Navigating the Labyrinth:  
A Study of Engagement and Artistry  
in Process Drama  
for Additional Language Teaching and Learning

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ABSTRACT

In this reflective practitioner research I investigate process drama for additional language teaching and learning (AL/process drama). In particular, I examine two constructs relevant to AL/process drama aesthetics: ‘learner engagement’ and ‘teacher artistry’.

To explore these constructs I draw on three case studies, developed within two adult schools of Italian (AL) and a university, in Milan, Italy. As teacher/researcher, I designed and facilitated a series of process drama workshops for each context, resulting in 45 hours of video-recorded material. I kept a reflective journal (written in English) and a logbook (written in Italian) where I recorded my reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. As a translingual researcher, I deliberately switched between languages, in an attempt to capture different nuances and better understand my attitudes and beliefs towards AL/process drama teaching.

Within each case, I worked with a group of up to 16 international students of Italian (AL) at an intermediate level of proficiency (student-participants) and up to seven teachers (teacher-participants) who observed the workshops and took notes on the learners’ engagement. Both students and teacher-participants took part in individual and focus group interviews. At the end of each workshop, student-participants were invited to choose a specific moment from the drama and self-evaluate their engagement. These moments informed the selection of video extracts that were later used within video-stimulated recall interviews.

The ‘learner engagement’ construct was explored through the Vygotskian lens of ‘felt-experience’ (perezhivanie) in which individuals perceive, feel, interpret, internalise, and re-create meaning through a cognitive, affective and social investment. I analysed the nature of engagement from a sociocultural perspective, across three domains: Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Intercultural Education and Aesthetic Learning. The analysis revealed that the nature of learner engagement in the SLA domain seems to appear and manifest as a cycle of ‘perception-in-action’. This cycle entails a ‘felt-experience’ in the drama, beginning with dramatic action affording the exposure to ‘authentic’ language, enhancing the states of receptivity and vigilance, and generating agency in the target language. This agency manifests in a variety of ways: self-regulation in verbal and non-verbal communication, playfulness with the Italian language, and playfulness with the elements of drama. Through this process, fuelled by dramatic tension, the student-participants seemed to engage in meaningful, dialogic communication in the target language.

The nature of learner engagement within the Intercultural Education domain seemed to appear and manifest as a process of intercultural meaning-making. This process, fuelled by dramatic tension, generates intercultural tension, lived through a ‘felt-experience’, and triggers a degree of intercultural awareness and intercultural meaning-making. I associate this process
with the degree of 'intercultural tension' in the pre-text, noting that its presence directly affects the intercultural dimension of the drama, as well as the opportunities for intercultural reflection. I refer to this framework as the 'intercultural/dramatic structure', and observe that this framework changes considerably across the three case studies, resulting in different levels of intercultural engagement.

The nature of learner engagement within the Aesthetic Learning domain seems to appear and manifest as a process of transformation, beginning with a 'felt-experience', entailing creative perception, interpretation, connection to an idea and, in some cases, heightened self-awareness. To some degree, all the student-participants were affected by the form of drama. Some students were affected by the content of the drama. Whenever they were affected by the influence of form on content, they appeared to undergo a transformation that led to a heightened self-awareness. This shift in awareness seemed to be related to their voice and identity as additional language speakers, as well as intercultural speakers. Those participants who were found to engage at an aesthetic level were able to 'feel' the Italian language and the culture at a visceral level. Thus, findings from the research suggest that the language, intercultural and aesthetic domains are inextricably inter-connected in AL/process drama.

Findings relating to the 'teacher artistry' construct reveal that I was initially tacitly clinging to the notion of a linear, Aristotelian narrative in the drama. Through reflection-in-action, and on action, I expose some covert beliefs. In order to make sense of my reflection-in-action, I differentiate between my 'intra-episode' reflection-in-action, i.e., thinking on my feet within one dramatic episode, and 'inter-episode' reflection-in-action skills, i.e., re-structuring episodes thinking on my feet. I identify my weakness at an inter-episode level, and map my progression through the three case studies, in order to understand how to develop and harness the artistry of process drama to facilitate engagement in an AL teaching context. Ultimately, the research suggests that, as my artistry developed, the participants’ engagement also grew, and that a playful attitude, both mine and the learners’, is at the core of my understanding of AL/process drama aesthetics. The aspects that I recognise as important for teacher artistry to impact positively on learner engagement are: dramatic tension, a sense of form, heightened self-awareness, the ‘intercultural-dramatic structure’, reflection-in-action, agency and a sense of playfulness.
Statement of Originality

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

(Signed)_____________________________
Erika C. Piazzoli
RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS

These publications have been informed by my experiences and understandings developed within and beyond the thesis process:


CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS


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Researcher’s Background

As Neelands (2006) suggests, in reflective practitioner research we share the assumption that “what we see, is what we see” and that the same events are experienced, observed and interpreted differently, by different individuals (p.33, original emphasis). For this reason, I include here a short account to help the reader understand the researcher’s background.

I was born and grew up in Italy. My mother grew up in France, and I was raised with French nursery rhymes and lullabies. I took French as my first language in High School. During my secondary studies, I also studied Latin for two years, Spanish for three years, German for one year, and, of course, English. Indeed, it was the English language that seduced me. I had studied English since I was six years old and, by the time I was 15, I was obsessed. I so fully identified with the British culture that I rejected my own Italian identity. Those were the years of being embarrassed to admit I was Italian; trying to speak English at all times, at all costs, in front of passers-by. By the end of high school, I had been to England more than 10 times, working as a hotel cleaner in the French community in London. This identifies a curious pattern: wherever I was, I was longing to be elsewhere.

At the time I left Italy to come to Australia in 1998, I was a rebellious teenager fully rejecting my Italian heritage. I simply hated Italy, and I wanted to be un-Italian. At that time I started to keep a journal, and became accustomed to reflective writing as a tool for introspection. Curiously, in those years I wrote in my journal in Italian when I was in Australia and in English when I visited Italy. I just needed to be ‘other’. I attempted to fulfil this need through my ‘translingual writing’, i.e., writing in more than one language (Kellman, 2000). As I settled in Australia, I met my husband, an artist from Krakow. I began studying the Polish language, and re-created my identity with a newly found Eastern European touch.

After the first few years of euphoric freedom in Australia, I started missing Italy. This manifested as a nostalgic longing for my little brother Daniele, who was eight when I left for Australia, and for my baby cousin Cecilia. To overcome this feeling, I began working with children. I started volunteering in children’s hospitals’ play schemes, and ended up working full-time in child care. Working with children for four years helped me to re-discover my ultimate passion: play. I took great joy in dramatic play and storytelling. Through the years, I developed a story that I explored and re-created with different groups of children. After facing a period of depression, I decided to put this story into writing, and wrote a lengthy children’s book (unpublished). To overcome my depression, I also began writing poetry. This has given birth to four manuscripts (unpublished), containing hundreds of poems. While I wrote the children’s book in English, I wrote all my poetry in Italian. I tried to compose poetry in English, but I could never quite reach that inner level of poetic imagery that I could in Italian.
As an undergraduate student in Australia, I majored in filmmaking and Spanish studies. I wrote my first Honours Thesis in Spanish, researching the cultural maintenance strategies of Spanish women living in Australia. At the same time, I investigated the role of the filmmaker’s creativity when doing visual ethnography. Alongside my majors, for my degree I took courses like creative writing, media studies, anthropology, psychology and theatre directions. As part of my assessment, I had to write short stories, feature articles, screenplays and stage plays. These experiences have undoubtedly shaped who I am as an individual.

After I finished my undergraduate degree, I became fascinated with the art of improvisation. As I read *Impro for Storytellers* by Johnstone (1999), a new world opened up for me: I attended several workshops in improvisation, voice and creative arts, culminating in the creation of my own Arts Therapy business. Here I combined improvisation with drawing, singing and creative writing. With my business partner, a psychologist/hypnotherapist, we worked with groups of women from disadvantaged backgrounds. These arts-therapy workshops were exciting; yet I felt there was something missing in my practice.

In parallel, from 2001, I started working as a teacher of Italian language to both adults and children in schools in Brisbane. This gave me great fulfilment, as it was a means to reconnect with my Italian cultural identity. However, after about three years of teaching, I started to grow dissatisfied with the so-called ‘communicative’ strategies, with the role-plays and language games that feature in most communicative textbooks. I started to design my own lesson plans, incorporating the arts and experimenting with drama. After a number of years teaching Italian through improvisation, drama games and play reading, I came to the realisation that my use of drama in the classroom was scattered and inconsistent. I lacked direction; students seemed to have fun, but were they learning anything? My approach felt somewhat aimless; borrowing Fleming's (1994) words, it felt “educationally bankrupt” (p.1). I did sense a great potential in drama for languages, but I was not sure how to harness it.

For this reason in 2008 I decided to go back to university and enrolled in an Applied Theatre Honours degree, exploring process drama for adult language teaching. Thorough that experience, I learned the difference between drama games and process drama as pedagogy. I observed and analysed several process dramas, and then I designed and facilitated six process dramas for a third-year university course. This experience strengthened my passion in this direction. However, it also confirmed that I was missing something in my practice, something I could not identify precisely. It was something related to the aesthetic dimension; something related to reflection; something to do with managing the elements of drama. That ‘something missing’ is what inspired me to embark on this PhD project.
“Not all those who wander are lost”

(J. R. R. Tolkien)
1. INTRODUCTION: ENTERING THE LABYRINTH

1.1 THE LABYRINTH METAPHOR

In *Researching Drama and Arts Education* (1996), O’Neill crafts a beguiling metaphor of the research process as a Greek labyrinth. She pictures the researcher lost in the labyrinth, looking for Ariadne’s thread, as the words of great scholars echo in the gloom. She suggests that researchers venturing into this ‘labyrinth of scholarship’ need to follow their intuition. She pictures the research topic as the Minotaur waiting at the centre of the maze:

> At the dead centre of the labyrinth lurks our research topic, the monster, its jaws dripping with the gore of scholars it has already consumed. It may pounce upon us and destroy us too, immediately or slowly. The battle may be long drawn out with neither side yielding victory […] Take your vorpal swords in hands, and go forth… (1996, p. 145)

Like O’Neill, I also see research as a labyrinth to be explored, but unlike her, for me the Minotaur lurking in its depths feels less of a threat and more like a wise creature, able to guide me through the sometimes confusing pathways and dark dead-end tracks. In my interpretation of the metaphor, the labyrinth is not a dangerous place, but rather an exciting one, full of passageways with the potential to offer rich insights into my research topic.

In entering the labyrinth, my confidence comes from knowing that I have Ariadne’s thread to guide me. This thread represents the methodological choices that inform my research design, allowing me to explore the labyrinth as thoroughly as possible. Despite Ariadne’s thread, I still need some help to understand and interpret the learning inherent within the labyrinth; fortunately, this wisdom comes from my Minotaur. But what would this Minotaur of mine look like? In Greek mythology, Hecate is a three-headed goddess of crossroads, who uses her heads to guard a three-way crossing. Also known as the goddess of fertility, she is associated with foretelling the future and witchcraft in the Shakespearian tradition. Hecate seems particularly apt for guiding this study, as she is often portrayed as having one body and three heads. This description seems to align well with my research; in effect, within this multidisciplinary study, I recognise three informing domains. These are: *Second Language Acquisition*, *Intercultural Education* and *Aesthetic Learning*. These domains merge into one body, process drama for additional language teaching and learning.
After reviewing several representations of Hecate, the one that resonated most with me was the illustration\(^1\) by Brazilian artist Patricia Ariel (Figure 1.1). Throughout this thesis, I have used this visual representation as a metaphor for my research process. In this way, I have attempted to interpret Hecate’s voices, using them as a guide to find my way, looking through its eyes to navigate the labyrinth.

\(\text{Figure 1.1. Hecate © Patricia Ariel (2008).}\)

\(^1\) Image used with permission from the artist.
1.2 RESEARCH FOCUS

This research explores my developing understanding, as a reflective practitioner (Shön, 1983), of the aesthetics of process drama for teaching and learning additional languages. In order to explore my aesthetic understanding, I designed and facilitated three process drama interventions, for a total of 45 hours, working with three groups of adult language learners.

The research is grounded in sociocultural theory for Second Language learning (Lantolf, 2000). Sociocultural theory has emerged in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) as a Vygotskyan orientation to teaching and learning languages. It focuses on the interrelation of affect and cognition when learning a Second/Additional\(^2\) language. It considers language learning as a dialogic, mediated process, occurring within social interaction (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Process drama (O’Neill, 1995) is a participatory form in which dramatic contexts are co-constructed by teacher and students, by negotiating the elements of drama, to create dramatic meaning (O’Toole, 1992). Its foundations can be traced back to Vygotskyan theories of play (1976), and Bolton’s (1979) conceptualisation of drama in education.

The backbone of this research rests on the notion that process drama can enhance the goals of additional language (AL) teaching and learning. Process drama for teaching and learning additional languages (AL/process drama) was initially explored by the seminal work of Kao and O’Neill (1998) whose findings have been reinforced by Liu (2002), and supported by further research (Kao, Carkin & Hsu, 2011; Stinson & Freebody, 2006). These studies indicate that process drama can support key goals of AL teaching, i.e., generating motivation to communicate in the target language and creating ‘authentic’ contexts to communicate. Process drama also fosters intercultural awareness (Fleming, 1998; 2003), another important aspect of AL teaching. Extensive research supports the synergy between drama and intercultural education; a recent example is the Drama Improves Competence in Education (DICE) project, a longitudinal, cross-cultural research across 12 countries (http://www.dramanetwork.eu/conference_talks.html).

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\(^2\) I use the expression ‘additional language’ (AL) to refer to both Second Language (L2), and Foreign Language (FL) learning. Technically, Second Language (L2) learning refers to study of language in the country where the language is spoken; Foreign Language (FL) learning refers to study of a language in the learner’s own country. Recently a call has been made to use the term ‘additional’, as a learner may speak more than two languages and may feel the language they are learning is not ‘foreign’ to them. However, many publications still use the expressions L2 and/or FL learning. In this thesis, I use the term ‘additional’ wherever possible, but I keep the original acronym when quoting other research.
1.3 RESEARCH GAP

The studies mentioned above suggest that process drama can address two important goals of AL teaching: promoting motivation to communicate and fostering intercultural awareness. However, recent research on teacher development (Araki-Metcalfe, 2008; Stinson, 2009), has revealed that learning process drama can be challenging for AL teachers. In Stinson’s study, a group of language teachers was partnered with drama educators, to observe and co-teach. Although the AL teachers noticed an improvement in their students, they were reluctant to continue using process drama. Similarly, in Araki-Metcalfe’s study, AL teachers observing the drama practitioner acknowledged the benefits of drama, but were resistant to implementing the approach independently. Such resistance, Araki-Metcalfe argues, may be because they were experienced teachers, comfortable with their teaching styles, hesitant to relinquish the control that they held in the classroom. Reflecting on these teachers’ involvement, Araki-Metcalfe suggests they may have been caught in a dilemma between the new approach of educational drama and their own teaching approach (p.53). Araki-Metcalfe concludes that since much of process drama knowledge is tacit, these teachers may have been feeling overwhelmed by the innovation of the approach.

Indeed, a key finding from my own Honours research (Piazzoli, 2008) emerged from my lack of experience as a drama teacher, resulting in limited flexibility to reflect-in-action. When I was confronted with an unexpected delay, I was unable to move away from the lesson plan. I was hesitant to re-arrange the dramatic conventions, fearing it would impact on the build-up of tension. Thus, I followed the plan and sacrificed the final language reflection which impacted on the students’ perceptions of their learning. From that research, I concluded that an AL teacher who is beginning to embrace process drama needs more than just learning the dramatic conventions; she needs an aesthetic understanding specific to the art of drama.

The aesthetic, as Nicholson (1999) notes, is a slippery concept, often regarded “as something of a mystery” even by drama teachers themselves (p. 81). McDonald (1994) explored the practical implications of the aesthetic in the drama classroom. Her research suggests that students’ aesthetic responses depend largely on the educational setting, which is constructed by the teacher’s expectations of the drama. As Bowell and Heap (2005) argue, process drama teachers must themselves develop a strong aesthetic understanding of the art form, in order to become confident in structuring learning experiences. Since the aesthetic has such a pivotal role for process drama teaching, it is imperative for AL teachers to acknowledge, create and sustain an aesthetic experience when using AL/process drama. However, the aesthetic dimension remains virtually unknown in the AL/FL teaching community.
What might the aesthetic dimension entail, in an AL/process drama context? What perceptions and beliefs might need to be changed for an AL teacher to harness the aesthetic dimension? In this reflective practitioner study I explore these issues, monitoring my own understanding of the aesthetic dimension as I develop my process drama pedagogy. To develop such an insight, I rely on my reflection-in-action (Shön, 1983), as well as learners’ and teachers’ perceptions of learning and teaching the Italian language through process drama.

### 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research is concerned with my developing understanding of AL/process drama aesthetics. I have explored aesthetic understanding with reference to two main constructs: ‘learner engagement’ and ‘teacher artistry’. On the one hand, I acknowledge with Dewey (1934) and Vygotsky (1971) that an ‘aesthetic experience’ is the fruit of an engagement that is both cognitive and affective. Thus, I set out to explore the construct of ‘learner engagement’, looking at the three inter-related domains I presented above as the three ‘heads’ of Hecate: Second Language Acquisition, Intercultural Education and Aesthetic Learning.

On the other hand, I also acknowledge with O'Neill (1995) that in process drama the aesthetic dimension is related to the teacher’s artistry in setting up dramatic encounters that can generate meaning. Thus, I set out to explore the nature of my ‘teacher artistry’ in terms of how it is developed and harnessed, in an AL/process drama context. In other words, I consider two distinct points of view: the learner’s, and the practitioner’s. This twofold perspective generated two research questions:

- **What is the nature of engagement in AL/process drama within the Second Language Acquisition, Intercultural and Aesthetic domains?**

- **How can an AL teacher develop and harness process drama artistry to facilitate engagement?**

These questions have led me onto inter-disciplinary terrain: the fields of drama, education, psychology, linguistics, philosophy, sociology, anthropology and aesthetics.
1.5 METHODOLOGY

This research is grounded in a qualitative paradigm. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe qualitative research as a field of inquiry concerned with studying phenomena in their natural settings, and interpreting the meaning that people construct. The qualitative researcher draws on a range of “interconnected, interpretive practices” (p. 4), with the awareness that each practice will shed a different light on a given phenomenon.

Within this paradigm, I have explored the research questions through reflective practice methodology (Shön, 1983), informed by multiple case studies (Stake, 2005). Reflective practice is defined as a meta-cognitive approach to one’s practice. It is a learned, conscious process, in which the practitioner examines his/her own beliefs, attitudes and behaviour in a professional context. Case study research is an inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within real-life contexts (Yin, 2003). The case researcher, Stake (2005) argues, ‘digs into meaning’, working to relate meaning to context and experience.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to address the research questions, I conducted three case studies, within two adult schools of Italian (AL) and a university in Milan, Italy, between June and September 2010. As teacher/researcher, I designed and facilitated three process drama interventions of 15 hours each, for learners at an intermediate level of proficiency. Each intervention consisted of five three-hour workshops with a group of adult learners (student-participants), observed by a group of Italian language teachers (teacher-participants). The workshops were conducted solely in Italian, the target language, and were filmed for analysis purposes.

Teacher-participants (TP) were involved as participant observers. They conducted classroom observation, and were encouraged to take notes on the learners’ engagement, using a specific template provided. I conducted pre- and post-observation interviews with each participating teacher. At the end of the intervention, the teacher-participants attended a focus group where we discussed their perceptions of learner engagement in AL/process drama. In the focus groups, I used Video-Stimulated Recall (VSR) to prompt pedagogic reflection.

Student-participants (SP) were involved as active participants in the drama. At the end of each workshop, they were encouraged to choose one specific moment in the drama, and self-evaluate different aspects of their engagement in that moment, from 0 (dis-engaged) to 10 (highly engaged). I later discussed these questionnaires with the student-participants in
individual interviews during the intervention (between workshops 4 and 5), or shortly after its completion. At the end of the intervention, the student-participants participated in a focus group, where I used props from the drama and Video-Stimulated Recall (VSR) to prompt pedagogic reflection.

Throughout the case studies I kept a reflective journal to record my reflection-in-action (Shön, 1983). I also kept a logbook where I recorded my thoughts during class. While I wrote the reflective journal in English (my second language), I wrote the logbook in Italian (my first language). During the data collection, I deliberately switched the two languages, exploring my ‘translingual writing’ (Kellman, 2000), that is, the phenomenon of writing in more than one language. As Pavlenko (2005) argues, in the writing of translingual scholars, one of their two languages (usually, but not always, the native language) retains the stronger emotional resonance, while the other induces a more detached, reflective writing. I played with this idea to record my reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action.

Case Study One (CS1) was carried out in a public university in Milan, in its Department of Intercultural Mediation. The intervention was conducted in a new campus, recently built to meet the skyrocketing number of enrolments in this field of study. Since 2004, the university had supported the Marco Polo exchange, a joint initiative of the Italian and Chinese Governments, connecting key universities in China and Italy. This had attracted a large number of Chinese students for a three-year exchange program. The student-participants in CS1 were 16 Chinese students in the second year of the exchange program, aged from 21 to 25 years. The teacher-participants were three pre-service education teachers who were enrolled in a Master of Italian (AL teaching) at the university. All three teacher-participants had studied drama at secondary level.

Case Study Two (CS2) was carried out in an adult, private language school, nested inside the Contemporary Fine Arts Academy of Milan. The school was part of an Italian educational network, with branches in Milan, Rome, Siena and Viareggio. The student-participants were nine women, aged 20 to 50, from Russia, the United States, Japan, Slovenia and Taiwan. The teacher-participants were three experienced male teachers with no experience in drama and a professional actress who was a trainee in the school.

Case Study Three (CS3) was carried out in an adult language institute in Milan. The institute is part of an international network for adult language teaching, with 150 branches worldwide. The Milan branch offered AL classes in both English and Italian. The student-participants were nine female students aged 21 to 51 from Brazil, Iran, Taiwan, Russia and German-speaking Switzerland. The teacher-participants were seven male and female experienced teachers working in the school, with no experience in drama. None of these teacher-participants had heard of process drama.
1.7 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

In this chapter, I have introduced the background to the study, the research questions and the methodology. In Chapter Two I present a literature review of AL/process drama pedagogy, within the domains relevant to this area: Second Language Acquisition, Intercultural Education, and Aesthetic Learning. In Chapter Three I illustrate the methodology, offer a justification for the data collection procedures, and outline the analysis process. Chapter Four is a descriptive chapter where I portray the context, participants, and drama structures for each of the three case studies. In Chapter Five I address the first research question, by analysing the nature of engagement. The chapter is divided into three major sections, following the three domains of the literature review. In Chapter Six I address my second research question. I consider the case studies in chronological order, analysing my evolving understanding of the artistry of process drama. Thus, the data is presented from three angles: in the contexts of the case studies (Chapter Four), from the perspective of the student-participants' engagement (Chapter Five), and from my reflective practitioner's viewpoint (Chapter Six). Finally, in Chapter Seven I draw the conclusions, synthesising my responses to the two research questions with the literature. I also consider the limitations of the study, and possibilities for future research.
2. LITERATURE REVIEW: LISTENING TO HECATE’S VOICES

As, like Theseus, I cautiously enter the labyrinth, I explore several areas of scholarship including psychology, linguistics, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, drama, education and aesthetics. The purpose of this review is not to offer a comprehensive overview of these fields. Rather, it is to shed light on how they inform my research topic: my developing understanding of AL/process drama aesthetics. In particular, within this review I pay attention to ‘learner engagement’ and ‘teacher artistry’, with reference to my research questions:

- **What is the nature of engagement in AL/process drama within the Second Language Acquisition, Intercultural and Aesthetic domains?**

- **How can an AL teacher develop and harness process drama artistry to facilitate engagement?**

I define ‘teacher artistry’ as the ability related to working within an art form (Harper, 2001). In this context, I view ‘teaching’ as a kind of art form, based on Eisner’s (1985) theory on teaching as an art. On the other hand, I construe ‘engagement’ in a sociocultural perspective, framing it as a transformation from lower to higher mental processes, involving both affect and cognition (Vygotsky, 1978). One key aim of this review is to identify gaps in AL/process drama literature that I will address in this research. These gaps concern the nature of ‘learner engagement’ and its relationship to ‘teacher artistry’, including the construct of learner agency, and how it is affected by the teacher’s choices when reflecting-in-action.

I have organised this chapter following the Hecate metaphor. In Ariel’s illustration (Figure 1.1), Hecate is portrayed with three heads, juxtaposed over one body. Similarly, this multidisciplinary research draws on three domains: Second Language Acquisition, Intercultural Education and Aesthetic Learning, informing the emerging field of AL/process drama. The chapter is divided into three main sections, each considering one ‘head’ of Hecate. I first introduce the ‘common body’ (AL/process drama); then I consider each ‘head’, or domain. For each domain I contemplate the constructs of ‘teacher artistry’ and ‘learner engagement’, listening to the different voices of Hecate.
2.1. PROCESS DRAMA FOR ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES

Drama has been used for teaching additional languages since the tenth century, when the practice of performing plays to learn additional languages was introduced by Jesuit monks teaching Latin and Greek to their pupils (Kelly, 1976). These performance-based AL learning practices became established in the Renaissance, and continued through to the 20th century. Since the 1960s, the use of role-plays has become popular in language teaching. Some attempts have also been made to promote dramatic exercises, improvisation, and scenarios (Di Pietro, 1987; Maley & Duff, 1978) in the AL curriculum. These strategies are valuable tools to promote language learning. However, in this research, I focus on a different kind of approach, which remains largely unknown among language teachers: process drama.

According to O’Neill (1995), the main difference between process drama and improvisation exercises is the structure. A process drama is not a one-off exercise; it builds up through a series of episodes, or scenic units, launched by a pre-text. The pre-text is a source, or impulse, which defines the nature of the dramatic world, and implies roles for the participants, binding them together in anticipation. The episodic organisation of a process drama immediately entails structure, and implies a complex relationship between the units, which together form a ‘web of meaning’ (1995, xiv). O’Neill defines the key feature of a process drama, as opposed to brief improvisations, in terms of the entire group being engaged in the same enterprise, with the teacher leading in role. Also, in a process drama the work is not based on a script, and involves an integral audience, rather than external spectators.

Process drama is grounded in Vygotsky’s (1978) developmental theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD); when learners participate in spontaneous, symbolic play, taking on the personae of others, they can reach a developmental level above their actual level (p. 552). Learning in the ZPD involves acting, thinking and feeling (Wells, 1999). In the same way, drama stimulates both affect and cognition (Bolton, 1979). Process drama embraces the theories of play (Bruner, 1983; Vygotsky, 1976) as a safe vehicle for trying out combinations of behaviours without pressure, in a ‘no penalty testing zone’ (Heathcote, 1991). Although initially directed at children, process drama considers play as a highly developed form of cognitive activity and it has been widely transposed to adult learning.
AL/Process Drama Research

Process drama for additional language teaching and learning (AL/process drama) is a relatively new field of enquiry, which has gained momentum in the last few years (Stinson & Winston, 2011; Winston, 2012). The first study to investigate process drama in the AL classroom was Shin-Mei Kao’s (1995) investigation of the impact of drama on AL discourse. This was a mixed-methods study, conducted at a Taiwanese university, with 33 undergraduate learners of English. Kao’s intervention lasted 14 weeks; for the purpose of data analysis, four activities were selected, and coded for turn-taking. Kao used Van Lier’s (1988) classification for turn-taking: topic management, self-selection, allocation and sequencing. Overall, her findings indicate a significantly high percentage of spontaneous participation, over the four turn-taking categories, when using process drama, with the students taking 20 per cent more turns than the teacher (p.96).

Importantly, the study shows that a key factor provoking active participation is the dramatic tension generated by the theme. When analysing each activity, it appeared that one activity was less successful in encouraging students’ participation. Upon further investigation, Kao realised that this activity carried less intrinsic tension than the others (1995, p. 99).

In her findings, Kao (1994) tentatively hints at the relationship between ‘learner engagement’ and ‘teacher artistry’. She expresses this as her challenge as a teacher, in managing the “unknown elements” related to teacher and students playing their roles in the drama (p. 168). She identified a ‘subtle relationship’ between degrees of the teacher’s control and the students’ active involvement:

It seemed that the students could play a more active role in participation when I had less control of the topics and procedures; however, the activity might lose its original purpose and became disorganized and loose when I had too little control of it. How to handle the “unknown elements” so that he teacher and the students could effectively play their roles in the drama was a great challenge to me. (1994, p. 168)

This comment appears in the final section of Kao’s PhD dissertation, under ‘challenges of the language teacher using drama’. In her subsequent publications, Kao has not investigated this relationship between the teacher’s control, and learners’ engagement. This constitutes a gap in the literature, which I attempt to explore in my research.

In 1998, Kao and O’Neill expanded Kao’s findings into a seminal text on AL/process drama. Here, the authors consider a range of dramatic approaches, creating a continuum from ‘totally controlled language exercises’ to ‘open communication’. They argue that scripted role-plays would fall on the ‘controlled communication’ end, and process drama on the ‘open’ end of
the continuum (Figure 2.1). Kao and O’Neill (1998) frame process drama in terms of objectives, organisation, contexts, role, decision-making, dramatic tension and teacher functions. They also note the crucial role of a language reflection at the end of each drama session, to revise and acknowledge the new language acquired. Throughout the book, they make explicit connections between language acquisition and process drama:

Language acquisition arises from the urge to do things with words, and this need becomes paramount in process drama, when participants are required to manipulate the dramatic circumstances to achieve their own goals. (p. 4)

This comment hints at the learners’ *active engagement*, in saying that, in order to fulfil their goals, speakers are required to manipulate the dramatic context. However, Kao and O’Neill do not specifically focus on learners’ agency and what this entails.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Controlled communication</th>
<th>Open communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OBJECTIVES</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fluency</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Authenticity</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Confidence</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Challenge</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>New classroom relation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td>Fluent&lt;br&gt;Authentic&lt;br&gt;Confident&lt;br&gt;Challenged&lt;br&gt;New classroom relation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ORGANIZATION</strong></td>
<td><strong>Beginns with large group</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Pair work and small groups as work continues</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair work</td>
<td>Beginns with large group&lt;br&gt;Pair work and small groups as work continues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small groups</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rehearsal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONTEXT</strong></td>
<td><strong>Launched by teacher in role</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Developed with students’ input</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple</td>
<td>Launched by teacher in role&lt;br&gt;Developed with students’ input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturalistic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher selected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ROLES</strong></td>
<td><strong>Generalized at first</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Becoming individualized at students’ own choice later</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Generalized at first&lt;br&gt;Becoming individualized at students’ own choice later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher determined</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed attitudes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DECISIONS</strong></td>
<td><strong>Negotiated by students</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>Negotiated by students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TENSION</strong></td>
<td><strong>Arising from dramatic situation and the intentions of the roles</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To produce accuracy of language and vocabulary</td>
<td>Arising from dramatic situation&lt;br&gt;and the intentions of the roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEACHER FUNCTIONS</strong></td>
<td><strong>In role</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>As model</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>To support</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>To provide resources</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>To challenge</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To set up the exercises</td>
<td>In role&lt;br&gt;As model&lt;br&gt;To support&lt;br&gt;To provide resources&lt;br&gt;To challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To provide resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be evaluator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 2.1. Kao & O’Neill’s (1998) Continuum of Communication (p.16).*
Liu (2002) builds from Kao and O’Neill’s framework, endorsing the benefits of AL/process drama, and identifying three functions of process drama in the AL classroom: a cognitive, a social and an affective function. The cognitive function stimulates the learners’ creativity in acquiring new language in meaningful contexts; the social function relates to the cooperative interaction among peers; the affective function is connected to dramatic tension, which allows participants to concentrate on using the target language as strategically as possible (2002, p. 57). Liu highlights a number of strategies that characterise AL/process drama:

1) Determining the context and creating a pre-text;
2) Identifying a variety of roles for students and the teacher;
3) Building different levels of tension to sustain dramatic activities;
4) Utilising body and language in developing communicative competence;
5) Reflecting on the experiences, reinforcing and explaining linguistic expressions that emerge in the drama (2002, p. 57).

Since these foundations were laid, a number of studies have explored the nature of AL/process drama. Below I review some studies with relevance to my research.

Stinson’s (2008) Drama and Oral Language (DOL) project reveals a positive correlation between process drama and ESL students’ oral communication scores, motivation and self-confidence. This was a multiple site case study, involving four 10-hour process dramas, aimed at improving the oracy of English learners in Singapore. A total of 140 students were involved, 70 from the drama intervention, and 70 from the comparison group. All participants undertook a pre- and post-intervention test. As Stinson and Freebody (2006) have argued, using process drama, students experimented with changes of status, attitude, speech style, vocabulary and physicality in a safe place. Stinson (2008) summarises these findings in four categories: 1) the contextualisation of language; 2) the motivation, confidence and enthusiasm that drama promotes; 3) the encouraging and safe atmosphere of the drama classroom, and 4) the shift in power from teachers to students.

Bournot-Trites, Belliveau, Spiliotopolous and Séror’s (2007) mixed-methods study explores the value of process drama in reducing the teacher-centred nature of AL learning. The researchers observed the difference between two elementary classes: one using a teacher-centred approach (library group), the other using process drama, in a Canadian French Immersion context. Data from pre-and post-testing, field observations, and teacher journals reveals that students’ motivation to learn the target language was significantly higher in the drama group (p. 19). Students’ interviews indicate that the drama group created their own knowledge through the drama, while the library group was relying on the teacher as a source of
knowledge. Similarly, data from teachers’ journals and interviews reveals major differences in the two groups; as the course progressed, in the library group, the teacher felt “compelled to entertain the students” to sustain their interest and motivation. On the contrary, the drama group teacher noted that, as the drama evolved, role-playing became a natural way to communicate and discover together (pp. 23-24). This research emphasises the meaning-making nature of process drama.

Araki-Metcalfe’s (2008) study explores the responses of Japanese primary school students learning English through educational drama. The research was conducted in a Japanese primary school, with three Year 6 English classes of Japanese students, and their teachers. The project spanned over 12 weeks of action research cycles. Data from video-recording, questionnaires, class discussion, interviews, students’ work and the researcher’s journal reveal that the students underwent a gradual change: at first they were confused, and slowly they became engaged:

Throughout the project, these students came to the realization that they needed to draw on all the resources and knowledge they had for successful participation in the activities. Once they realized this and I had gained their confidence, their level of physical, emotional and cognitive engagement with the drama activities increased immensely. (p. 53, my emphasis)

This remark hints at a relationship between learners’ active engagement and teacher’s behaviour. Learners engaged once the teacher “gained their confidence”. However, she does not analyse the genesis and the nature of such a relationship. How did she gain their confidence? How did her behaviour change after gaining their confidence? This gap is relevant to my research, as I explore the relationship between learners’ engagement and teacher artistry.

Yaman Ntelioglou’s (2011) research focuses on drama as an ‘embodied pedagogy’, creating ‘identity texts’, as participants incorporated their life experiences and identities in the second language drama classroom (p. 602). Her ethnographic study involved 50 adult learners of English (basic level), in a Canadian adult school in 2007. She argues that through drama, AL learners made use of verbal modes (reading, writing, listening and speaking) and non-verbal modes (visual, embodied, audio, gestural, tactile, spatial) to create meaning, thus framing drama as a ‘multiliteracy pedagogy’.

Kao, Carkin and Hsu (2011) researched the kind of questions AL/drama teachers ask, in and out of role. Analysing the teachers’ questions, data suggests that dramatic role enabled the teachers to use a broader range of social registers, contexts and relationships. The data was collected within a three-week intensive course, in 2007, with 30 Taiwanese university students of English (intermediate). Kao et al. (2011) distinguish between two kinds of teacher questions:
display questions, where the answer is known in advance by the teacher and referential questions, which are genuine requests for information. The authors use a question taxonomy that identifies a number of elicitation functions: informing, confirming, agreeing, committing, repeat, clarifying, asking pseudo-questions and performing comprehension checks (pp. 493-494). Interestingly, the findings reveal that informing questions, that is, referential questions with no previous assumption from the speaker, occurred more often. The researchers interpret this outcome as process drama creating a need to communicate in real social contexts (p. 503).

Finally, To, Chan, Lam and Tsang (2011) summarise the benefits of AL/drama as: motivation to learn, confidence in speaking, improvement in writing, using language in context with purpose, richer means of expression, engagement of students of different abilities, more active participation, better teacher student relationship, and more supportive and appreciative attitudes amongst students (p. 524). The findings stem from a year-long process drama teacher development program, in 2008–2009, with 160 teachers of English in Hong Kong. The researchers selected six schools, and conducted interviews with principals, teachers, students and parents.

In a teaching resource developed from the same program, Chan et al. (2010) draw on O’Toole and Dunn’s (2002) template for structuring process drama and adapt it for AL teaching. They offer several process drama structures for English learners, as well as practical guidelines for teachers planning their own process dramas. They highlight the need for having clear educational goals (in the language and in the drama), and sourcing the right pre-text to trigger such goals. Thus, they suggest that an AL/process drama workshop is comprised of an initiation phase, an experiential phase, and a reflection phase (pp. 9–10).

This planning structure (Chan et al., 2010), as well as Kao and O’Neill’s rationale (1998), and Liu’s framework (2002), heavily emphasise what Dunn and Stinson (2011) call the macro aspects of planning in process drama. As Dunn and Stinson explain, ‘macro’ planning refers to those decisions made before a drama begins, like selecting the pre-text and preparing a learning sequence. Another aspect of planning process drama is the micro level, “the ‘in the moment’ artistry needed to make effective decisions in light of the participants’ responses” (2011, p. 619).

As the overview above suggests, in the AL/process drama literature, much emphasis is placed on research to create macro planning guidelines. However, less attention has been given to the structuring that occurs at the micro level and, most importantly, to the dynamic relationship between the macro and the micro levels, in action. This constitutes a gap in the literature, related to teacher artistry, which the present research aims to address.
AL/Process Drama Research on Teachers’ Perspectives

The projects described above relied on either collaborations between drama educators and language teachers, or on a teacher who was trained in both disciplines. So far, only two research projects have considered the perspectives of AL teachers learning process drama. The first is Araki-Metcalfe’s (2008), who included in her study three English teachers in Japan; the second is Stinson’s (2009) study where she worked with eight English teachers in Singapore. Interestingly, both studies reveal a degree of teacher resistance when the AL teachers had to facilitate the drama autonomously. These studies were very different in research design. While Araki-Metcalfe’s (2008) was a small-scale action research, with three classes of Year 6 students, Stinson’s (2009) was a large-scale intervention research, with 12 classes of up to 40 students in each class. The teachers’ involvement was also different; in the latter study, teachers just observed; in the former study, teachers were given ongoing professional development support, and were encouraged to actively facilitate.

Araki-Metcalfe (2008) reports that the responses from the teachers were problematical, as they could see the positive influences of drama on their students’ learning, but at the same time doubted that it was comfortable for them to use it as a teaching method. Upon reflection, Araki-Metcalfe concludes that the teachers’ comments revealed a degree of hesitation towards process drama, and attributes this to the teachers’ reluctance to change:

This [teachers’ resistance] may have been because they were experienced teachers who had already established their own teaching styles and were quite reluctant to change. The educational drama approach was innovative and at times overwhelming for them. (p. 53)

Araki-Metcalfe (2008) recommends more research on teachers’ responses. In particular she calls for future research to understand some aspects of teacher change, including personality, teaching styles, educational background, socio-cultural background, attitudes and beliefs. By exploring these elements, she adds, it might be possible to identify key features influencing teachers’ decisions and capacity to take on process drama independently.

Stinson’s (2009) project indicated similar results. Although the teachers acknowledged that process drama was beneficial for their students, they retained a negative view towards using the approach independently. The ‘Speaking Out’ project was a follow-up from the DOL project (above). The research design involved a team of drama practitioners training, co-planning and co-teaching, alongside eight ‘non drama’ language teachers, at secondary level, for one year. Their collaboration involved five professional development workshops, a two-day drama camp and ongoing mentoring assistance. Stinson’s motive was to determine the quality
and quantity of professional development needed to provide ‘non-drama teachers’ with sufficient knowledge and confidence to use drama independently in their classrooms (2009, p. 227). Remarkably, while the student participants in the DOL project scored highly in the oral communication post-tests using process drama, the same measure implemented in the ‘Speaking Out’ project did not bear the same results. The difference between the two was in the planning choices of the teachers.

On the one hand, the DOL project was facilitated by experienced drama educators, and the process drama templates had been written before the research by experienced drama educators. As Stinson and Freebody (2006) highlight, in the DOL project, importance of the aesthetic dimension was quintessential:

The prime concern was to enable the students to work in role and in a fictional dramatic context with a heightened aesthetic frame. To this end it was important that both the process dramas and the facilitators of these be of high quality. (2006, p.33, my emphasis)

On the other hand, in the ‘Speaking Out’ project, the English teachers involved did not really plan and facilitate with the aesthetic dimension in mind. These dramas were described by Stinson as functional, rather than aesthetic. Despite ongoing support, these teachers’ choices for pre-text lacked intrinsic tension, while sometimes there was no pre-text at all. The pre-text selection by the teachers was based on “potential for creating specific language skills”, as opposed to generating dramatic action (Dunn & Stinson, 2011, p. 626). In other words, the aesthetic quality of the pre-text was compromised, and, with it, the integrity of the art form.

Dunn and Stinson (2011) conclude that it is only when teachers are able to manage both the artistry of the form and the intended learning that AL/process drama can attain its full potential. They recommend that AL/process drama educators attend to both the macro and micro levels of planning. This can be achieved by selecting aesthetically charged pre-texts, by learning how to structure to encourage meaning-making, and by developing ‘in the moment' decision-making skills (p. 630). Most importantly, Dunn and Stinson highlight that an in-depth, integrated understanding of drama and AL teaching pedagogy is essential to foster quality learning experiences. Yet, they do not articulate the nature of such ‘integrated understanding’, or which aspects of it are involved in balancing macro and micro planning.

As Shulman argues (2004), pedagogical understanding is based on layered understandings. Exhaustive ‘content knowledge’ of a subject to be taught is not enough and neither is advanced ‘pedagogical knowledge’ of teaching processes. A competent educator needs “pedagogical content knowledge”: knowledge of teaching strategies, the most powerful forms that make the subject comprehensible to others (p. 203). Drawing on Shulman (2004),
Dunn and Stinson (2011) refer to the ‘integrated knowledge’ of AL and drama required by the AL/process drama teacher as “dual pedagogical content knowledge” (p. 630, my emphasis).

To reiterate, in this section I have reviewed a number of research studies on AL/process drama, from both learners’ and teachers’ perspectives. I have identified a series of gaps in the AL/process drama literature. The gaps related to engagement involve the relationships between teacher control, learners’ engagement and learners’ agency. The identified gap for teacher artistry relates to the dynamic relationship between macro and micro reflection-in-action, and the nature of the ‘integrated understanding’ necessary to create aesthetic experiences in AL/process drama.

In the remaining sections of this chapter, I explore the theoretical and practical issues that relate to such ‘integrated understanding’. I recognise three interrelated domains that inform the integrated understanding of my dual pedagogical content knowledge: Second Language Acquisition, Intercultural Education and Aesthetic Learning. Returning to the labyrinth metaphor, I now venture further in the maze, in search of the three heads of Hecate, the mythological goddess of crossroads.
2.2. SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION (SLA)

In this section, I consider the first ‘head’ of Hecate, Second Language Acquisition. The aim here is not offering a complete review of this domain, but using it to frame my research paradigm, in terms of ‘learner engagement’ and ‘teacher artistry’.

*Figure 2.2. Hecate (detail) by Ariel (2008).*

**SLA Research**

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is concerned with how a second/additional language is acquired by a learner. In 1950s, the behaviourist tradition explained acquisition as a result of operant conditioning, based on stimulus–response (Skinner, 1957). This paradigm was soon replaced by the cognitive approach, which conceived language acquisition on the basis of an internal device through which learners acquire rules of a Universal Grammar (Chomsky, 1981). Meanwhile, Krashen’s *Comprehensible Input Hypothesis* (1982) posited that, if input was made comprehensible to the learner, acquisition would follow. This hypothesis has been highly influential, in terms of teachers making adjustments to make language comprehensible. However, it was highly criticised (Ellis, 1990; Van Lier, 1996), as it construes learners as ‘processing machines’, and it does not place enough emphasis on spoken production. Hence, the *Interaction Hypothesis* (Long, 1981) posits that SLA is a process explicable by the interaction between learners and more proficient speakers. This hypothesis inspired a branch of research known as ‘interactionist’, which investigates ways in which Native Speakers avoid or repair misunderstandings with Non-Native Speakers. The interactionist approach established a solid tradition of empirical research (Long & Robinson, 1998; Pica, 1994; Spada, 1997). However, this research was also criticised, as the language produced by learners was reduced to sets of statistical figures on clarification requests and other tactics for utterance repair. Learners were reduced to ‘input crunching’ machines (Donato, 1994), rather than agents of their own learning. Instead, in the mid-1990s a new paradigm emerged, which is referred to as *sociocultural theory.*
Sociocultural Theory of Mind

The sociocultural theory of mind is based on the theories of Vygotsky (1978) applied to Second Language Acquisition. The founder of sociocultural theory (SCT) is considered to be Lantolf (1994; 2000). Lantolf was dissatisfied with the interactionist view, as it isolates chunks of interactions without considering the context. Indeed, SCT is inspired by Hegel’s historical and cultural situatedness. SCT places context at the core of its study; in doing so, SCT does not discard ‘interaction’, but gives it a deeper role. Interaction is not viewed merely as ‘input’; rather, interaction constitutes the learning process. As Swain and Lapkin (1998) maintain, “unlike the claim that comprehensible input leads to learning, we wish to suggest that what occurs in collaborative dialogues is learning” (p. 321).

According to SCT, dialogue is crucial to generate learning, which, following Vygotsky is considered as a social, dialogic activity. In particular, some key Vygotskyan concepts that inform sociocultural theory are internalisation, mediation and self-regulation. Internalisation refers to a process of transformation, whereby any function of development occurs first externally and then internally in the learner. Thus, development is framed as a transformation from interpsychological to intrapsychological functioning (1978, p. 57). Initially, in solving a task, speech would be directed at others (social speech) and then at ourselves (private speech). Eventually, as cognitive development proceeds, this speech becomes internalised (inner speech) in the form of intra-personal thinking. Internalisation, or ‘appropriation’, refers to such transformative process.

Mediation plays a key role in this transformation. Vygotsky argues that the source of mediation can be a tool (a pen or a computer), a system of symbols (language) or another individual in social interaction. Symbolic mediation (through objects, systems or persons) transforms spontaneous impulses into ‘higher order functions’, i.e., voluntary attention, voluntary memory, and in AL learning, language learning strategies. Unfocused learning actions can become focused based on how the learning is mediated (Donato & MacCormick, 1994). In effect, in SCT, language is considered a crucial mediation tool, as “verbalization mediates the internalization of external activity” (Swain, 2000, p. 105).

Regulation is linked to mediation. It refers to development being regulated first by an external object (object-regulation), and person (other-regulation), before it can be regulated independently (self-regulation). In the AL classroom, the object-regulated speaker’s utterance is constrained, limited by grammar rules; the other-regulated speaker’s utterance is a response, dictated by others (usually the teacher). Only the self-regulated speaker is able to freely express ideas and feelings in the target language. Lantolf (2000) argues that to be an advanced AL speaker means to be able to control one’s psychological and social activity through the
Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) investigate the transition from other-regulation to self-regulation, focussing on the nature of the tutor’s intervention. They identify five levels of transition from inter-mental to intra-mental functioning, from the learner not being able to identify an error without the tutor’s intervention (level 1), to the learner noticing and self-correcting his/her errors (level 5).

The transition from other-regulation to self-regulation takes place within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), already introduced in the opening of this chapter. As Vygotsky states, the ZPD entails mental functions that “have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation”. He describes them as the ‘buds’ of development, rather than ‘fruits’ of development (1978, p. 86). Significantly, in SCT the construct of ZPD has been variously interpreted, from scaffolding, to collaborative dialogue and ‘co-authoring’ (Kinginger, 2002). An interpretation of the ZPD includes forms of dialogic interaction where learners draw on their potential, to “form something of a collective expert” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 283). Donato (1994) explores the concept of collective scaffolding. He focussed on three students of French (AL) at an American university, engaged in a one-hour planning session for an oral activity. His findings suggest that the learners were capable of providing guided support to their peers during collaborative L2 interactions, in line with expert scaffolding envisaged by Vygotskyan theories of development (p. 51). Donato’s concept of collaborative dialogic events aligns with Swain’s (2000) ‘collaborative dialogue’, i.e., “language use mediating language learning” (p. 97).

Private speech plays an important role in the transition from other-regulation to self-regulation. In a seminal study, Frawley and Lantolf (1985) demonstrate how, in order to move from object-regulation to self-regulation, the AL learners in their study externalised their efforts through private speech in the target language. Following this study, a substantial number of studies in SCT emerged (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Lantolf & Poehner, 2008). Appel and Lantolf’s (1994) findings support the notion of private speech as mediation. They worked with 27 students, some advanced speakers of English (AL), and some English native speakers. Their analysis reveals how, for both cohorts, speaking was employed as a mediating device. Their research demonstrates that for ‘making sense’ to happen, the learners speak to the self via private speech (p. 449). Ohta’s (2001) research on private speech investigates the responses of adult learners of Japanese. According to her longitudinal study, a quiet learner is not necessarily disengaged, but could be engaged through private speech.

All of these studies employ microgenesis, a data analysis approach which, according to Vygotsky (1978), allows the researcher to “grasp the process in flight” (1978, p. 68). Microgenetic growth in AL learning focuses on individual learners and the moment-to-moment development of their capability to perform a task in the target language (Platt & Brooks, 2002).
Gesture Studies

As Lantolf and Thorne note (2006), the Vygotskyan concept of symbolic mediation includes speaking, writing and gesture. The focus on gesturing as self-regulation has sparked a body of research known as ‘gesture studies’. This branch of sociocultural research focuses on embodiment and therefore has particular implications for the use of drama in AL teaching. The underlying assumption of gesture studies is that gesture and speech are two facets of the same process, part of a single integrated system. The origins of gesture studies can be traced back to the work of anthropologist Kendon (1972; 2004), and psycholinguist McNeill (1992; 2000). In offering a rationale of gesture studies, McCafferty and Stam (2008) state:

For our purposes we want to embrace the general principle that as human beings we live our lives through embodied experience within specific cultural historical contexts, and that this has an impact on how we communicate as well as how we think. (2008, p. 3, my emphasis)

The basic tenet of gesture studies is the close connection between language and gesture in relation to meaning-making. McNeill (1992), with Vygotsky (1986), posits that speech and gesture develop interdependently in speech. In essence, McNeill claims that inner speech is not only verbal, but also has a gestural aspect. Gesticulation (the spontaneous gestures that accompany speech) and emblems (culturally-specific gestures) are co-expressive with speech.

Within sociocultural research, this sparked several qualitative research studies on gesturing and self-regulation. For example, McCafferty (2002) analyses focus on the regulatory function of the gesturing of a Taiwanese learner and his American tutor, across 15 feedback sessions, and a Japanese speaker of English in informal conversation (2008). Negueruela and Lantolf (2008) focus on three speakers of L2 Spanish, three of L2 English and six monolingual speakers, reconstructing oral narratives. These studies and others (Platt & Brooks, 2008; Tabensky, 2008) suggest that the act of gesturing carries meaning and mediates understanding. Embodiment is thus seen as contributing to the internalisation process, and crucial to self-regulation in the target language.

Haught and McCafferty’s (2008) research focuses on gesturing as a regulatory function for AL development, within a dramatic context. Their study involved six adult learners of English (AL), who participated in one semester of drama activities, including improvisation, games, and the enactment of scripts. Their findings suggest that dramatic play gave rise to ZPDs, enabling learners to self-regulate by engaging in physical, cognitive and affective activity (p. 159). Their analysis of gesturing indicates that drama can afford engagement with play, providing AL learners the opportunity to embody language and culture.
Ecological Perspective

Nested within sociocultural theory, the ecological approach in language learning (Kramsch, 2008; Van Lier, 2004) embraces context, process and action. From an ecological perspective, language is seen as a meaning-making activity, related to social and symbolic worlds. It considers not only physical, but also imagined worlds (Van Lier, 2004, p. 44). This is relevant, as it establishes a synergy between the ecological approach and process drama.

Three important principles in the ecological approach are the concepts of identity, voice, and agency. Identity is a key notion, which Van Lier (2004) defines as a projection of the self in interaction with social groups: “We can only speak the second language when thoughts, identities and self are aligned” (p. 128). These concepts are intimately linked to voice: infusing one’s words with emotions, thoughts, identity and actions. Van Lier (2004) notes that when learning a language, students might be feeling ‘tongue-tied’, unable to speak the foreign language “from the depth of [their] self”. They may not be able to make their mouth utter sounds in the language, if the new cultural identity that has been “allotted to [them]” creates a ‘barrier’ between their thoughts and their selves (p. 2004, p. 128). ‘Voice’ is central to language learning, and it involves an aesthetic quality: “Language use requires an investment of voice, and there is an aesthetic element in language use from this perspective (2004, p. 134). However, Van Lier does not expand on what this aesthetic dimension might entail. An ‘investment of voice’ requires agency: learners being self-regulated, the agents of their own actions. These three concepts are inter-connected: “The core of identity is voice, and voice implies agency” (Van Lier, 2007, p. 47).

Kramsch (2008) also acknowledges an aesthetic dimension to ecological teaching, although she never defines what she means by the term ‘aesthetic’. Addressing ‘teachers of meaning’, in an ecological sense, Kramsch states:

Build on students’ memories, emotions, perceptions, fantasies linked to sounds, and intonations. Ask the students: What does this word evoke for YOU? What does it remind YOU of? Bring back the emotional and the aesthetic dimension of language. (2008, p. 405, original emphasis)

Kramsch’s main emphasis is on meaning as reflexive, unpredictable and mediated, as well as on the notion of symbolic competence – the ability “to play with various linguistic codes and with the various spatial and temporal resonances of these codes” (2008, p. 400). Overall, she urges all AL educators to adopt an ecological perspective, but she recognises that this discourse is highly abstract for AL teachers. In her own words, “ecological theory doesn’t offer a blueprint for what to do on Monday morning” (p. 405).
Teacher Artistry

I now turn to the sort of frameworks that, paraphrasing Kramsch (2008), do offer language teachers a blueprint for Monday morning, and have done so for the last two decades. As part of the ‘teacher artistry’ construct in Second Language Acquisition, I discuss the notions of fostering a communicative classroom, the practice of ‘teacher talk’, and managing classroom interaction. Within these practices, I also discuss some limitations, and the potential of process drama to overcome them.

Fostering a ‘Communicative’ Environment

One of the key tenets of the artistry of teaching languages refers to fostering a ‘communicative’ environment. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) became influential in the 1980s (Nunan, 1987) and, arguably, its impact is still detectable in many language institutions today. The communicative approach is based on the notion of ‘communicative competence’ (Hymes, 1972), which broadened the scope of language teaching from linguistic to communicative functions. CLT has become very influential in AL teaching; indeed, to argue that AL teachers aim to foster a ‘communicative’ classroom environment, based on a student-centred approach, is considered a truism (Donato & MacCormick, 1994). Ellis (1990) puts forward some propositions to define the “optimal communicative environment” (pp.126-127):

1. Learners need to feel the need to communicate in the L2;
2. Learners are involved and interested in what is being talked about. They need to be given opportunities to initiate, and control the topic of conversation;
3. Teachers and students need to make efforts to be understood;
4. Students need to be encouraged to produce utterances that tax their linguistic resources;
5. Students need to have an opportunity to participate in the kinds of discourse (planned or unplanned) that correspond to their communicative needs outside the classroom;
6. At the initial stages, teachers need to provide scaffolding for the production of structures that are too complex for learners to produce by themselves;
7. At later stages, learners need to have adequate access to planned discourse;
8. Learners need to feel free to choose when to speak.
These tenets have influenced AL teachers’ values of teaching and learning, and inform their ‘teaching culture’ (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986).

Recently the communicative approach has received some criticism. As Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) argue, by focussing solely on ‘natural’ interaction, communicative approaches overlook that communication should also be ‘purposeful’. They note that communicative teaching has tended to construct interaction as a ‘pointless activity’:

What is missing from such a view of interaction is an appreciation of the fact that interaction is purposeful. People do not talk in order to do language: they use language in order to talk. Therefore people need to have something to talk about and someone they wish to talk about these things with. By removing communicative purpose as a relevant consideration in classroom action, language teaching has tended to construct interaction as a sterile and pointless activity. (p. 38)

Indeed, this is a key gap that process drama can address in terms of creating a purpose to communicate, through manipulation of dramatic contexts, tension, role and situation. For these reasons, Kao and O’Neill describe process drama as “a powerful version of Communicative Language Teaching” (p. 77).

‘Teacher Talk’

An aspect of the artistry of AL teaching consists of balancing elements of ‘teacher talk’ with a spontaneous, natural conversation. ‘Teacher talk’ is a common practice employed by AL practitioners to facilitate comprehension. It was validated by Krashen’s (1985) notion of ‘finely tuned’ comprehensible input, as the ‘essential ingredient’ for SLA, and since then has become embedded in practice. It is characterised by a slower pace and clearly enunciated, less complex sentences (Allright & Bailey, 1991). Typical ‘teacher talk’ behaviour also includes over-emphasising paralanguage, paraphrasing and/or repeating sentences often, to give students a chance to re-elaborate (Richards & Lockhart, 1995, p. 183).

Since the acknowledgment of ‘foreigner talk’ in linguistics (Ferguson, 1975), a great range of studies has been conducted on teacher talk (Hall, 2000). Van Lier (1996) suggests that teachers become aware of their ‘teacherese’ speech patterns, and use them selectively, rather than as modus operandi. To this purpose, he unpacks some features of ‘teacher talk’, according to (linguistic) form, content and interaction (Figure 2.3). According to Van Lier, these features describe the kind of talk that tends to be enacted by AL teachers addressing learners who are non-native speakers. While these features are exaggerated at beginners’ levels, they are used
less when addressing advanced learners; yet to some degree they are always present in teachers’ speech.

![Teacher Talk Model](image)

All these practices inform the artistry of AL teaching. These practices are not natural; they are an acquired speech pattern, which the novice teacher needs to learn, until it becomes tacit in the communicative teacher persona.

As research suggests, ‘teacher talk’ may not always be helpful, as teachers may become stagnated in a variety of ‘teacher talk’ that does not sound ‘natural’ (Richards & Lockhart, 1995). In effect, ‘teacher talk’ may facilitate comprehension, but if it becomes too artificial, it will not reflect the richness of language used outside the classroom.

Process drama can address this gap in the AL classroom. Through the strategy of teacher-in-role, learners can be exposed to registers that break free of rigid moulds of ‘teacher talk’, gaining access to a more diverse range of sociolinguistic contexts (Kao & O’Neill, 1998). Indeed, becoming aware of my own ‘teacher talk’ was pivotal in my Honours research (Piazzoli, 2008). During the course of teaching I observed that, as I took on a role within the drama, I found it hard to shed my communicative teacher persona for the sake of a more authentic register. I found it challenging to become aware that my ‘communicative teacher persona’ was a role that I was playing, and that I needed to drop out of, or at least monitor this role when assuming another role in the drama.
Classroom Interaction

For the purpose of this review, I focus only on one of the three features of ‘teacher talk’ presented in the model above: interaction, and in particular, the IRF exchange. The classroom study by Bellack et. al. (1966) identifies a basic teacher-student pattern of interaction: Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF). Since then, the IRF has been acknowledged as the most basic interactional sequence of classroom communication (Johnson, 1995).

This is a feature that, in a pedagogical approach is consistent with sociocultural theory, particularly needs to be overcome. According to Van Lier (1996), the IRF sequence does not foster learners’ initiative, autonomy or motivation. It is a kind of interaction that does not take into account the natural flow of turn-taking. Instead, it enables the teacher to maintain control: the teacher usually knows the answer in advance, and opens and closes the IRF interaction. Van Lier (1996) reflects that teachers should break away from the IRF pattern, as it limits learners’ initiative in verbal contribution in terms of ‘turn-taking’ (when to speak) and ‘utterance design’ (how to construct a sentence). For Van Lier, the IRF “essentially strips the work of turn-taking and utterance design away from the student’s contribution” (1996, p. 152).

It follows that an aspect of teacher artistry relates to the ability to overcome the IRF pattern, and to foster classroom interaction that is natural and spontaneous. Kramsch (1985) offers a template to inform this aspect of teacher artistry. She analyses the micro-world of classroom interaction, as a continuum from ‘instructional’ to ‘natural’ discourse (Figure 2.4). On one end of the spectrum she places predictable behavioural patterns: fixed roles, teacher-oriented tasks, and a focus on content and accuracy. On the other end, there are roles negotiated among the speakers, group-oriented tasks, and a focus on process and fluency. Furthermore, she differentiates between position-centred communication, a teaching environment where information is delivered and received and person-centred communication, where meanings are negotiated.

![Figure 2.4. Kramsch’s (1985) Continuum of Classroom Interaction (p. 171).](image-url)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional discourse</th>
<th>Natural discourse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ROLES</strong></td>
<td><strong>Negotiated roles</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed statuses</td>
<td>Group-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-oriented</td>
<td>Person-centred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position-centred</td>
<td>Focus on process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TASKS</strong></td>
<td><strong>KNOWLEDGE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-oriented</td>
<td>Focus on content</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2.4.** Kramsch’s (1985) Continuum of Classroom Interaction (p. 171).
Kramsch (1985) advocates a kind of classroom discourse that favours the right-end of the continuum. To this end, she identifies three ‘rules’ to follow in order to encourage natural discourse: (a) using the language not only to deal with the subject matter, but also to regulate the interaction in the classroom; (b) reducing the number of display questions, favouring genuine requests for information; and (c) building the topic with the students (p. 178). Kramsch’s continuum was later used by Kao and O’Neill (1998) to make sense of the AL communication engendered by process drama (Figure 2.1).

Kao and O’Neill maintain that through a more flexible teacher-student relationship, in AL/process drama a ‘natural’ pattern of communication can be achieved, and the IRF pattern can be broken (p. 77). This finding is echoed in Kao’s finding (1995), which reveal that when using process drama in the AL classroom, students take almost 20 per cent more turns than the teacher. This is reinforced in Kao et al.’s (2011) study on the nature of teacher’s questions in process drama. Their findings suggest that in using drama, the teachers asked more referential questions, than display questions. They suggest that the status of the teacher, either in role or out of role, determined the use and distribution of question functions in the activities (p. 90). These findings seem to suggest that, by using process drama, AL classroom communication can break free of the IRF interaction exchange. However, these studies do not explicitly connect the breakdown of the IRF pattern with learner engagement, a gap I am addressing in this study.

Engagement

I now shift my attention to the construct of ‘engagement’, a primary focus of this research. For each section of this chapter, I contemplate ‘engagement’ within a different domain, that is, using a different set of Hecate’s eyes. Below I consider ‘engagement” in the domain of Second Language Acquisition.

Engagement as Perezhivanie

In a Vygotskyian perspective, the construct of ‘engagement’ is understood in terms of the interdependence of cognitive, emotional and social aspects. A key notion related to the ‘lived experience’ of such interdependence, is perezhivanie. This Russian term, which cannot be translated directly into English, was used by Vygotsky (1994) to express the relationship

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3 From Russian: an intensively lived experience through emotion and cognition in a social context. 
Plural form: perezhivanija
between affect/cognition in an individual, and the environment. It conveys that the same situation may be “interpreted, perceived, experienced or lived through by different [individuals] in different ways” (p. 354). Vygotsky used *perezhivanie* as a unit of analysis to comprehend *experience*, within the ZPD, across the cognitive, affective and social dimensions of learning.

In an additional language context, Mahn and John-Steiner (2002) describe *perezhivanie* as the affective processes through which “interactions in the ZPD are individually perceived, appropriated, and represented” by the language learner (p. 49, my emphasis). They argue that Vygotsky’s concept of *perezhivanie* plays a central role in understanding the appropriation of (AL) social interaction. They draw on their research on students of English (AL) compiling ‘dialogue journals’. In their opinion, an essential part of students’ *perezhivaniia* (see footnote) is provided by inter-personal relationships in the classroom, particularly for additional language learners, who face further cultural and linguistic challenges. Discussing methods to research *perezhivanie*, they recognise that, while the students in this study used journals, these may not be effective with all AL students. For this reason, they suggest interviewing students, or setting up teachers’ observations of students during an activity, as means to “provide glimpses of their *perezhivaniia*” (p. 58), as the interplay of cognitive, emotional and social factors.

Engagement in the Additional Language

Svalberg (2009) defines the construct of engagement in the additional language through three components: *cognitive, affective* and *social* dimensions. For Svalberg, the engaged AL learner presents a number of features: 1) *cognitively*, he/she is alert, pays focussed attention, and constructs her own knowledge and is eager to reflect; 2) *affectively*, the engaged learner has a positive, willing and autonomous disposition towards the language; and 3) *socially*, the engaged learner is interactive and initiates interaction. Svalberg formulates a definition of engagement:

In the context of [AL] language learning and use, ‘engagement with language’ (Engagement) is a cognitive, and/or affective, and/or social state and a process in which the learner is the agent and the language is the object and may be the vehicle (means of communication). (p. 244)

This definition implies willingness to take initiative and a degree of agency. In effect, Svalberg highlights the importance of ‘learner autonomy’, which she defines, with Van Lier (2007), as “the feeling of being the agent of one’s own actions” (2007, p. 48).

In terms of research methods for identifying, analysing and understanding language engagement, Svalberg (2009) recommends the microanalysis of audio/video recordings of L2/AL classroom interaction. In particular, she views ‘collaborative dialogue’ (Swain, 2000) as
one manifestation of engagement with language. As noted above, collaborative dialogue is knowledge-building dialogue, “language use mediating language learning” (2000, p. 97).

Another manifestation of engagement with language is ‘language play’, as a function of private speech (Lantolf, 1997). Language play is a phenomenon that serves an important function in AL learning. Lantolf describes language play as “the learner doing something with what he or she notices” (p. 19), through behaviours like repetition, expansion and substitution of language forms. For Lantolf, some examples of language play would be “talking out loud to yourself [in the target language]; repeating phrases to yourself silently; making up sentences or words; imitating sound, having random snatches of [target language] pop into your head” (1997, p. 11). Lantolf’s research with 156 learners of Spanish (AL) suggests that the highest frequency of language play arises “spontaneously, in real time” (p. 17). Thus, despite language play involving an element of repetition, language play is stimulated more by spontaneous conversation than language drills.

In methodological terms, capturing language play as private speech requires particular arrangements: it is necessary to microphone every participant, and to synchronise each audio track to each other, and to the footage of the class. As this was not possible in the current research, I do not follow the path of language engagement as private speech, but focus on social speech instead. As Sullivan’s (2000) research demonstrates, ‘playfulness with language’ can also occur in group settings, manifested in social speech. Sullivan (2000) advocates playfulness as mediation in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Her study indicates that the use of verbal play, like puns, word play and oral narratives, impacts positively on the engagement of the language learners.

Another conceptualization of engagement in the AL is ‘task engagement’ (Platt & Brooks, 2002). Here the focus is not on language itself, but on problem-solving in the additional language. Task engagement is defined as the moment in a social interaction that signals the beginning of the transformation from interpsychological to intrapsychological functioning, from lower to higher mental processes. To research task engagement in AL learning, Platt and Brooks (2002) videorecorded two learners of Spanish and two learners of Swahili while problem-solving in pairs. They argue that evidence of task engagement can be found both at the verbal level (increased fluency, more frequent use of the target language) and non-verbal level (straighter posture, stronger voice quality and less non-functional behaviour). Their findings suggest that when the students became engaged they carried out the task with “a renewed sense of accomplishment”, which enabled them to gain control of themselves, their partners and their tasks (2002, p. 393). In this thesis, I embrace the notions of engagement in the AL both with the language and with the task.
Engagement as ‘Perception-in-action’

Vygotsky and Luria (1994) describe the developmental process of learning in the child as a “newly born unity of perception, speech and action” (p. 109). Van Lier (2004) draws on Vygotsky, to argue that ecological language learning requires an ‘active perception’ or “perception-in-action” (p. 97). Van Lier acknowledges the importance of meaning: indeed, preconditions for meaning to emerge are action, perception and interpretation, in a continuous cycle of mutual reinforcement. Affordances, i.e., relations of possibility between language users, may be actively perceived, and acted upon by the learner. Meaning thus becomes “an active relationship, or engagement, with the environment in which we find ourselves” (p. 92).

To further explore ‘perception-in-action’, I draw on Van Lier’s earlier work, where he conceptualises the constructs of ‘perception’ and ‘action’ in depth. First, I explore Van Lier’s construct of perceptual processes involved in ‘conscious attention’. A key element uniting ‘action’ and ‘perception’ is attention, “getting information from the environment while doing something, in order to do something else” (2004, pp. 97-98). For Van Lier, degrees of attention fall on a continuum, spanning from the states of ‘unawareness’ to ‘vigilance’, as the intensity of engagement increases (Figure 2.5). In his later work, Van Lier refers to this continuum as “an increase in the intensity of engagement as a result of perception and action” (2004, p. 98). Overarching this process is ‘consciousness’, which Van Lier (1998) defines, from a sociocultural perspective, as a social phenomenon born out of social activity (p. 133). Van Lier construes ‘consciousness’ in terms of meaning-making, as “the totality of efforts (and the perceived successes and failures of those efforts) of the individual to make sense of the world and his or her place in it” (p. 133). He argues that ‘consciousness’ is related to language development in the dimensions of identity and voice, which he sees as crucial constructs in additional language learning (see ‘Ecological Theory’ above).

Figure 2.5. Van Lier’s (1996) Variety of Attentions Involved in Perceiving an Object (p. 49). [This is the first half of the diagram (‘state’); for the second half (‘action’) I use Van Lier’s (2008) more recent work on agency, Fig. 2.6]

At the higher end of the engagement continuum is vigilance, a state which, for Van Lier, is not always achieved in the AL classroom; it occurs on “rarer occasions” (p. 52). For the learner to
reach ‘vigilance’ a number of preconditions are necessary. First, the learner needs to be *receptive*. Drawing on Allwright and Bailey (1991), Van Lier defines ‘receptivity’ as “a state of mind, permanent or temporary, open to the experience of becoming a speaker of another language” (p. 157). He links receptivity to a spirit of exploration, curiosity and play. ‘Receptivity’ is considered an *active* state; its opposite would be ‘defensiveness’, feeling threatened by an experience and setting up defences against it (Allwright & Bailey, 1991, p. 157).

Next, the learner needs *quality exposure* to the language, i.e., ‘authentic’ language. Authenticity here relates to how learners respond to the environment, using language that is *indexed* to the specific context. Van Lier (1996) describes ‘authenticity’ as: a) the *process of engagement* in the learning situation; and b) a *characteristic* of the persons *engaged* in learning. Thus, ‘authenticity’ relates to who teachers and learners are, and what they do as they interact with one another for the purposes of learning (p.125). ‘Authenticity’ is not connected to the kind of linguistic resources used in the classroom. Rather, it relates to how learners *respond* to the texts. Authenticity is not a property of the material, but a *response* to it. Authenticity also relates to teacher and learners using language that is ‘genuine’, rather than artificial; language ‘indexed’ to a specific context. This implies breaking away from the IRF pattern (Figure 2.3).

When *exposure* and *receptivity* are present, the speaker can *attend* to the language, with various degree of attention (Figure 2.5). This may lead the learner to experience *vigilance*: an intense, all-absorbing state, when the speaker is alert and “ready to act on partly predictable, partly novel stimuli” (p. 52). In a *vigilant* state, the AL learner processes language through a *cognitive, emotional, physical* and *social* investment.

Second, Van Lier advocates ‘agency’ as key to the engagement and learning process. Van Lier (2008) frames agency as “something that learners *do*, rather than something learners *possess*; in other words, it is behaviour, rather than a property (p. 171). Drawing on Ahearn (2001), Van Lier provides a broad definition of ‘agency’ as “the socioculturally mediated capacity to act” (p. 112). More specifically, he identifies three qualities of ‘agency’:

1. Agency involves initiative or self-regulation by the learner (or group);
2. Agency is interdependent, that is, it mediates and is mediated by the sociocultural context;
3. Agency includes an awareness of the responsibility for one’s own actions vis-à-vis the environment, including affected others. (2008, p. 172)

Moreover, he proposes a continuum of *agency*, which maps learners’ initiative from ‘passive’ to ‘committed’. Specifically, Van Lier’s scale of agency encompasses six levels:

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4 Some AL practitioners refer to ‘authentic material’ as resources produced for native speakers, rather than for additional language learners. Van Lier (1996) rejects this notion.
Level (1) Learners are unresponsive or minimally responsive;
Level (2) Learners carry out instructions given by the teachers;
Level (3) Learners volunteer answers to teachers’ questions;
Level (4) Learners voluntarily ask questions;
Level (5) Learners volunteer to assist, or instruct other learners and create a collaborative agency event;
Level (6) Learners voluntarily enter into debate with one another, and create a collaborative agency event. (2008, pp. 169-170)

In Figure 2.6, I represent this ascending scale in diagrammatic form.

Figure 2.6. Van Lier’s (2008) Scale of Agency (my interpretation in graphic representation).

As Van Lier (2008) points out, from level five onward, agency involves not just an individual, but groups of learners, in what he terms “a collaborative agency event” (p. 170). In this thesis, I construe ‘perception-in-action’ through Van Lier’s notions of ‘perception’ as conscious attention (1996), and the construct of ‘agency’ (2008).

Finally, a note on methodology; in SCT research, the preferred method is microgenesis, where the data is obtained within a social interaction, considering both verbal and non-verbal cues. However, Van Lier (2008) calls for additional methods that consider not only the interaction, but also introspective data, like interviews and stimulated recall, to enable the researcher to access the meaning-making following the interaction. In this research, I endorse Van Lier’s recommendation, focusing both on the social interaction, and on the reflection it generates.
2.3. INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

Here, I expand the literature review to Intercultural Education, the second head of Hecate. This discussion is to be interpreted in light of the previous section, as it is situated within sociocultural theory. Again, the aim is not to offer an exhaustive overview of intercultural education, but to illuminate the intercultural frameworks relevant to this research.

*Figure 2.7. Hecate (detail) by Ariel (2008).*

**Inter - cultural**

**Culture and ‘intercultural’**

Defining the construct of ‘culture’ is an ambitious task, beyond the scope of this review. In this research, I align with Geertz (1973), understanding ‘culture’ as:

An historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men (sic) communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes toward life. (p. 89)

Geertz (1973) frames culture as the ‘context’ in which individuals live out their lives. Byram’s (2003) definition of culture is more economical: “the shared beliefs, values and behaviours of a social group” (p. 50). Bruner (1982/2006) places more emphasis on the meaning-making process: he defines ‘culture’ as a *forum* for negotiating and renegotiating meaning, with individuals as active *agents* in this ‘culture-making’ forum (p. 82). These definitions of ‘culture’ can serve as a platform from which to progress in the literature review.

Next, I offer a definition of the term ‘inter-cultural’, and some relevant compound adjectives associated with ‘culture’. Gupta (2003) provides an overview of similar terminology found in the literature, with slightly different interpretations. Thus, ‘multicultural’ can be employed as a descriptor of a group of people coming from different cultures. For example, within this research, two case studies involved ‘multicultural’ cohorts and one involved a monocultural
group. ‘Cross-cultural’ is used to indicate a specifically comparative methodology where two or more cultures are compared. In this sense, this research is not cross-cultural, as it does not attempt to compare different cultural patterns. ‘Intercultural’, on the other hand, refers to encounters where individuals are immersed in cultures other than their own, and become aware of this experience, through reflection. As Gupta (2003) puts it:

In describing intercultural in this way, the implications are that the individual is actively engaged with cultural material and systems, and that the consequences of the encounter are that, for all individuals concerned, something will have changed, some part of the process will have been internalized within the individuals concerned. (p. 159)

Thus, ‘intercultural’ does not mean just being in the presence of more than one cultural system; it requires that the individual actively engage with the context, making sense of the new cultural dimension, in relation to his/her own (inter-cultural). This definition is compatible with the sociocultural and the ecological perspectives (see section 2.2), where the notions of ‘context’ and ‘agency’ assume a central role. Furthermore, this definition evokes the presence of ‘engagement’ and a degree of ‘transformation’ in the individual. More recently, the term ‘transcultural’ (Kramsch, 2008) has emerged in the literature. Transcultural places an emphasis on the complex inter-relationship of language and culture, as a result of contemporary migration patterns, with cultures inter-mingling and influencing each other (Risager, 1998). For the purposes of consistency in terminology, I use the term ‘intercultural’, since its connotation to active engagement relates directly to the epistemology of this research.

The ‘language and culture’ nexus

Since the 1980s, a major shift in languages education has seen intercultural theorists and practitioners acknowledge the close connection between ‘language’ and ‘culture’. The acknowledgement of culture in languages education may be traced back to Halliday’s (1975) social interactionist model. Halliday posits language and culture are interwoven in a ‘symbolic system of meanings’, to facilitate social interaction. The linguist’s seminal work inspired a new understanding of culture as an integral component of language, embedded in the grammar choices we make as we are speaking. This led to the questioning of the traditional approach of teaching culture per se, favouring the idea of teaching language and culture as an integrated whole.

In this light, in the last two decades, Kramsch (1993; 1998; 2008; 2011) has attempted to redraw the boundaries between culture and language teaching. In 1993, she put forward a
critique of the language/culture dichotomy in the classroom. Kramsch (1993) frames ‘culture’ as a social construct, and advocates for a view of culture as a negotiation between the learners’ meanings and the meaning of the ‘other’. Gradually, this inter-relationship between language and culture has been recognised in AL practice.

However, Risager (2006) warns against viewing the language–culture nexus through the “simple identification” of language and culture, embodied in such mottoes as ‘language and culture are inseparable’. Risager identifies two levels of the ‘language–culture’ relationship: the ‘generic’ and the ‘differential’. The latter is concerned with “language and culture as phenomena shared by all humanity” (p. 3). On this level, she argues, language and culture are inseparable. The former is concerned with various languages, various cultural phenomena, and specific forms of linguistic practice. In this sense, language and culture can be separated.

Risager’s key contribution regarding intercultural pedagogy is therefore that additional language teaching belongs to the differential level, because teachers are focussing on specific languages, with their norms, values, symbols and meanings. Risager suggests that the confusion over the relationship between ‘language and culture’ stems from failing to distinguish between the ‘generic’ and the ‘differential’ level.

Intercultural Language Learning

Intercultural language learning can be defined as an orientation that enables learners to de-centre from their own linguistic and cultural perspectives, in order to consider the diverse perspectives of others (Crichton 2008; Lo Bianco, Liddicoat & Crozet, 1999; Scarino & Liddicoat, 2009). These scholars built on Byram (1997) and Kramsch (1993; 1998) towards a shared view of an intercultural pedagogy. Overall, the principles of intercultural language learning involve: the purposeful and active construction of knowledge, challenging pre-conceptions and reflecting on one’s own intercultural behaviour. Scarino (2008) condenses these features as intercultural meta-reflection, meta-cognition and intercultural meaning-making.

Intercultural language learning conceptualises teaching and learning as ‘social activities’ that cannot have a definitive explanation, but are open to multiple interpretations. Drawing on Goffman (1959), intercultural language learning theorists believe that the interaction between teachers and students (and among students themselves) is dependent on the perceptions that each individual brings to the constant mutual monitoring of social interaction. Teachers and students are thus positioned as ‘social actors’ who enact their roles in the classroom. The teacher thus performs for the students, and the students perform for the teachers; what becomes important is how these performances are interpreted. Crichton (2008) further
maintains that intercultural language learners need to engage in an ‘investigative stance’: a “constant sense of enquiry” in an effort to understand how learners perceive, and are perceived, in the process of making meaning (p. 33).

In 2006-2007, the Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning in Practice (ILTLP) project was implemented in Australia. This government-funded program involved 22 language teachers in planning and facilitating intercultural language learning strategies (www.iltlp.unisa.edu.au/). The project’s findings indicate that an orientation towards intercultural language learning is worthwhile, and should be retained as the conceptual base for the development of language education (2009, p. 14). One of the project's outcomes was an online database with exemplars, modules and assessment units to promote intercultural learning in Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese, French, German and Italian (AL). Some of the practical strategies5 suggested include discussion groups, questioning, writing, power point presentations, collage, as well as strategies like scenarios and role-plays.

Teacher Artistry

As part of the ‘teacher artistry’ construct in intercultural education, I discuss three notions: teachers encouraging learners to become ‘intercultural speakers’ (Byram, 1997), promoting intercultural competence in the classroom (Byram, 1997), and using drama as a means to foster intercultural education (Fleming, 1998, 2003).

The ‘Intercultural Speaker’

An aspect of teacher artistry in the language classroom relates to enabling learners to become ‘intercultural speakers’. The concept was originally coined by Byram and Zarate (1997) to describe the objective of language learning: what language learners should aim to become. Intercultural speakers are able to see how different cultures relate to each other, and act as mediators between people socialised into these cultures. This view of language learning was created in rejection of a ‘purist’ view, upheld until the 1980s, of foreign language students as striving towards becoming ‘native speakers’. That assumption had placed particular strains on learners, and gradually became substituted with the model of the intercultural speaker (Kramsch, 1998).

5 These comments refer to the Italian classroom exemplars, Year 6 (Cloudsdale, 2007) and Years 10/11 (Macchia & Zacchi, 2007).
As Byram (2003) argues, the ‘intercultural speaker’ is mediating between her/himself and others. This involves “being able to take an ‘external’ perspective on oneself as one interacts with others and analyse and, where desirable, adapt one’s behaviour and the underlying values and beliefs” (p. 60). The learner who to some degree can engage in this process can be referred to as an ‘intercultural speaker’.

A parallel can be seen between the notion of the ‘intercultural speaker’ and Van Lier’s (2008) view of language learning as agency. As Byram points out, being ‘intercultural’ is an activity; being an intercultural speaker involves an active involvement in understanding between one’s own language and culture, and another language and culture.

Furthermore, a feature of the intercultural speaker is the ability to ‘de-centre’ from one’s own cultural codes. Byram (1997) defined ‘de-centring’ as a “willingness to suspend disbelief in one’s meaning and behaviours” so that these can be contemplated from the viewpoint of others with whom one is interacting (p. 34). This definition of de-centering is associated with empathy. In effect, Byram and Morgan (1994) describe the affective dimension of ‘empathy’ as “the ability to decentre”, dependent on psychological development” (p. 138).

**Intercultural Competence**

The idea of ‘intercultural speaker’ is part of Byram’s (1997) model of ‘Intercultural Competence’, another key element informing teacher artistry in intercultural education. This model draws on Ryle’s (1949) distinction between ‘knowing that’ and ‘knowing how’. To emphasise these differences, Byram employs different nuances of the French verb ‘to know’ (savoir). The model features five types of ‘savoirs’, summarised in Figure 2.8, that he sees are necessary to develop intercultural competence: intercultural attitudes, intercultural knowledge, skills of comparison, skills of discovering and interaction, and critical cultural awareness. The ‘intercultural speaker’ is a speaker who attains some, or all, of the five savoirs. Each of the five components that constitute ‘intercultural competence’ is then broken down into a list of objectives, to facilitate planning and assessment (pp. 50-54). For the purposes of this review, I am particularly interested in ‘intercultural attitudes’ (savoir être) and skills of discovery (savoir apprendre/faire), discussed more in-depth under the ‘Engagement’ section below.
Figure 2.8. Byram’s (1997) SAVOIRS for Intercultural Competence (my interpretation in graphic representation).

| 1. Intercultural attitudes (savoir être) | • Curiosity and openness; readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures, and suspend beliefs about one’s own |
| 2. Intercultural knowledge (savoirs) | • Knowledge of how social groups and social identity function - one’s own, and others |
| 3. Skills of comparison, interpreting and relating (savoir comprendre) | • Ability to interpret an event from another culture, to explain it, and relate it to events from one’s own |
| 4. Skills of discovering and interaction (savoir apprendre/étre) | • Ability to acquire new knowledge of cultural practices and operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication |
| 5. Critical cultural awareness (savoir s’engager) | • Ability to develop critical awareness of one’s values, and those of other people |

‘Intercultural competence’, together with ‘linguistic’, ‘sociolinguistic’ and ‘discourse’ competence, constitute what Byram (1997) defines as ‘Intercultural Communicative Competence’ (ICC). This is a broader framework, conceived as guidance for AL pedagogy and assessment. Since its original appearance in Byram’s (1997) monograph, the ICC framework has been implemented widely and researched in a variety of contexts. Indeed, it informs the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001).

While Byram’s is not the only model of ICC, is it one best fitted to my approach, due to its inclusion of the emotional sphere alongside the cognitive. Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) provide a comprehensive review of several other Intercultural Competence frameworks. In analysing these frameworks, they draw the conclusion that the models neglect the emotional dimension, depicting them as “too conceptual, too rational, too conscious and too intentional” (2009, p. 35). Moreover, the very notion of ‘competence’ can be controversial (Fleming, 2006), especially within the intercultural realm, where attitudes and skills are not objective or transparent. For these reasons, I do not review any other model of Intercultural Competence. In this thesis, I embrace Byram’s framework (1997) but refer to it as the qualities of the ‘intercultural speaker’, keeping my focus on engagement, rather than competence.
Drama as a Form of Intercultural Education

A final aspect of teacher artistry that I explore in this review is the use of drama to promote intercultural awareness. Fleming (1998; 2003) advocates the use of drama for intercultural education. He argues that role-play exercises commonly used in the AL classroom are not always effective in developing intercultural awareness. In effect, Fleming suggests, often role plays are used in the language classroom to replicate real life situations. Such attempts do not exploit the full potential of drama, as they contain minimal dramatic tension (p. 89). On the other hand, Fleming holds, drama does have the potential to explore experience.

Fleming suggests that drama can be a form of intercultural education. A teacher may use the artistry of drama to approach a simple role-play situation (e.g., buying bread) by including layers of meaning, adding a sub-text, and enriching the context with underlying intercultural nuances. In this regard, Fleming provides several practical examples of intercultural drama workshops. One such example (1998) involved 30 British students and some visiting teachers. Students were asked to depict a situation, through tableaux, in which a foreign visitor had been made to feel uncomfortable. The process involved: a) viewing the tableaux and ‘reading’ them; b) repeating the tableaux, with participants verbalising thoughts; c) discussing the contrast between observers’ interpretations, and participants’ intentions; d) a role play. Here students interviewed a teacher in role as a traveller who, after visiting England, was now back home. The students, in role as fellow citizens, inquired about her impressions of England, uncovering a cultural misunderstanding. Finally, e) an improvisation, showing what might have actually happened. This process, he notes, helped them to distance themselves from their own culture, and from seeing themselves as ‘other’. Fleming (2003) reminds us that ‘suspension of disbelief’, at the core of intercultural education, is also “the sine qua non of drama” (p. 99).

Heathcote and Bolton (1998) firmly align with Fleming’s case. They make a strong claim for the value of educational drama in developing intercultural awareness, providing examples from an extended drama session, with groups of students, and the delegates at a conference, including Byram himself. They argue that, through drama, we are always decentring from our own culture; indeed, they add, “that is what drama is” (p. 160, original emphasis).

Numerous studies have explored the synergy between drama and intercultural education, in a variety of contexts (Byram & Fleming, 1998; Alred et al., 2003; Bräuer, 2002). Recently the Drama Improves Competence in Education (DICE) project (2012) conducted large-scale, longitudinal research to consider the effects of drama education on a number of competencies,

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6 The seminar was held in 1995, at University of Durham, School of Education.
including intercultural competence (p. 13). The project involved 5000 participants aged 13 to 16, and several dozen drama educators, in collaboration with psychologists and sociologists, over a two-year period. The multisite, cross-cultural research took place in 12 countries. Data was collected from students and teachers’ questionnaires, observation of the drama workshops, and surveys. The interventions varied, including theatre in education, drama-based activities and process drama. Findings indicate that the use of drama education enables participants to be more empathic towards others, and sympathetic towards cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue (pp. 6-7). This seems to suggest that drama can function as a valid means to inform teacher artistry in intercultural education.

**Engagement**

What might learners’ engagement look like in an intercultural learning context? Here I explore the notions of internalisation and gesturing, being ‘intercultural’, and engagement with Otherness.

**Engagement and Gesturing**

In a sociocultural perspective, intercultural engagement can be contemplated through the process of *internalisation*. As Vygotsky notes, inner speech is not verbal; rather, it is “thinking in pure meanings” (1986, p. 249). Drawing on Vygotsky, Bruner (1977) suggests that making meaning requires not only language, but also a grasp of the cultural context in which language is used. In the previous section (2.2), I introduced gesture studies (Stam & McCafferty, 2008), which examine the Vygotskyan notions of *internalisation*, and the regulatory function of gesturing in AL learners. This stance assumes an interconnection between *inner speech, gesture and culture* (McCafferty & Ahmed, 2000).

This is relevant to intercultural engagement, as the kinds of gestures produced by AL learners can function as a *sign* to indicate the nature of their inner speech, especially when the gestures produced are culturally specific:

The question then arises whether gestures that are particularly associated with cultural expression, that is, metaphoric gestures, change with exposure to a new language/culture. (McCafferty & Ahmed, 2000, p. 200)
McCafferty and Ahmed (2000) set up a study with the aim of investigating whether abstract, metaphoric gestures change with exposure to a new cultural system, and under what conditions. The study involved 36 participants from four contexts: 1) eight advanced Japanese speakers of English (AL) who learnt the language through naturalistic contexts (e.g. living in an English-speaking country); 2) 10 Japanese advanced speakers of English (AL) who learned English through an instructional context (at school); 3) 12 monolingual speakers of English; 4) eight monolingual speakers of Japanese. The participants were paired within each group, and asked to have a discussion, while being filmed. Each abstract gesture was recorded, and analysed in relationship to the verbal content. Findings suggest that some culturally specific abstract gestures were appropriated by the naturalistic learners, but not by the other learners (p. 217).

This study is relevant to my research since, to identify evidence of intercultural engagement, gesticulation can be an indicator of inner speech, and thus evidence of the intercultural meaning-making process.

**Being ‘Intercultural’**

Alred, Byram and Fleming (2003) explore the concept of ‘interculturality’, related to the active experience of operating in-between cultures. The authors note that there can never be a ‘complete’ intercultural experience; it is an ongoing process of experience and reflection. Being ‘intercultural’ implies a qualitative interpretation, a shift, a questioning of taken-for-granted preconceptions:

Being intercultural is … the capacity to reflect on the relationships among groups and the experience of those relationships. It is both awareness of experiencing otherness and the ability to analyse the experience and act upon the insights into self and other which the analysis brings. (2003 p. 4, my emphasis)

In Figure 2.9, I represent their argument in diagrammatic form.
Significantly, Alred et al. (2003) suggest that being intercultural leads to a “heightened awareness” of one’s identity and of the interaction between ‘own’ and ‘other’ (p. 4). This process, they argue, can trigger a psychological shift in a person’s centre, which might lead to a more integrated sense of ‘self’ and confidence in being ‘in-between’, socially and culturally. In essence, if ‘being intercultural’ is the capacity to reflect, they seem to equate this process of reflection with: a) an intercultural awareness; and b) reflection, i.e., the analysis of such awareness. They observe that the role of the educator may lie in triggering such intercultural awareness and analysis which, in turn, could lead into insight and a heightened awareness.

This construct is useful for my approach to analysing learners’ engagement in AL/process drama for a number of reasons. First, Alred et al. (2003) suggest that a consequence of this kind of intercultural experience is a challenge to one’s modes of perception, thought and feeling. Thus, their construct validates not only the cognitive, but also the sensory, and affective dimensions of the intercultural experience. This framework is well suited for drama, an approach that also involves both cognitive and sensory/affective domains. Second, the authors’ underlying assumption is that we are, by nature, social beings, and that it is in the interaction with others that we develop (2003, p. 3). This principle aligns with the Vygotskyan social perspectives and therefore it is compatible with the paradigm of my research.
Another way in which the concept of interculturality contributes to the analytical framework for my exploration of learners’ engagement is Byram’s (1997) ‘engagement with otherness’. The concept of ‘other’ originates from self-reflexive anthropology (Rosaldo, 1989). It symbolises ‘the elsewhere’, and functions as a vehicle that allows for an inverse image of home, place, self and power (Said, 1978). Within Cultural Studies, the notion of ‘other’ has been used to frame identity; Hall and Du Gay (1996), for example, have argued that individuals make sense of their identity through what they are not, through the identity of the ‘other’.

In the field of intercultural education, a vast range of research on ‘identity’ exists. For example, the research by Ryan (2003), within Alred et al. (2003)’s framework of ‘interculturality’, consists of an in-depth narrative inquiry into two learners, and the different ways they ‘engage with otherness’ while studying additional languages. Ryan writes:

> The search for understanding what we are, as well as what we are not, takes us through paths of experience involving languages being learned, cultural identities being formed, the range of attitudes we hold toward contact with other cultures, and our receptiveness to engaging with ‘otherness’. (p. 131, my emphasis)

Ryan (2003) thus introduces the idea of receptiveness to ‘engagement with otherness’. Such receptiveness, he maintains, is stimulated by curiosity and openness toward cultural differences. These are what Byram (1997) defines as the attitudes of the intercultural speaker, the first ‘savoir’ in his competence model (Figure 2.8). According to his IC model, such intercultural attitudes require a dual operation: a) readiness to suspend disbelief; and b) willingness to suspend belief. While the former involves suspending disbelief about the other’s cultural meanings, the latter involves suspending belief about one’s own cultural meanings.

Thus, for Byram, intercultural engagement with ‘otherness’ requires a double-edged suspension: suspending belief and disbelief. This dual function is worth pointing out as, often, emphasis is placed exclusively on the ‘willing suspension of disbelief’, following Coleridge’s (1817/1965) famous quote. Here, however, Byram notes a dual suspension: of belief and of disbelief. This nuance, characteristic of intercultural engagement with otherness, is particularly relevant to this research. It aligns well with drama, a medium through which participants can voice and embody not only their own, but other perspectives as well.

Nicholson (1999) discusses this relationship between ‘self-awareness’ and ‘other-awareness’, connecting intercultural engagement with drama. She calls for the triangulation between self-interpretation, dramatic form and other-understanding (1999, p. 88). Drawing on Geertz (1973), who holds that the arts symbolise deeply felt cultural values and beliefs,
Nicholson points out that through drama processes, participants are enabled to embody different ways of seeing the world. Thus, through drama, ‘other understanding’ can change ‘self-understanding’:

> If, as Geertz has argued, subjectivity is inscribed through cultural and aesthetic discourse, the process of engaging with other voices and experiences may challenge self-identity, values and beliefs. Other-understanding can change self-understanding. (1999, p. 87)

Nicholson argues that such an act of self-interpretation is part of the aesthetic experience (p. 86). She suggests that, in this view, the relationships between self and other, identity and difference, emotion and intellect, are interrelated. She notes that aesthetic engagement depends on “active participation and involvement in the drama, as an act of identification with, or questioning of, the values and emotions of others” (p. 86). This relationship is relevant to my research, as it suggests a synergy between the intercultural and the aesthetic domains.

Finally, Kramsch (2011) interconnects additional language teaching with the intercultural and the aesthetic domains. Kramsch reflects on Byram’s concept of intercultural competence as the ability to interpret relationships in terms of the ‘other’. She wonders how one can interpret one’s own, and the other’s culture, if at the same time one’s interpretation is culturally determined (p. 355). She advocates for the ‘symbolic dimension’ of intercultural education, an approach to language teaching that is discourse-based, and “aesthetically sensitive” (p. 366). While mentioning an ‘aesthetic’ dimension to intercultural language teaching, Kramsch does not expand on what the aesthetic might represent in this context, or how it might contribute to the symbolic dimension of intercultural education. In the next section, I attempt to address this gap by exploring the aesthetic domain, with relevance to the discussion so far.
2.4. AESTHETIC LEARNING

In this section, I consider my research within the Aesthetic Learning domain. In the third head of Hecate, I maintain the sociocultural stance, and expand it to include aesthetic education and process drama pedagogy. As above, I provide elements of the framework for analysing learner engagement and teacher artistry.

*Figure 2.10. Hecate (detail) by Ariel (2008).*

**Aesthetics**

Nicholson (1999) suggests that the idea of the aesthetic is an enigmatic, slippery concept. Broadly speaking, the aesthetic can be defined by virtue of its opposite, the ‘anaesthetic’: metaphorically, living *anaesthetically* would mean being devoid of “consciousness, sensations, emotions, thoughts, movements” (1999, p. 81). In this section, I attempt to define the aesthetic, with attention to aesthetic education and process drama.

**Defining ‘Aesthetics’**

Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy concerned with art, perception and sensory experience. It is a fascinating field, enriched by different complex interpretations (Marcuse, 1978; Nietzsche, 1872/1999; Wittgenstein, 1966). An inclusive review of aesthetic theories is beyond the aim of this thesis. Instead, I limit myself to introducing the etymology of the term, the foundations, and three philosophers who particularly inform the framework of this research.

After Baumgarten (1750), who first employed the term ‘aesthetics’, Kant was the first to systematically study aesthetics. In *Transcendental Aesthetics* (1781/1990), part of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant defines aesthetics in terms of ‘sensation’, honouring the Greek term *aistetika* (‘of the senses’). As he states: “the capacity for receiving representations (receptivity) through the mode in which we are affected by objects is called sensibility”, while “the effect of an object upon the faculty of representation, so far as we are affected by it, is sensation” (p. 43). Later, in *Critique of Judgement* (1790), Kant explains ‘aesthetic judgement’ as the free interplay...
between ‘imagination’ and ‘understanding’ in a person’s response to beauty. For Kant, aesthetic judgement necessitates a ‘disinterested’ stance, which allows one to appreciate a work of art for its own sake rather than for an underlying desire. Thus, to judge something as beautiful, is to judge it on the basis of perceptual form, without a connection to its content (1790/1928, p. 48). Although pioneering at the time, and essential to establishing important foundations, Kantian aesthetics cannot be reconciled with the epistemology of my research, as it separates affect and cognition in the aesthetic experience, and isolates form from content.

In contrast, Hegel’s aesthetics emphasises the content of a work of art, framing it in its historical context. “The forms of art”, he states, “are nothing but the different relations of meaning and shape” (1835/1975, p. 75). Hegel holds that the purpose of art is to unveil the ‘truth’ in the form of sensuous artistic configuration (p. 55). The kind of ‘truth’ Hegel is concerned with is spiritual truth. Hegel’s philosophy is relevant to this research as his emphasis on historical situatedness inspired sociocultural theory. However, Hegel’s view of aesthetics as ‘the science of sensation’ (1835) cannot fully align with this research. Rather, Schiller’s (1795) vision of aesthetics, which influenced Hegel’s early writing, is more suited. Schiller frames the aesthetic in terms of playfulness, or the ‘play instinct’ (Spieltrieb), which he sees as a drive essential for humanity. He holds that only through play, can a person be complete (letter XV). Schiller conceives of individuals as aesthetic beings: “there is no other way to make a reasonable being out of a sensuous man than by making him first aesthetic” (XXIII). He sees the prerequisite of the aesthetic being as an active determination, exercising freedom and choice.

This emphasis on aesthetics as playfulness and agency resonates with both sociocultural theory and process drama pedagogy.

In the 20th century, formalist aesthetics placed an emphasis on the perception of pure form, with content as a mere function of form. On the other end of the spectrum, Marxist aesthetics value content, and its political function in shaping ideology over form (Eagleton, 1976). Vygotsky (1971) inherited the Marxist tradition, developing his own theory of aesthetics. In Psychology of Art, Vygotsky rejects purist formalist views, endorsing a view of aesthetics that involves both cognition and affect. Perception of art requires “a creative act of overcoming the feeling”, resulting in a change of purpose (p. 248, original emphasis). He views the aesthetic as transformation, claiming that art is the ‘social’ within us (see below, ‘Engagement’).

Within the Marxist tradition, Marcuse (1978) holds that “aesthetic form is not opposed to content, with form becoming content, and vice versa” (p. 41). Like Vygotsky, Marcuse also defines the aesthetic as a transformation.

The aesthetic transformation is achieved through a reshaping of language, perception, and understanding so that they reveal the essence of reality in its appearance: the
repressed potentialities of man (sic) and nature. The work of art thus re-presents reality while accusing it. (1978, p. 8)

Marcuse maintains that content is extracted from the constant process of reality, and assumes a significance of its own through form (p. 8). In this thesis, my understanding of aesthetics is informed by Vygotsky (1971), Schiller (1795) and Marcuse (1978).

**Aesthetic Education**

Discussing aesthetic education, Greenwood (2011) differentiates between learning about the aesthetic, learning through aesthetic experience, and Aesthetic Learning (p. 47). Learning about the aesthetic refers to learning about specific aspects related to form; for example, portraying a character on stage. Learning through the aesthetic relates to learning as a result of an aesthetic encounter; for example, learning about cultural differences after having watched a play. Aesthetic learning refers to a kind of learning which is “visceral, emotional and intuitive” (2011, p. 49). While all kinds of learning are useful and valid, Greenwood advocates for the value of Aesthetic Learning in that:

> It gives us the experience, both embodied through our participation and empathetic through exploring another’s world. (p. 51)

Significantly, Greenwood (2012) notes that all three approaches can be valuable, but that Aesthetic Learning’ in particular can generate agency. In this research, the process drama intervention I have designed does not aim at learning about the aesthetic. Instead, I attempt to generate both learning through the aesthetic and, most ambitiously, Aesthetic Learning.

A seminal thinker on aesthetic education is Dewey (1934). In *Art as Experience*, Dewey’s vision of aesthetic experience encompasses both the term ‘artistic’ and ‘aesthetic’: the former refers to creation, the latter to perception. For Dewey, ‘perception’ is not a passive operation of bare recognition; it is an active process. Rather than relying on a stereotype, ‘active perception’ is an act of “reconstructive doing”, where consciousness becomes “fresh and alive” (p. 53). In the nature of an aesthetic experience, ‘doing’ (creating) and ‘undergoing’ (perceiving) operate simultaneously:

> Art in its form, unites the very same relation of doing and undergoing, outgoing and incoming energy, that makes an experience to be an experience … As we manipulate, we touch and feel, as we look, we see; as we listen, we hear. (pp. 48-49)
His theory of aesthetic experience involves affect and cognition. It entails an emotional response, an active receptivity or “receptive perception” (p. 48), and an interpretation on behalf of the percipient. In particular, it is precisely this transformation that changes the original emotion, and idea, altering its quality so that it becomes “clothed with meaning” (p. 60).

Eisner (1985) elaborates on the central role of imagination in aesthetic education. He focuses on the artistry of teaching, providing a rationale to justify his claim that ‘teaching is an art’, guided by the educational values, personal needs and beliefs held by the teacher. He identifies four criteria, or ‘senses’, as together comprising the artistry of teaching: its aesthetic dimension, its spontaneous dimension, its complex nature, and its process-based dimension.

Teaching is an art in the sense that teaching can be performed with such skill and grace that, for the student as well as the teacher, the experience can justifiably be characterised as aesthetic. (1985, pp. 175-176)

To explore the last point, Eisner draws on Polanyi and Prosch (1977), who define ‘art’ as a process in which skills are employed to discover ends through actions, as opposed to ‘craft’, the process through which skills are employed to arrive at pre-conceived ends (1985, p. 176).

Sawyer (2004) also makes an argument for aesthetic education, framing teaching as ‘improvisational performance’. He situates his argument within the sociocultural perspective, for which learning is a shared social activity. He advocates for improvisation in teaching, or “disciplined improvisation” (p. 16), as a way for teachers to improvise within pedagogical frameworks. As the flow of the classroom is unpredictable, the teacher can be best seen as a creative improviser, who, together with the students, engages in classroom discourse.

Abbs (1987) is also a key influence on aesthetic education. For Abbs, “art exists for the meaning’s sake, but that meaning cannot be grasped outside of the form in which it finds expression” (p. 53). Abbs (1989) defines the aesthetic as:

A kind of bodily knowledge, an apprehension of patterns through the power of sensibility, especially as it is formally expressed and developed through all the arts. (p. 172)

Abbs develops a theory of aesthetic education stemming from the idea that humans are born aesthetic beings, rather than rational beings. Taken from this perspective, aesthetic education aims at awakening a mode of perceptual intelligence, working not through concepts but through percepts, the structural elements of sensory experience. Abbs argues that this modality can be enhanced and developed through the symbolic forms of the arts. Framing his argument within arts teaching, Abbs identifies four stages of the aesthetic process: making, presenting, responding and evaluating (1987, pp. 57-61). He views this as a cyclical process, where all
phases gain meaning in their interrelatedness. Abbs advocates the importance of ‘aesthetic understanding’, described as a modality that relates to the senses, related to “all that works through and on feeling, sensation and sensibility” (1987, p. 54).

Fleming (1999) reflects on the meaning of ‘understanding’, ‘appreciating’ and ‘imagining’ in aesthetic education. He argues that these activities do not occur just internally, but also in external public contexts, placing an emphasis on the “social and cultural aspects of drama” (p. 94). He advocates for an integrated approach to promote aesthetic learning, where attention is given to both form and content, as well as to the internal and external dimensions of experience. More recently, Fleming (2012) further crystallises the notion of ‘understanding’, identifying a dual meaning of understanding: an analytic sense, and an experiential sense, arguing that both types of understanding are needed in aesthetic education.

**Drama Aesthetics**

I now narrow the field of aesthetics focusing solely on dramatic form. The aesthetics of drama were first conceptualised by Aristotle in *The Poetics* (330 B.C/1992). Aristotle conceives drama and poetry as ‘elevated fine arts’, able to capture the universal values of human beings. He defines drama in terms of ‘mimesis’, the art of imitation, and ‘catharsis’:

A tragedy is the mimesis of an action... in appropriate and pleasurable language... in a dramatic rather than narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear wherewith to accomplish a catharsis of these emotions. (p. 6)

Aristotle identifies six basic elements of drama: plot, theme, character, language, rhythm and spectacle, defined by Pavis as “the laws of dramatic composition” (1998, p. 15). Throughout history, this definition has been the cornerstone of dramatic structure and storytelling. The Aristotelian elements created a universal framework to be followed, or to be rejected, according to epoch and trends. For example, in the 20th century its rejection became a platform for Epic theatre, which Brecht called ‘non-Aristotelian drama’ (1964), as well as for Ibsen’s Theatre of Realism (McFarlane, 1961). Boal (1985) also criticised the *Poetics*, identifying catharsis as a framework that serves to further oppress marginalised groups.

Regardless of tradition, across centuries drama theorists have agreed upon the existence of identifiable dramatic elements used by playwrights, directors and actors to create theatre or, in the case of drama in education, to create learning through drama. As Wagner (1976) reports, Heathcote describes her practice as a “conscious employment of the elements of drama to educate” (p. 13). Heathcote refers to the dramatic elements as ‘the three spectra of theatre’.
darkness/light, silence/sound and stillness/movement. By manipulating the elements, one can create artfully what seems to be magic when it occurs on stage (1976, pp. 154-156). Bolton (1979) sees the aesthetics of drama as that which regulates the interplay between the actual and the fictional contexts:

Raw emotion belongs to the actual situation; harnessed, tempered or filtered emotion springs from a dialectic set up between the actual and the fictitious context. Form is made up of the elements that promote and control that interaction. (p. 111)

Thus, for Bolton the elements of drama control the inter-relation between these two contexts. He identifies the elements as tension, contrast, symbolisation, as well as a sense of time, and focus. He favours ‘tension’, rather than ‘conflict’, adding: “the tension is there because the conflict might be around the corner” (p. 76). Similarly, Morgan and Saxton (1987) identify the elements of drama as focus, tension, contrast and symbolisation, and identify two frames upon which drama operates: an expressive frame (outer manifestation), and a meaning frame (inner understanding). They note that the potential of drama is realised when the inner frame of meaning is harnessed to the outer frame of expression.

Haseman and O'Toole (1986) formulate a model for the dramatic elements, encompassing: situation, role and relationships, driven by tension, directed by focus, made explicit in place and time through language and movement, to create mood and symbol which all together create the experience of dramatic meaning (1986, viii). These elements are interdependent, but at the same time distinct and distinguishable. Importantly, O'Toole notes, in an interview with Davis, that these elements cannot be presented in a vacuum; their manifestation is dependent on the contextual factors (O’Toole, in Davis, 2008, p. 64). Thus, this model for the dramatic elements needs to be interpreted as a dynamic, rather than a linear structure (Haseman, in Davis, 2008).

While all the dramatic elements are equally important in a dramatic experience, for the purpose of this review, I concentrate on dramatic tension, given its central importance in Second Language Acquisition (Kao & O’Neill, 1998). Tension can be described as “a mental excitement fundamental to intellectual and emotional engagement” (Morgan & Saxton, 1987, p. 3). It is the energy that drives a drama forward, “the gap between the characters and the fulfilment of their purposes” (O’Toole, 1992, p.27). Styan (1960) differentiates between ‘narrative tension’, created by the unfolding of the narrative (both in dialogues and in the teacher narration) and ‘non-narrative tension’, created by elements like the contrast of light/darkness, silence/sound, movement/stillness. According to O’Toole (1992), dramatic tension can be broken down into sub-types, as summarised in Table 2.1.
Table 2.1.
*Types of Dramatic Tension (O’Toole, 1992).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of dramatic tension</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tension of <em>the task</em></td>
<td>Tension implied in fulfilling a task, given constraints imposed by the situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tension of <em>relationships</em></td>
<td>Tension arising by an <em>interpersonal</em> clash (opposites attitudes, motivation) and/or <em>intrapersonal</em> clash (values, beliefs, i.e. <em>tension of dilemma</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tension of <em>the mystery</em></td>
<td>A form of suspense, anticipatory expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tension of <em>surprise</em></td>
<td>Tension caused by new unexpected constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Metaxis</em></td>
<td>Tension caused by the gap between the real and the fiction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within these sub-types, ‘metaxis’ is of particular interest for this review. Etymologically, the term ‘metaxis’ derives from the writings of Homer, and its meaning, from Greek, is ‘betwixt and between’ (Bundy, 1999, p. 55). In current drama discourse, metaxis is used to describe the parallel involvement between the ‘fictive world’ and ‘the real world’. Two main interpretations of ‘metaxis’ appear in the literature. The first interpretation, stemming from Boal (1995), describes metaxis as belonging simultaneously to two different worlds. Bolton (1984) subscribes to this view, in defining metaxis as “the phenomena of the participant holding the two worlds in the mind simultaneously, *regardless* of the specific response (p. 162, my emphasis). Another interpretation, from O’Toole, views metaxis as a more complicated dynamic: metaxis arises as tension when the events in the real world are *questioned* by emotional response to a *paradox* in the fictional world. O’Toole thus defines metaxis as being created “by the dissonance of the fictional event within the real context” (1992, p. 169). Bundy (1999) follows this tradition:

> Metaxis is defined as the tension created when there is a disjunction between the way participants or spectators respond to the drama and the way they would normally respond to a similar ‘real life’ event – but only if they are moved/affected by the discrepancy itself. (p. 55)

Here Bundy and O’Toole are highlighting a *dissonance*, a discrepancy by a paradox between the responses in the real plane and in the dramatic planes. In this research, I confine my use of the term ‘metaxis’ to the latter interpretation. With Bolton, I acknowledge the ‘dual affect’ as an aesthetic element of dramatic form but, in using ‘metaxis’, I specifically indicate instances when this dual affect involves a *dissonance* created by a *paradox* between the two contexts.
Teacher Artistry

I now turn my attention to the notion of teacher artistry, with attention to the aesthetic learning domain, and process drama. I explore three key notions: the dynamics between teacher and co-participants, reflection-in-action, and aesthetic distance.

Quadripartite Thinking and Quadripartite Response

In process drama, a key feature of teacher artistry is the relationship between the teacher and the co-participants. In Abbs’ (1987) discourse on the aesthetic, having an audience is an essential requirement of the cycle of creation. “If there is no audience”, Abbs writes “there can be no aesthetic” (p. 58). This is what differentiates process drama aesthetics from other arts disciplines. Process drama does not have an external audience (O’Neill, 1995); on the contrary, all participants (including the teacher) function concurrently as actors and audience. Thus, the creator is simultaneously a responder, a presenter and an audience member. In addition, since process drama involves a group, rather than a single artist, Abbs’ four phases co-occur continually, creating a complex dynamic. This relationship lies at the heart of process drama aesthetics.

Bowell and Heap (2005) make sense of this dynamic as a multi-faceted creative spiral. They argue that negotiating the creative roles of facilitator and participants is at the heart of teacher artistry. On the one hand, the teacher-artist performs four different creative functions: as playwright, actor, director and teacher. These functions operate interchangeably, requiring a kind of Quadripartite Thinking (QT) illustrated in Figure 2.11. While facilitating a process drama, the teacher needs to wear these four hats at once “between two worlds and four functions” (2005, p. 64).
• **Playwright** function: thinking about how to help the participants craft the narrative, so the story unfolds in a way that carries within it the learning;

• **Director** function: steering the participants to the learning within the narrative through the best dramatic performance structure;

• **Actor** function: giving a performance (teacher in role) that engages the participants and supports and challenges them in the creation of their own roles;

• **Teacher** function: holding all this thinking simultaneously, with knowledge and understanding of the real context of the students, school, and culture.

**Figure 2.11.** Bowell and Heap’s (2005) Quadripartite Thinking (QR) (my interpretation in graphic representation).

Meanwhile, the *participants* also engage in a Quadripartite Response (QR) as shown by Figure 2.12.

• **Playwright:** learning how to contribute, to feel sufficiently empowered to initiate further developments of the narrative;

• **Director:** learning by acquiring knowledge of the art form and content to have the confidence to initiate and implement directorial decisions;

• **Actor:** learning how to respond and adjust behavior within fictional circumstances, adjusting behavior within that ‘other’ reality;

• **Learner:** making sense of the layering of experience as it moves toward the possibility of some kind of self-transformation in the real context.

**Figure 2.12.** Bowell and Heap’s (2005) Quadripartite Response (QR) (my interpretation in graphic representation).
For Bowell and Heap (2005), this ‘multifaceted spiral’ of creative discourse is initiated by the facilitator, and bounces back and forward between the facilitator and the participants (Figure 2.13). This real time, on-going exchange characterises the aesthetics of process drama.

![Figure 2.13. Spiral of Creative Exchange (Bowell & Heap, 2005) (my interpretation in graphic representation).](image)

Given these complex dynamics, a process drama teacher faces the challenge of managing the QT/QR partnership, with both spontaneity and intuition. This is particularly delicate, as it requires finding a balance between the teacher’s and the students’ intentions: “to lead the way”, as O’Neill says, “while walking backwards” (in Taylor & Warner, 2006, p. 26). To examine how this process occurs, I now turn to ‘reflection-in-action’.

**Reflection-in-Action**

Reflection-in-action is a vital component of teacher artistry in process drama. Schön (1983), who first conceptualised this notion, defines it as a kind of “thinking on your feet” which professionals use to evaluate a situation (p. 54). In O’Neill’s words, teachers have to “think on their feet, holding a number of possible choices for action before the inner eye” (in Taylor & Warner, 2006, p. 55). Taylor (1996) argues that the improvisational and spontaneous nature of process drama demands that teachers develop the skill to reflect-in-action. He conducted a reflective practitioner project with a Year 5 teacher new to process drama. In Taylor’s (1998) words, this teacher “opened up for public scrutiny” and “released himself into a learner role” (p. 215). Taylor identifies openness, receptivity, and honesty as the features of a practitioner who reflects-in-action.
O’Mara’s research (1999, 2006) investigates how an increased understanding of reflection-in-action might be useful to process drama teachers. She defines reflection-in-action as “the process of thinking about something while doing it” (1999, p. 4). Her theory captures the complexity of her reflection-in-action while teaching. She identifies four main factors: 1) self: recognising the role one’s personal needs play in the teaching; 2) empathy: being empathically attuned to read the class level engagement; 3) management: creating a specific atmosphere for dramatic action; and 4) artistry: focusing on artistry to produce aesthetic moments (pp. 278-286). Within the last point, she identifies two sub-categories: artistry of reflection-in-action and artistry of creating process drama. With respect to the artistry of reflection-in-action, she holds that process drama relies on reflection-in-action for its shape, continuity and progress. As for the artistry of creating process drama, O‘Mara (1999) maintains that reflection-in-action is vital for its structuring. To examine this, she draws on O’Neill’s (1995) four features of process drama: episodic structure, absence of a script, integral audience and extended time frame. In Table 2.2, I summarise O’Mara’s comparison.

Table 2.2.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Process drama features</strong></th>
<th><strong>Reflection-in-action</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(O’Neill, 1995)</td>
<td>(O’Mara, 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episodic structure of process drama</td>
<td>The teacher needs to reflect-in-action as a participant to create the episodes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of script</td>
<td>The teacher needs to reflect-in-action to forward the drama as director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integral audience</td>
<td>The teacher needs to reflect-in-action to monitor class relationships and participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended time frame</td>
<td>The teacher needs to reflect-in-action between sessions to prepare for future episodes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, O’Mara’s (1999) research reveals that in the art of process drama teaching, reflection-in-action occurs on different planes: within each episode; across several episodes; and across several sessions. In my research, I endorse O’Mara’s findings, and I attempt to analyse these kinds of reflection-in-action in my own practice.
Aesthetic Distance

The notion of ‘aesthetic distance’ is another crucial aspect of teacher artistry in process drama. ‘Distance’ can be defined as a poetic quality existing on a continuum, where an excess of distance results in an abstract, or over-distanced aesthetic experience, while shortage of distance results in an overly realistic or under-distanced experience (Eriksson, 2007). Drawing on Bullough (1957) and Ben Chaim (1984), Eriksson maintains that increasing distance involves “reflection on one’s previous emotion and critical examination of this emotion” while decreasing distance involves “projection of one’s own emotional life into the character-images” (p. 20). Eriksson frames this argument to process drama, a form that relies on the manipulation of distance: an ongoing switching between empathy and detachment, in order to promote multiple viewpoints and a reflective attitude.

Eriksson (2011) identifies three perspectives to frame the concept of ‘distance’ in drama education: distance as protection, distance as an aesthetic principle and distance as a poetic device. First, distance can function as a protection mechanism, filtering between the fictitious and the real, constructing a dramatic world where challenging emotions can be experienced in a safer environment. Second, Eriksson (2011) frames distance as an aesthetic principle, fundamental to becoming aware of the dramatic context and having the means to articulate the dynamics in drama schools and traditions. Third, distance and its purposeful manipulation can be intended as a poetic device. Distancing devices can be helpful to foster learning in the classroom, by constructing a dramatic frame within which learning can occur. In this research, I endorse Eriksson’s discourse on distance, and apply it to the context of process drama for language learning. In AL/process drama, there seems to be an even more pronounced degree of distancing, intrinsic to the form. This is because the participants are experiencing the drama in a foreign language, and have an ongoing, underpinning focus on new language and cultural processes.

Thus, the essence of AL process drama has a further layer of distancing within itself: learners experience the drama as ‘other’, causing them to constantly pause and reflect on it. Distancing is therefore an aesthetic principle inherent to the form, which at the same time affects its content. As Neelands (2004) notes, during a drama participants imagine themselves differently, taking on roles which take them ‘beyond’ themselves. They transform time, space, gesture, voice and movement to convey a sense of ‘other’ (p. 50). By doing that, the form and the distancing within it affects the content, while at the same time transforming it.
Engagement

In this section I consider engagement in terms of play theory, dual affect, and transformation within the aesthetic learning domain. Finally, I consider issues related to researching aesthetic engagement in drama education.

Play and Dual Affect

As mentioned in the introduction (1.1), process drama is grounded in developmental theories of play. In a Vygotskian perspective, engagement through play can generate ZPDs:

In play a child is always above his (sic) average age, above his daily behaviour; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself. As in the focus of a magnifying glass, play contains all developmental tendencies in a condensed form. (Vygotsky, 1976, p. 552)

Vygotsky (1976) maintains that while children play they operate within the ZPD, engaging in a learning–leading–development. As several scholars argue, although Vygotsky referred primarily to children, this theory can be applied to adults as well, and it resonates with the core philosophy of drama in education (Bolton, 1979; O'Toole, 1992). Importantly, central to Vygotsky's theory is meaning-making, as one's behaviour, during an imaginary situation, is guided not only by immediate perception, but also by the meaning of that situation (1978, p. 97).

Bruner's (1983) research builds on Vygotsky's theories to frame 'play' as "an attitude towards the use of mind" that can help the process of growth:

Play, for the child and for the adult alike, is a way of using mind, or better yet, an attitude toward the use of mind. It is a test frame, a hot house for trying out ways of combining thought and language and fantasy. (p. 69)

Bruner set up several experiments on children’s problem-solving through play. His findings suggest that through play, children were better problem-solvers, in terms of engaging in a situation with a more playful, frustration-free attitude. He identified a number of implications of engagement with play (Table 2.3). Drawing on Bruner, Neelands (2011) argues that through drama, participants can engage in play to learn a variety of skills, including language.
Table 2.3. 
*Bruner’s (1983) Implications of Play.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implications of play</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduction of frustration</td>
<td>A reduction in the seriousness of the consequences of errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium of exploration</td>
<td>Play is activity for <em>itself</em>, a superb medium of exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium for invention</td>
<td>Loose connection between means and ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No fixed expectations</td>
<td>Children are not excessively attached to results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules</td>
<td>Rarely random; play has rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>An important activity for developmental growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasure-giving</td>
<td>It has the quality of problem-solving, but in a joyous fashion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If, as Bruner (1983) suggests, play is “an attitude towards the use of mind” (p. 69), then ‘play’ is to be intended as a verb, not as a noun. In this context, ‘playfulness’ would be more appropriate as the respective noun. Neelands and Goode (1995) define ‘playfulness’ as “the basic human instinct to play with the relationships between symbols and their orthodox meanings in order to create or express new possibilities of meaning” (p. 85). Thus, a ‘playful attitude’ allows one to reassemble the elements of reality and to transform meanings, by creating new symbolic relationships.

Playing as engagement in dramatic form involves a *dual affect*. Vygotsky (1976) explains that, while playing, the emotional state of the ‘play context’ might be different from the ‘actual context’. In Vygotsky’s terms, while playing, the child “weeps as a patient, but revels as a player” (p. 549). Vygotsky holds that this is possible as an affect can only be overcome by a stronger affect. In other words, through play, the child operates in the ZPD, renouncing their immediate impulses, and coordinating their behaviour to the rules of the game. Drawing on Vygotsky, Bolton (1979) identifies this dual affect as intrinsic to the art form of drama. Emotions occur simultaneously in two contexts and may contradict each other; it is precisely the dialectic between them that defines drama (p. 106). For Bolton, this dual affective experience needs to be re-ordered, through a cognitive reflection operation. Thus, aesthetic engagement “raises the level of the meaning of the experience, so that every action takes on meaning beyond what is functional, to the universal” (p. 107). Though this process, the resulting experience may be one of “heightened self-awareness” (p. 111).

---

8 This distinction is more obvious in Italian, where play (verb) and play (noun) take different forms.
Bateson’s (1976) theory is also insightful to appreciate play as dual affect. Bateson observes that the behaviour of play is always characterised by a ‘paradoxical frame’: the actual behaviour and what it stands for. In his own words: “The playful nip denotes the bite, but it does not denote what would be denoted by the bite” (p. 121). Bateson also exposes the double paradox of play: not only does the playful nip not denote what a ‘real’ bite would, but, significantly, “the bite itself is fictional” (p. 123). Engagement in the paradoxical frame of play particularly applies to AL/process drama, where participants are engaged in a real and a fictitious context, fluctuating between two languages and two cultural systems.

**Engagement as Transformation**

Another significant aspect of aesthetic engagement involves the idea of transformation. In *Psychology of Art*, Vygotsky (1971) frames the aesthetic as not just a transmission of feelings, nor just mere perception, but a transformation of feeling and perception, in a social environment. This process requires an active engagement, as art “incites certain actions” (p. 252). Perception of art requires a ‘creative act’. This is similar to Dewey’s (1934) notion of ‘active perception’ as “an act of reconstructive doing”, where “consciousness becomes fresh and alive” (p.53). Vygotsky frames this transformative action as an active process of ‘overcoming’ one’s feeling:

This is why perception of art requires creativity: it is not enough to experience sincerely the feeling, or the feelings, of the author; it is not enough to understand the structure of the work of art; one must also creatively overcome one’s own feelings. (p. 248)

For Vygotsky, the difference between an ‘aesthetic emotion’ and ‘real emotion’ is that the aesthetic does not immediately express itself in action. He describes aesthetic engagement as ‘delayed reaction’, as there is always a period of time between perception and the transformative process of overcoming the feeling. Aesthetic engagement manifests in a change of purpose, which might be completely different to the action represented. In this way, aesthetic engagement manifests in the emergence of new meanings, “the reorganization of future behaviour” (p.253). Vygotsky defines art as the social within us, since “the action of art” is a “social action” (p.249). In his view, even if an action is performed by a single individual, its nature is social. In essence, art performs with and through the body in a social context.

Vygotsky sees aesthetic experience as the influence of form on content. As Lima (1995) comments, Vygotsky frames aesthetic transformation as the collision of the contradictory emotions generated by form and content. Vygotsky holds that such collision transforms the nature of the affect, resulting in a catharsis, that is, “the transformation of these feelings into
opposite ones and their subsequent resolution” (1971, p. 244). However, in this thesis, I do not adopt the idea of ‘catharsis’ because, as Nussbaum (1992) warns, this Aristotelian concept might have been misinterpreted from its original meaning (pp. 280-281). Instead, I frame the aesthetic theory above within Vygotsky’s theories on imagination, creativity, and dramatic form.

In *Imagination and Creativity in Childhood*, Vygotsky (2004) argues that imagination is “the basis of all human creative activity” (p. 9). A ‘creative act’, is any human act that gives rise to something new, with ‘creativity’ being driven by both *feeling* and *thought*. In explaining the operations involved in a ‘creative act’, Vygotsky describes the relationship between *imagination* and *reality*. What is created through imagination is based on elements taken from reality, which are “transformed” or re-worked” (p. 16). A key dimension of this complex relationship is the *emotional* aspect. For Vygotsky, the relationship between imagination and reality is bi-directional: on one side, emotions influence imagination; on the other, imagination has an effect on our emotions (p. 19). Thus, on the one hand: “Emotions possess a kind of capacity to select impressions, thoughts, and images that resonate with the mood that possesses us at a particular moment in time” (pp. 17-18). On the other hand, “every construct of the imagination has an effect on our feelings, and if this construct does not in itself correspond to reality, nonetheless the feelings it evokes are real” (p. 19).

In this way, Vygotsky makes sense of the relationship between ‘imagination’ and ‘reality’ as the twofold, mutual dependence between *imagination* and *experience*. Furthermore, he contextualises the relationship between imagination and reality, within the art form of *drama*. He describes ‘drama’ as “the form of creativity that most closely, actively, and directly corresponds to actual experiences” (p. 70).

The dramatic form expresses with greatest clarity the full cycle of imagination … Here the image that the imagination has created from real elements of reality is embodied and realized again in reality, albeit only the contingent reality of the stage; the drive for action, for embodiment, for realization that is present in the very process of imagination here finds complete fulfilment. (p. 70)

Here Vygotsky’s elaboration of dramatic form resonates with Courtney (1995), who relates the aesthetic mode in drama to feeling, embodiment and felt-experience. For Courtney, “it is in and through the embodiment that we achieve felt-meaning and gain knowledge. This kind of knowledge is homologous with feeling, doing and acting” (1995, p. 51).

Finally, Vygotsky’s theory of ‘imagination’ and ‘experience’ can be interpreted within the notion of ‘intensely lived experience’ of *perezhivanie*. As noted above (section 2.2), *perezhivanie* is a pivotal concept in Vygotskyan theory, the unit of analysis of *experience* within affect and cognition. Here I extend the meaning of *perezhivanie*, embracing a wider view to encompass
‘creativity’ and ‘imagination’. In using this term, Vygotsky draws on Stanislavsky (1980), who was the first to use the word perezhivanie in more than an everyday sense. As Carnicke (1998) observes, the richness of the term perezhivanie is lost in the English translation of Stanislavsky’s work. The Russian title ‘An Actor Prepares’ contained the term ‘perezhivanie’, translated as “the creative process of experiencing” (1998, p. 109). This version, however, was later dropped in the translation. Throughout the text, the term perezhivanie is translated in various ways, including: “the art of living a part”; “sensation”; “living and experiencing”; “the capacity to feel”; “emotional experience” and “creation” (p. 109). In Ferholt’s (2009) study on perezhivanie through playworlds, she defines it as “the dynamic relations of imagination and creativity, emotion and cognition” (p. 3, my emphasis). In this thesis, I embrace the notion of perezhivanie, honouring its various meanings. I construe it as the engagement with an experience that is uniquely perceived, felt, internalised, re-interpreted, and creatively represented by the individual.

Researching Aesthetic Engagement

I now turn to the issue of researching creative engagement, illustrating a number of studies that have focussed on researching aesthetic engagement in the drama classroom.

McDonald (1994) set out to research how the aesthetic is used in the drama classroom, rather than how it is understood theoretically. In her intervention, she designed drama units for teachers to follow, aiming for the units to actively engage students. Her research reveals that the extent to which an aesthetic response was demonstrated by students depended largely on the educational setting that had been constructed by the teacher’s expectations of drama. Therefore, McDonald concluded that whether or not students engaged aesthetically was “significantly influenced by the teacher’s choices” (p. 11). Her findings also indicate that the function of the aesthetic can be best considered as a dimension of the unit planning, as opposed to the focus of an individual drama lesson, and that its potential seems to lie in the development from lesson to lesson. McDonald (1994) finally notes that if teachers wish to promote the aesthetic, they need to develop a consistent aesthetic framework.

McLean (1996) takes up McDonald’s recommendation, developing a framework for drama aesthetics. Her Aesthetic Framework (AF) stems from a study that saw McLean collaborating with two drama teachers, seeking to find out how teachers can plan to facilitate students’ aesthetic engagement. In the AF McLean identified three essential conditions for the aesthetic to be present in the drama classroom: a) dialogue between students and teacher; b) teacher/students working as co-artists through experiential learning; and c) critical reflection (p.
She argues that reflection should not occur only at the end of a unit; it should be viewed as a recurring strategy integral to aesthetic learning (p. 57). Here she echoes Bolton (1979) who holds that experience in itself is neither productive nor unproductive; it is how one reflects on the experience that makes it significant, resulting in “heightened self-awareness” (p. 111).

Gallagher (2005), on the other hand, frames aesthetic engagement in relationship to the embodied, collective nature of the form:

One person’s aesthetic engagement is, more often than not, intimately tied to another’s in the collective enterprise that is improvised drama. (p. 85)

Analysing data from her ethnographic study on urban drama classrooms, Gallagher (2005) terms this dynamic ‘the sociology of aesthetics’. She argues that in drama, participants reach aesthetic engagement through embodying and reflecting not only their own, but also others’ sensuous perceptions of a shared world (p. 93). Drawing on Greene (2001), she frames aesthetic engagement as an active ‘reaching out’. Central to her argument is the notion of a collective ‘provoked imagination’, as well as the distance given by the dramatic frame.

More recently, Gallagher, Freeman and Wessells (2010) investigated the relationship between engagement, multiculturalism and theatre/drama pedagogy. The authors claim that although countless studies support the notion of drama/theatre pedagogy as ‘engaging’, “it is less clear, at the conceptual level, what ‘engagement’ means or looks like, and how best to meaningfully and accurately describe it” (p. 11, my emphasis). The Urban School Performances (UPS) was a multi-site ethnographic study, based in four schools in Canada, Taiwan, India, and the United States. It focuses on the relationship between culture, identity, multiculturalism, engagement and drama. A finding emerging from this research is the dialectic between teachers’ social and aesthetic agendas, creating is defined as ‘teacher melancholia’. In a Freudian perspective, the authors draw on Butler (1997) to differentiate between ‘mourning’ and ‘melancholia’. While mourning is the process of letting go of the lost object or person, melancholia is avoidance of this mourning process, “a taking of the lost object into the ego where it turns on itself and becomes hyper-judgemental” (p. 6). In ‘teacher melancholia’, what is lost is not an object or person, but an ideal. For some teacher-participants of the study, such lost ideals were social and aesthetic in nature, that is, they related to the process as a learning experience (social) and the performance itself (aesthetic). Gallagher et al. (2010) observe that teachers’ implicit goals often remain unexplored in the social and aesthetic dimensions.

In effect, researching engagement is a paradox in itself, as it is an internal condition, which cannot be ‘seen’. Warner’s (1997) research aimed to address this paradox by developing a method to capture aesthetic engagement in the drama classroom. Alongside journaling,
interviews and observation, Warner proposed a new method: the ‘Circle of Engagement’. This was a red paper circle, placed on the corner of students’ desks, which participants were encouraged to flip as soon as they started to engage in the drama. By flipping the circle from the red to the green side, students would signal to the researcher that they were “starting to think about the drama unfolding”, and therefore she would know that they were engaged (p. 24). Students were encouraged to make notes about what they were thinking within the drama as they turned the circle. As Warner admits, this method was problematic, as it interrupted the spontaneous flow of engagement. This study is relevant to my research as it problematises the issue of how to research (and not to research) engagement, in terms of methodological choices.

Finally, Bundy (2003) provides a useful framework to research aesthetic engagement. Drawing on Dewey, she suggests that aesthetic engagement can be framed in terms of ‘animation’ and ‘connection’, which together may give rise to ‘heightened awareness’. By ‘animation’, she refers to a feeling of alertness, as percipients respond to the drama. By ‘connection’ she refers to participants engaging with an idea, not contained in the drama, but evoked by a response to the drama. As for ‘heightened awareness’, she refers to participants becoming open to universal questions, which have not been previously considered (p. 180). Bundy identified these criteria as inter-related: when percipients experience a sense of invigoration (animation) they may connect to an idea at a metaphoric level (connection), and may become open to new understandings (heightened awareness). The experience of these qualities can generate aesthetic engagement. In a later study, Bundy (2005) examines how to phrase interview questions when researching aesthetic engagement, and identifies the importance of connecting to a specific moment. Figure 2.14 summarises Bundy’s argument.

Figure 2.14. Bundy’s (2003; 2005) Qualities of Aesthetic Engagement (my interpretation in graphic representation).
Bundy’s framework is relevant to my research as the focus on a *specific moment* informed my research design and data analysis. Bundy identifies four categories inherent to ‘connection’: 1) the identification of a *specific moment*; 2) explanation of it; 3) imaginative projection in the *specific moment*; and 4) judgement of it. The first and second criteria give insight into what, from the work itself, the participant is thinking about. The third criterion shows whether the specific moment has had some emotional and cognitive impact on the participant. The fourth criterion indicates if the participant has made “a leap beyond the work” (2005, p. 10), resulting their heightened awareness.

2.5. CONCLUSION

In this chapter I reviewed the literature relevant to this research, which focuses on my developing understanding of AL/process drama aesthetics. I used a metaphor for the research process as the labyrinth, and for the researcher as Theseus (O’Neill, 1996). I pictured my Minotaur as Hecate, the tri-cephalous goddess of crossroads (Figure 1.1), and organised the chapter according to each of her ‘heads’. These correspond to the three domains of Second Language Acquisition, Intercultural Education and Aesthetic Learning, connected to one body: AL/process drama. I acknowledged these domains as essential to achieve an integrated understanding of AL/process drama’s ‘pedagogical content knowledge’ (Shulman, 2004).

So what concepts and tools did this discussion provide for analysing ‘learner engagement’ and ‘teacher artistry’? Within the AL/process drama body of research, I identified a number of gaps in the literature. On one hand, the gaps related to ‘engagement’ involve the notion of agency, and the relationship between teacher control, and learners’ engagement. On the other hand, the gaps within teacher artistry related to the dynamic relationship between macro and micro reflection-in-action, and the nature of the ‘integrated understanding’ necessary to create aesthetic experiences in AL/process drama.

As for the three ‘heads’, although pertaining to different fields, the frameworks above share some common features. On the whole, all frameworks were explored taking a Vygotskyan perspective of sociocultural theory of mind, focussing on dialogic learning. Moreover, all frameworks of ‘teacher artistry’ focussed on teaching in such a way as to encourage active meaning-making (Dewey, 1934; Kramsch, 2011; O’Toole, 1992; Scarino, 2008; Van Lier, 2004). Finally, all theories of ‘engagement’ that I examined describe a transformative process of active perception and interpretation, resulting in a shift of awareness (Alred et al., 2003; Bolton, 1979; Van Lier, 2004; Vygotsky, 1971). This suggests that, despite the different gaze of each ‘set of eyes’, the three ‘heads’ do share some common perspectives.
3. METHODOLOGY: ARIADNE’S THREAD

In this chapter I consider the methodological choices that, like Ariadne’s thread guided Theseus, guided me through the labyrinth of research. First, I delineate the research paradigm, considering qualitative research, reflective practitioner and multiple cases studies. Second, I discuss the data collection process, in terms of participants, fieldwork and research tools. Finally, I illustrate the data analysis process.

3.1. RESEARCH PARADIGM

In this research, my interpretation was guided by a qualitative paradigm. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe qualitative research as a situated activity that involves a set of interpretive practices:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recording and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. (p.3)

Discussing qualitative research for education, Bogdan and Biklen (2006) identify some central features: the researcher being the key instrument; research being descriptive, with data being reported as words or pictures, rather than numbers; being concerned with process, rather than product; analysing data inductively; an emphasis on the meaning that participants assign to events and situations.

In this research, I actively introduced a practice different from the norm of the specific context, i.e., I introduced an intervention using process drama. Thus, within the qualitative paradigm, this research can be described as interventionist, that is, a research that examines a phenomenon while actively intervening to change it (O’Toole, 2006, p. 28). In effect, I intervene to change my designated context, using a qualitative lens to interpret the participants’ responses, as well as my own, within the drama intervention. The two research questions were framed by a reflective practitioner stance and informed by multiple case studies. Below I explore these methodologies.
Reflective Practitioner

Reflective practitioner research has been defined as a meta-cognitive approach to one’s practice (Schön, 1983). Reflective practice is a learned, conscious process, which examines one’s own beliefs, attitudes and behaviour in a professional context. As Neelands (2006) notes, the reflective practitioner “continuously and persistently scrutinises practice on a daily basis across a professional life-time” (p.17). As such, reflective practice research involves what Gardner, Kornhaber and Wake (1996) defined as ‘intra-personal intelligence’: the ability to distinguish and identify personal thoughts and feelings, using them to understand one’s behaviour. Thus, reflective practice involves reflecting, and learning, from one’s practice. In Barth’s (2004) words, “the reflective practitioner is, above all, a learning practitioner” (p. 158).

In his seminal work *The Reflective Practitioner* (1983), Schön identifies ‘problem setting’ as the first step towards doing reflective practice:

By placing a great emphasis on problem solving, we ignore problem setting, the process by which we define the decision to be made, the ends to be achieved, the means which may be chosen. In real-world practice, problems do not present themselves to the practitioner as given. They must be constructed from the materials of problematic situations which are puzzling, troubling and uncertain. (p. 40, original emphasis)

A significant aspect of Schön’s discussion on reflective practice is the interaction, or ‘contract’ between the professional and the client. He identifies two main prototypes of professionals: the ‘expert’ and the ‘reflective practitioner’, with different belief systems.

Table 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expert’s belief system</th>
<th>Reflective practitioner’s belief system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am presumed to know and must claim to do so, regardless of my own uncertainty</td>
<td>I am presumed to know, but I am not the only one to have relevant knowledge. My uncertainties are a source of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I keep my distance from the client and hold onto the expert’s role</td>
<td>I seek out connections to the client’s thoughts and feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give the client a sense of expertise, but convey a feeling of sympathy as a ‘sweetener’</td>
<td>I allow the client’s respect for my knowledge to emerge from their discovery of it in the situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I look for admiration and status in the client’s response to my professional persona</td>
<td>I look for the sense of freedom and of real connection to the client, no longer needing to maintain a professional façade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the reflective contract, Schön (1983) describes the attitude of the ‘expert’ as setting up a relationship of “mystery and mastery”, through which the professional seeks to control the client (p. 305). The reflective model, on the other hand, requires the capacity to relate to co-researchers in a participatory way. In this research, the role of the observing teachers and participating students was fundamental to inform my understanding. For this reason, I openly discussed the ‘reflective contract’ with the teachers. In effect, I started the introductory teacher meetings with the notion of reflective practice methodology. As for the students, I did not explicitly discuss the methodology (because of the language barrier); instead, I attempted to demonstrate it to them through my behaviour during the research.

Schön (1987) argues that the competence required by a reflective professional is characterised by two features: reflection-in-action, and reflection-on-action. This difference is temporal: in the former, one needs to react immediately – cognitively and pragmatically; the latter allows time to consider one’s actions and their effects, in order to apply those insights in a similar situation. Specifically, Schön (1983) believes that the essential competence of any professional is reflection-in-action. As I discuss in the literature review, reflection-in-action is the artistry of practice that enables practitioners to “cope with the troublesome divergent situations of practice” (p. 62). Schön refers to it as the means by which a practitioner is able to deal with situations where the practitioner is confronted with uncertainties, uniqueness and/or value conflicts. These situations, the norm rather than the exceptions, cannot be dealt with by mechanical routine. On the contrary, they require of the researcher creative acts that are performed, monitored, and adjusted on the spot (Orton, 1994). This approach is particularly relevant to this research, as reflection-in-action is a crucial feature of process drama artistry (See Chapter Two, 2.4). The spontaneity intrinsic to the form pushes the practitioner to constantly operate through reflection-in-action, in what Kershaw and Nicholson (2011) call the “mysteries of reflexive unpredictability in drama” (p. 10, original emphasis).

Discussing reflective practice, Neelands (2006) refers to “reflexivity-in-practice”, that is, the practitioner’s active commitment to articulate, and make visible, the choices they have undertaken during teaching processes (p.19). This notion entails providing a degree of transparency of the processes of selection, reflection and modification of one’s praxis, by engaging in dialogue with other teachers or students involved in these experiences. ‘Praxis’ here refers to Freire’s (1985) concept of integrating theory and practice. In this research, I have aimed to achieve some transparency in my praxis by opening up and analysing my choices that guided the pre-text search, the pre-text creation, the design of learning sequences, and my attitudes during the drama. I consider these by analysing my reflective journal, my behaviour during the improvisation, and my responses in dialogues with the co-participants (see Chapter Six).
Some limitations of the reflective practitioner methodology need to be considered in relation to this project. Below I address two: subjectivity and consistency. First, reflective practice is highly subjective: the core of the data is informed by the researchers’ iterative reflections through the research process. In this research I have sought to address subjectivity not just as a limitation, but as an inherent, critically self-aware aspect of the research process. On this basis, I have used multiple perspectives as information sources. While I was conducting the intervention, the teacher-participants were observing me in practice and taking notes, which I have used to inform my analysis. My analysis was also informed by my interviews with students, and questionnaires they completed about their experience in the drama. In this way, I attempted to balance the subjectivity of my own perception with the participants’ voices.

Second, reflective practice research evokes the issue of consistency. Indeed, in educational research, reflection-in-action has been criticised on the ground that the hectic pace of teaching makes it often not feasible to stop and write down one’s reflections (Van Manen, 1991). Yet tacit decision-making processes under way during teaching may be hard to evoke after the class has finished. Given that this study’s methodology is based on the researcher analysing her reflection-in-action, it becomes essential that this reflection is recorded as accurately as possible. I employed various strategies, both written and oral, to record my reflection-in-action. During class, between tasks I jotted down my thoughts in a logbook. Also, when appropriate, in-between dramatic tasks I discussed my decision-making processes with the teachers. Similarly, in the post-observation interviews with participant teachers, I shared with them honestly my internal dilemmas about specific instances. This was not pre-planned, but emerged spontaneously from my need to debrief from the work. In this way, some of my reflection (conversations with teachers) was captured on video. Barth (2004) acknowledges the potential of conversation as a trigger for reflection. In effect, conversing with the teachers was useful for exposing some of my inner decision-making which otherwise would have remained tacit. It emerged from my reflective practitioner’s stance, and participatory attitude towards the participants.

To analyse my reflective practice, I use Underhill’s (1992) teacher development model. This model maps four stages of awareness and competence in a teacher’s development:

Stage 1. Unconscious incompetence. I am not aware of what I am not doing well
Stage 2. Conscious incompetence. I become aware of what I am not doing well
Stage 3. Conscious competence. I am aware of doing it more competently
Stage 4. Unconscious competence. My new competence becomes second nature.

(p.76, my emphasis)
For Underhill, these stages are cyclical. In Figure 3.1 I represent the four stages in a spiralling growth diagram, with each quadrant representing a stage from 1 (unconscious incompetence) to 4 (unconscious competence).

According to Underhill, the aim of this model is to provide a criterion against which to evaluate selected aspects of teacher development initiatives, *in progress* (p. 71, my emphasis). Underhill proposes this model to question and examine implicit and explicit beliefs, manifested in behaviour. The underlying assumption is to enable teachers to draw their perception of their potential, to facilitate a kind of learning that is more engaging for the teacher and the learners.

**Multiple Case Studies**

As Babbie (2004) points out, the term ‘case study’ is used broadly in the practice of social research to describe research that focuses on a social phenomenon. Babbie argues that although there is little consensus on what constitutes a case study, an essential characteristic is that it frames one’s attention to a particular context. Yin (2003) defines a case study as an inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within real-life contexts. He suggests
that researchers might choose case study research when they deliberately want to uncover contextual conditions, believing that these might be highly pertinent to the phenomenon of study. Flyvbjerg (2011) also defines a case study in terms of context, suggesting that a case typically evolves in time as a string of interrelated events occurring in a specific place and time. As Stake (2000) argues, case study is not a methodological choice, but a choice of what is to be studied. “By whatever methods” he states, “we choose to study the case” (p. 435). The case researcher, Stake continues, digs into meaning, working to relate meaning to context and experience. As such, case study is highly compatible with the sociocultural paradigm, and with process drama pedagogy.

Stake (2005) identifies two types of case studies: intrinsic cases, undertaken when the researcher wants better understanding on a particular case, and instrumental cases, when a case is examined to provide insight into an issue. Stake classifies ‘multiple case studies’ as instrumental studies, extended to several cases in order to investigate a phenomenon (p. 444). Significantly, he notes that even if a researcher may simultaneously carry on more than one case study, each case study is a concentrated inquiry into a single case. This is important, as in my research I am not attempting to compare the learners in the case studies, for each case constitutes a unique environment. What I am attempting to understand is my evolution as a reflective practitioner over the case studies, and the effects it may have had on the learners.

In this research, the case studies are of a participatory nature. Reilly (2010) defines ‘participatory case study’ as a mode of case study where participants become “contributing researchers” (p.658). The participatory stance refers to a strong advocacy on the collaboration between researcher and participants, or ‘co-researchers’ (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). Whereas in participatory case studies the participants are involved in all the phases of the research, from conceptualisation to dissemination, in my study the co-researchers were involved in only two phases: data collection and, to a minor extent, analysis (teacher-participants were asked to interpret students’ engagement). Thus, rather than a ‘participatory case study’, this research is best described as ‘multiple case studies’ informed by a participatory stance.

As Yin (2003) points out, in case study research, each case is unique, and needs to be treated as a microcosm. Case Study One (CS1) was carried out in a public university, in the department of Languages and Intercultural Mediation. Case Study Two (CS2) was carried out in an adult school of Italian (AL) that was part of an educational network for the promotion of Italian culture and language. Case Study Three (CS3) was carried out in a private adult school that was part of a worldwide organisation specialising in teaching additional languages. While in the first and second case the students attended the drama during the day, as part of their courses, in the third case study the drama intervention was offered as an extra-curricular
course. To honour the rich and intensive connotation of case study research (Flyvbjerg, 2011), I have dedicated a separate chapter (Chapter Four) to illustrate each case, including the context, the participants and the process drama intervention.

3.2. DATA COLLECTION

Participants

This research involved 60 participants: 46 student-participants (SP), and 14 teacher-participants (TP), across the three case studies. The teacher-participants consisted of three groups of teachers of Italian as an additional language (AL). All the teachers were Italian native speakers, and varied in their experience of AL teaching. None of the teachers had heard of process drama; however, they all shared an interest in drama for language teaching, and had all actively chosen to participate in the research. In CS1, the teacher-participants were three student-teachers completing a Masters degree on AL teaching; all three observed all the sessions. In CS2, TPs were three experienced educators and a trainee; they did not just observe, but actually participated in some of the workshops. In CS3, TPs were all experienced AL teachers. All observed the sessions; two continuously and five on rotation, with no more than four teachers observing the same workshop.

The student-participants consisted of three groups of adult students of Italian language (AL). Most SP attended all five drama workshops consecutively. They came from diverse backgrounds: Brazil, China, Iran, Japan, Russia, Swiss-Germany, Taiwan, and the United States. Their proficiency in Italian ranged across the B1 and B2 levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, which describes speakers as intermediate, “Independent Users”. However, differences existed within their proficiency levels within each cohort. Table 3.3 summarises the distribution of participants across the case study. An in-depth description of the participants is provided in Chapter Four.

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9 www.coe.int/t/DG4/Portfolio/?M=/main_pages/levels.html
### Fieldwork

As O’Toole (2006) puts it, interventionist research involves a kind of fieldwork where the researcher “steps into a context, imposes a change from the norm, and collects data on what happens” (p.94). In this research, the context I stepped into was an additional language learning environment; the change I suggested was using process drama to help students learn Italian; the data I collected concerned the student-participants’ experiences, the teacher-participants’ observations, and my own reflections. The fieldwork was carried out in Milan (Italy) from June to August 2010. For each case study, the fieldwork involved some pre-intervention, intervention and post-intervention steps.

1. Before the drama intervention

I held an initial staff meeting to introduce myself to the teacher-participants. I explained the research project and the objectives. During this session, I shared my understanding of the concepts of reflective practice, co-researchers and learning through drama. I handed out and discussed the informed consent documentation\(^\text{10}\) (Appendix A.1). I also asked the participants for information about the context of the case, including typology of learners, curriculum, and educational resources used in the school.

I used some information that I gathered from the initial introduction meeting in designing five process drama workshops (three hours each), targeted at intermediate learners of Italian. This involved sourcing a pre-text, designing a learning sequence (Appendices X, Y, Z), and creating various artefacts related to it. I took into consideration the specific context of the case study and documented the design process in my reflective journal.

\(^{10}\) Before collecting the data, I was granted ethical clearance (protocol number: EBL/64/09/HREC) by the Human Research Ethics Committee, in line with the Griffith University policy on research ethics.
2. During the drama intervention

I facilitated the five process drama workshops, offered either twice a week (CS1), or for five consecutive days (CS2, CS3). Workshops were observed by no more than four teacher-participants at a time. I documented my reflections of the workshops through my journal and logbook. All workshops were video recorded.

In the first workshop I presented my research plan to the student-participants, including documentation to obtain their informed consent (Appendix A.2). I used storytelling and some drama strategies to familiarise myself with the group (proficiency levels; cultural backgrounds).

In the other workshops, I facilitated a four-day process drama.

Before each workshop, I conducted a semi-structured, 30-minute interview (Appendix B.1) with a teacher-participant to discuss their teaching experience, approaches and expectations of drama. I also handed out and clarified the observation template (Appendix D.1). All interviews were audio-recorded.

After each workshop, I conducted a semi-structured, 30-minute interview (Appendix B.2) with the same observing teacher. I encouraged sharing the written notes and asked questions relative to instances of engagement, related to specific moments, and specific participants. I also sought their impressions of process drama as a dramatic form.

After each workshop, I asked the student-participants to complete a questionnaire (Appendix G) using numeric scales from 0 to 10 to evaluate the three categories of ‘communicative’, ‘intercultural’ and ‘affective’ engagement. SP were asked to select a specific moment in the drama when self-evaluating their engagement.

Between the fourth and fifth workshop, or shortly after completing the intervention, I conducted a semi-structured, 20-minute interview with each SP (Appendix C). This was carried out in their stronger language (English or Italian) to discuss how they perceived their experience of learning Italian through process drama, including their experience of process drama as an art form. In the interviews, participants were encouraged to comment, and/or follow up, on the choices behind their rating. All interviews were audio-recorded.

3. After the drama intervention

Upon completion of the five workshops, I conducted a semi-structured, one-hour focus group with all the teacher-participants (Appendix E). During the focus group I showed extracts from some specific moments of the workshops, using Video-Stimulated Recall (VSR) to encourage the TPs’ free association in relation to engagement and language learning.
I also conducted a semi-structured, 30-minute focus group in Italian with all the SPs (Appendix F). To overcome the language barriers, I used a kinaesthetic approach, showing props from the drama to stimulate the conversation. I also used Video-Stimulated Recall (VSR) to prompt discussion.

**Research tools**

In this research I attended to three perspectives: the reflective practitioner’s, the teacher-participants’ and the student-participants’. I used a variety of research tools, visualised in Figure 3.2.

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 3.2. Participants' Perspectives.*

The variety of data sources used for this research contributed to achieving what Richardson (2000) terms ‘crystallisation’. Through the crystal metaphor, Richardson suggests that qualitative researchers need to incorporate a multitude of perspectives to challenge the researcher’s understanding: “crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly
Partial understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know. Ingeniously, we know there is always more to know” (p. 934). Reflecting on crystallisation, Richardson advocates it as means for qualitative researchers to gain credibility within the fragmented, postmodern contexts in which they operate. Below I explain how each individual tool was used in the research. I conclude with a discussion where I problematise the design of these tools.

Reflective Journal: Translingual Writing as Method

Throughout the data collection phase I kept a reflective journal to record my reflection in and on action. According to Farrell (2004), journaling can be a cathartic experience for teachers, as it records how one felt at a particular time, adding depth to one’s reflections and revealing patterns of thought that may not have been explicit at the time. As Barth (2004) suggests, by making time to write, teachers can develop some “meaning-making lenses” through which to reflect on practice and to learn from practice (p.68).

In drama education, keeping a journal is a crucial tool for the practitioner to reflect on one’s practice (O’Mara, 1999; O’Toole, 2006). Similarly, in L2/AL research, reflective writing is a useful method for a researcher to reflect on their practice. As Richards and Lockhart (1995) suggest, AL/L2 teacher/researchers can record and watch their practice, and write about their dynamic decision-making. These recommendations are based on the belief that much of what happens in the language class is unknown to the teacher, a stance that aligns with my reflective practitioner attitude.

In my journal I used writing as a translingual method. I define myself a ‘translingual writer’ (Kellman, 2000), that is, I am a fluent writer in two languages: Italian, my first language, and English, my acquired language. As Pavlenko (2005) argues, for scholars who write in their additional language, switching language can access different cognitive and emotional processes. Indeed, studies on bilingualism, cognition and emotions show (Pavlenko, 2005, 2008, 2011) that for most bilingual writers the first language retains the strongest emotional resonance. Often, and specifically in my case, a writer’s first language is influenced by spontaneous reflexes, resulting in greater expressiveness, emotionality and visceral power (p. 180). On the other hand, acquired languages create more distance between writing and affect:

The ‘stepmother tongue’ creates a distance between their writing and memories and allows [translingual writers] to gain control of their words, stories, and plots. …The words of the second language, simply speaking, do not feel as real, as tangible, and potentially as hurtful, as those of the first. (2005, p.183)
Drawing on Kellman (2000), Pavlenko (2005) defines this writing phenomenon as ‘emancipatory detachment’, which gives the ‘non-native writer’ an edge, in terms of being more neutral and detached in her/his reflections (p. 183). Yet at the same time, Pavlenko notes that writing in a second language can be a limitation, as it does not give access to intimate emotions and so is perceived by some writers as cold, detached and unemotional.

This discussion is relevant to my research because, as a translingual writer, I deliberately switched my written language during the data collection phase of this research. My reflections were intentionally written partly in English, partly in Italian. I wrote the reflective journal (Appendix H) in English, before and after class. I wrote this on my computer at home, neatly keeping track of each activity, my responses and reflections on participants’ behaviour. Yet I also had a logbook (Appendix I) which I wrote in Italian during class. This was a hand-written note book, which I kept with me at all times. The logbook included a combination of keywords, scattered thoughts, and sketches, where I attempted to capture my visceral thinking. Writing in English contributed to creating some distance between my identification with the work and my reflections; conversely, writing in Italian allowed me quicker access to my stream of consciousness. In this way, through a bilingual writing strategy, I was able to access my intuitive, emotional self (writing on the spur of the moment, in Italian), and my rational, reflective self (recollecting memories of the class, in English).

Throughout the writing process my philosophy aligned with the perspective of Richardson (2000), who discusses writing as a method of enquiry, “wording the world into existence” through the act of writing. However, as she points out, our ‘worded world’ can never accurately capture the ‘studied world’ (p. 923). Precisely for this reason, I selected additional tools to integrate to my translingual writing experience.

Filming as Method

The purpose of filming the process dramas was twofold: to capture the ephemeral nature of the dramatic work, vital to research dramatic processes, and to capture gesturing and speaking within a social interaction, key to sociocultural research. In effect, filming the workshops was critical to my analysis of engagement, especially as I focussed on Specific Moments, and scrutinised that footage meticulously, on a frame by frame basis.

The process of filming was influenced by the ethnographic stance that I adopted towards educational research. Arguably, knowledge that a camera may be recording may affect the behaviour of participants to some degree. However, I aimed to film in the least obtrusive way possible, without interfering with the unfolding of improvised events. I used one
fixed camera only, set on a wide angle, to capture the drama workshops. I recorded each workshop in one long take, and refrained from doing any editing in post-production. I chose this strategy because through my background as a visual ethnographer11 I am well aware that ethnographic filmmakers should focus on the events of the film, rather than the conventions of cinematography. However, I am also aware that films that are cinematographically incompetent are also ethnographically incompetent (Heider, 1980). For this reason, I knew that it was crucial to position the camera in the most convenient location in terms of framing, sound and lighting; however, this was not always possible. I asked one of the observing teachers to monitor the camera angle, to follow the dramatic action. As Heider suggests, ethnography embodies the fusion of anthropology and cinematography: ethnographic filmmaking is useless, unless it is transmuted by filming imagination (p. 95). Following his advice, I instructed the teacher-participant/camera operator to occasionally zoom into a particular group as it was presenting a tableau to others, or pan the camera across several groups (See Visual Appendix DVD).

Throughout this process, I was aware that video capturing devices can offer merely one representation of the actions unfolding, and that visual ethnography is a subjective construction representing the ethnographer’s vision of reality (Pink, 2001). In particular, the filming was carried out by one of the teacher-researchers. Although I attempted to explain to the camera operator/teacher-participant the principles behind ethnographic filmmaking in educational contexts, the framing of the images is still informed by the operator’s choices. For this reason it was important to integrate the research with further data collection methods.

Video-Stimulated Recall

Another advantage of filming the intervention was that it allowed for implementing Video-Stimulated Recall. In each focus group, I used VSR as a research method with both teachers and students. My aim was to tap into the participants’ spontaneous impressions of engagement in some specific moments of the drama. This technique has been used extensively in educational research to prompt participants’ cognitive and affective mechanisms, to gain insight into the relationships between beliefs and actions (Ethel & McMeniman, 2000). The VSR procedure involved selecting two segments of the videos for each workshop. When choosing each segment, I was informed by the moments participants had indicated in the questionnaires. TPs and SPs were shown the same sequences. After showing each segment, I stopped the video and encouraged participants to freely comment.

11 See researcher’s background in preliminary pages
Questionnaire

The questionnaire (Appendix G) was designed to gauge the participants’ self-perceived engagement, and used after each workshop. I used this tool as a platform for discussion with each participant during the individual interviews and, therefore, as a support for the collection of qualitative data, rather than to generate data for quantitative analysis.

Bundy (2005) recommends identifying a specific moment when researching engagement in a dramatic context. Consequently, in this research it was vital to encourage participants to clarify which moment of the drama they were considering to self-evaluate their engagement. Accordingly, when completing the questionnaire, student-participants were asked to select a ‘specific moment’ in the drama. The selection of the specific moment changed from CS1, to CS2/CS3. In CS1, I asked the group to select one moment they particularly liked, and to self-evaluate their engagement. Yet, consistently, some participants would select a moment different from the one agreed upon collectively. In this light, in the following two case studies I asked each student-participant to choose their own specific moment.

To design the questionnaire, I was guided by Johnson and Turner’s (2003) recommendations that it: uses familiar and natural language; is easy for participants; does not use leading or loaded questions. I was also aware that, when test questions are not in the participants’ native language, they are influenced by the participants’ knowledge of the testing language and culture (Van De Vijver & Leung, 2009). Moreover, the cultural diversity of the participants implied that there may have been considerable variations in how the participants perceived abstract concepts like culture or emotions. For this reason, it was important to discuss the questionnaires with each participant, rather than use them for statistical operations. Through this tool, this study has some minor quantitative overtones. However, I used the questionnaires as a springboard for discussing each individual SP’s experiences in the interviews, and so obtained qualitative data through this tool.

The SPs were asked to self-evaluate their engagement in the drama in three ways, corresponding to three values: (a) communicative engagement; (b) intercultural engagement; (c) affective engagement - on a scale of 0 to 10. In line with Johnson and Turner’s (2003) recommendations on questionnaire design, these notions were paraphrased in simple, familiar language that the student-participants could easily understand (Table 3.3).
Table 3.3.
Student-participant Engagement Questionnaire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>COMMUNICATIVE ENGAGEMENT</th>
<th>INTERCULTURAL ENGAGEMENT</th>
<th>AFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peak of scale (10/10)</td>
<td>[Selected moment] I wanted to speak in Italian <em>a lot</em></td>
<td>[Selected moment] made me reflect <em>a lot</em> on my culture, in relation to the Italian culture</td>
<td>[Selected moment] made me feel powerful emotions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom of scale (0/10)</td>
<td>[Selected moment] I didn’t feel like speaking in Italian <em>at all</em></td>
<td>[Selected moment] didn’t make me reflect on any culture <em>at all</em></td>
<td>[Selected moment] didn’t make me feel any emotion <em>at all</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three values in the questionnaire address emotional, highly subjective perceptions. As Schutz and DeCuir (2002) argue, conducting research on emotions in education is challenging, as emotions are fluid and difficult to pinpoint. These authors identify different three branches in the study of emotions in education: (a) variables; (b) process and meaning; (c) social-historical context. In the context of this research, I followed a ‘process and meaning’ approach, which identifies an ‘emotional experience’ as the interpretation and evaluation by an individual of his/her perceived emotional state. As the authors maintain, this kind of inquiry focuses on the processes related to individual experiences, and the meaning a person attaches to that experience of their emotions.

Student-participants Interviews: ‘Interlanguage’ Interviewing

My purpose in interviewing the student-participants was to explore learners’ engagement with dramatic form, as well as to follow up the engagement questionnaires. I interviewed each student-participant once during the intervention.

In Second Language Acquisition, the language produced by the AL learner in the target language is referred to as his/her ‘interlanguage’ (Selinker, 1972). All SP were interviewed in their interlanguage, except for two who were native speakers of English. While conducting the interviews in Italian, my focus was therefore to use simple language structures to try to ensure the interviewees could comprehend (for examples see Appendices C.2, C.4, C.6). Despite my efforts to paraphrase, to avoid direct questioning, and to use basic vocabulary, at times the interview questions proved too complex for some student-participants’ interlanguage.

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12 These are Catherine (CS2) from Boston and Sandra (CS2) from Washington D.C.
This created some further methodological challenges, in juggling the roles of ‘teacher’ and ‘researcher’. In fact, when an AL teacher is dialoguing with an AL learner, the teacher naturally re-phrases the speaker’s utterances, often guessing the intended meaning from a few keywords, to scaffold the hinted meaning. In the interviews, if a student-participant could not understand, I had to re-phrase the question, simplifying the wording to an easier level. This operation created a clash in my agenda as both a language teacher (scaffolding questions), and a researcher (posing neutral questions), and raised the issue of validity. Given that the student-participants were used to the teacher negotiating their interlanguage, they were able to confirm or deny the scaffolded/guessed meaning. However, I acknowledge ‘interlanguage interviewing’ to be a methodological weakness in my research design, as it may have increased the risk of my misrepresenting the participants’ voices.

Teacher-participant Interviews and Observation

My purpose in interviewing the teacher-participants and asking them to observe me was to explore teachers’ perceptions of learners’ engagement with dramatic form, and to discuss their observation notes. For each case study, I interviewed each teacher once. The pre-observation interviews (Appendix B.1) focussed on each TP’s previous teaching experience, educational approach, and expectations of process drama. The post-observation interviews (Appendix B.2) focussed on the TPs’ perception of learner engagement in its different forms, as well as their impressions of process drama.

Richards and Lockhart (1995) discussed peer observation in educational research and put forward a number of principles. First, peer observation should have a focus: the value of observation increases when observers know what they are looking for. Second, observers should use specific procedures for their observation. Third, the observer should remain an observer; that is, actively participating in the workshop compromises the quality of their observation (p. 24). Finally, they suggest that the researcher arranges a pre-observation orientation session to discuss the nature of the class observed, as well as a post-observation session immediately after class, to discuss the observer’s perceptions with the teacher-researcher.

These recommendations directly informed the design of the observation as a research tool for this study. As far as the first and second principles are concerned (focus and procedures), I created an observation template (Figure 3.3; Appendix D.1) where the observing teachers could write their notes.
WRITE DOWN YOUR OBSERVATIONS ON:

1. Communicative engagement
2. Intercultural engagement
3. Affective engagement

Give specific examples – indicating specific students and/or specific moments in the drama

*Figure 3.3. Teacher-participant Observation Template.*

During the pre-observation interview, I discussed this template with the teacher, thus negotiating the focus and the procedures of the observation. In the post-observation interview, undertaken immediately after class, I asked the teachers to verbally illustrate their observation notes, using them as a platform to converse on their impressions of learner engagement, and process drama as pedagogy. At the end of the drama intervention, the observing teachers submitted their templates with the observation notes.

As for the third principle (remaining an observer), my original intention was for the TPs not to actively participate in the workshops. This was agreed upon in the introductory staff meetings. Indeed, for the majority of the drama intervention the teacher-participants did not participate actively. However, during CS2, from workshop 2 to workshop 4 the observing teachers participated actively in some group activities. This was due to unforeseen circumstances, related to the logistics of the case study (explained in Chapter 4). In effect, this was reflected in the depth of observations in the CS2 teacher-participant cohort, which is considerably poorer than CS1’s and CS3’s. This further confirms Richards and Lockhart’s (1995) recommendation for peer observation and active participation.

As Farrell (2004) remarks, being observed in action while teaching can be hard, as the researcher can feel judged and can become inhibited or defensive. He suggests that researchers being observed can overcome self-consciousness by focussing on the advantages that observation can bring, like gaining more insights and comparing experiences. Johnson and Turner (2003) contribute to this discussion by drawing on Goffman’s (1959) discourse on social behaviour. According to Goffman, most social behaviour is frontstage behaviour (what we allow people to see), rather than backstage behaviour (what we say and do with our closest friends, acting naturally). It is useful to consider the roles that I was playing while being observed by the teacher-participants. During the initial meetings with the staff, I maintained frontstage behaviour. However, progressively I revealed my backstage behaviour.
when improvising in role, and in moments of disclosure in the intercultural reflections. My backstage behaviour was strengthened by establishing rapport with the teacher-participants during the pre-observation interviews, and relating to them as co-researchers. To reinforce our collaboration as co-researchers, and to overcome my self-consciousness of being observed, I acknowledged the teachers’ presence in the class, making eye contact with them during the drama or chatting in-between tasks. Through these steps, I was able to frame the TPs as co-researcher allies, rather than critics.

Teacher-Participants’ Focus Group

At the end of the drama intervention, I conducted a focus group with the teacher-participants. My purpose in conducting the focus group was to explore the TPs’ perceptions of learners’ engagement after the TPs had witnessed a number of classes.

I chose to use a focus group with the TPs as well as individual interviews with them because, as Madriz argues (2000), focus groups as method are useful to highlight the “multivocality of participants’ attitudes, experiences, and beliefs” (p. 836). Focus groups are often used in social sciences research as they involve not only ‘vertical interaction’ (interviewer/interviewees), but also ‘horizontal interaction’ (interaction among the group participants). These, Madriz (2000) argues, may provide important insight that can inform analysis of the data and facilitate the social construction of meaning. In effect, the simple nature of the questions (Appendix E.1) encouraged conversation among participants, which was useful for deepening my understanding of teacher-participants’ values and beliefs and their attitudes towards teaching and learning, engagement and process drama.

Student-participants’ Focus Group: A Kinaesthetic Approach

The SP focus groups were conducted at the end of the drama intervention. Their purpose was to explore the SPs’ perceptions after they had experienced a complete process drama.

While conducting the SP focus groups, my aim was to help the SPs as AL speakers to focus on the content rather than on language, as this is considered an effective way to reduce some of the language anxiety related to ‘being researched’ in SLA research (Allwright & Bailey, 1991). I used a kinaesthetic approach, combining the use of props from the drama workshops as stimulus material to generate discussion among participants (Appendix F.1). The props included hats, scarves, glasses and other costume devices that the participants associated with a role within the drama. Sanz (2010) discusses the benefits of using games...
and props in focus groups with children, to create a relaxed atmosphere, helping the participants to focus on each other rather than on the moderator. By applying this discourse to a language learning environment, using props associated with the dramatic experience was useful for re-directing participants' attention to their experience of the drama, rather than to the language they were using.

Translation as Method

Finally, the issue of translation as method needs to be discussed. ‘Cross language research’ (Temple, 2002) involves the collection of data in one language, and its translation into another language. Translating data in qualitative research is a complex issue; as Temple and Young (2004) argue, translation across languages involves specific methodological implications. These concern the role of the translator, and the process of translation itself. In this context, Esposito (2001) defines ‘translation’ as “the transfer of meaning from a source language, to a target language” (p. 570). Translation is not a mechanical act, but involves an active transfer of meaning: the translator’s task is to process the language, conceptualise its meaning, and then reconstruct the meaning in the other language (Larson, 1998). By applying the translation process to qualitative research, Esposito (2001) represents it as a process of re-interpretation of meaning (Figure 3.4).

![Figure 3.4. The Process of Cross-language Interpretation (Esposito, 2001).](image-url)
Being the primary translator in this task, I used the process of translation as a method in itself, to further reflect on the meaning of the items to be translated, to conceptualise it, and to re-express it in another language. In doing so, I attempted to consider both sociocultural contexts involved, in the process of “re-languaging” the data (Swain et al., 2011, p. 53).

As Esposito (2001) argues, translation can potentially produce inaccurate data. He identifies a number of risk factors that threaten validity in qualitative translations, which increase as the interpretative tasks become more complex. He positions these threats to validity on a continuum, with some risks being more significant than others. In this research, two broad categories of translated data can be identified: data produced by Italian native speakers (TPs) and data produced by non-native speakers (SPs). As illustrated above, these operations entailed a number of epistemological considerations. On the one hand, the TP data was a translation from one language into another (cross-language translations). On the other hand, the SP data was a translation of the participants’ interlanguage.

In this research, the qualitative translations of the teacher-participants’ data (cross-language translations) sit at the low end of Esposito’s risk continuum. Here the risk is low because as the researcher/participant, I shared with the TPs a common language (Italian), regional culture (Milan inner city) and age group. Although I was distanced from the participants by having emigrated, I shared the same profession (Italian AL teacher), and I understood their teaching culture (communicative approach).

The high end of the risk continuum features the translations of the student-participants’ data (interlanguage translations). Here participants were attempting to speak in a language that was not their own. This might have been disempowering for them, as they were less able than if speaking in their first language to articulate their opinions. My task as a translator was to attempt to interpret their re-interpretation of meaning and transfer that into English. Given that some SPs’ utterances contained syntactical errors, this proved to be a very complex, if not impossible, task. In the translations, wherever possible I attempted to reproduce errors to render the nuances of the data. Where this was not possible, or where meaning seemed obscure, I used footnotes to clarify linguistic forms or to include the original in Italian.
In qualitative research translation, the risk of misinterpretation of data is high, and
acknowledging the translation process is critical for methodological rigour (Esposito, 2001).
Marshall and Rossman (2006) suggest that when translating data in qualitative research, a
number of considerations need to be openly addressed: acknowledging that the data has been
translated, acknowledging whether the translator is the researcher or someone external, and
acknowledging whether the translator was involved in the analysis. Wong and Poon (2010)
further argue that translators who understand the research context should be favoured for the
translation task. In this research, I was the primary translator. Two additional translators
participated, both lecturers of Italian (AL) in Australian universities and experienced
professional translators, registered with the National Accreditation Authority for Translators
and Interpreters (NAATI). One is Italian, accredited in translating from English_into_Italian, and
the other Anglo-Australian, accredited in translating from Italian_into_English. The latter is also
associate supervisor of this research, is familiar with the research context, and has proof-read
all translations reported in this thesis. In this research I identify two aspects of translating: 1)
the translation of the participants’ voices (interview transcripts and focus groups; transcripts
of the drama); and 2) the translation of the research tools (interview questions, questionnaire,
and observation templates).

1) The participants’ voices were originally produced in Italian. While the interviews were first
transcribed in the original version (Italian), and then translated into English (text to text
translation), the focus groups were translated directly into English as they were transcribed
(audio to text translation). The focus group discussions were translated in the form of a
narrative summary, rather than as an accurate verbatim transcription (See Appendices E.2
and F.2). This option was chosen because of the length of the transcriptions, and the large
numbers of participants speaking simultaneously. The transcripts of the drama were first
transcribed in Italian and then translated.

2) The research tools were originally designed in English. I was the primary translator. As
Temple and Young (2004) argue, researchers who can translate themselves are automatically
best situated to do cross language research. In this circumstance, the researcher/translator
can use the experience of translating to better understand the implicit meaning of a concept.
Indeed, I found the translation of the research tools a valuable operation as it forced me to
consider different layers of engagement within the aesthetic dimension of AL/process drama.
Engaging in this process helped me to identify the categories of ‘communicative’, ‘affective’,
and ‘intercultural’ engagement and ‘engagement with dramatic form’, which I discuss below.
Researching the Aesthetic Dimension of AL/process drama

One of the challenges of this study was that participants were language students, and had virtually no awareness, or first-hand experience of dramatic form. It was therefore inappropriate for me to explicitly ask the participants about their engagement with the aesthetic domain, as they lacked the meta-awareness to identify their experience as ‘aesthetic’. This was addressed differently for the two cohorts of participants. For the teacher-participants the key notion of ‘aesthetic’ in process drama was elaborated and discussed at the outset. For the student-participants the issue was more problematic, as the language being used to communicate these concepts was not their native language but a language they were acquiring. Being intermediate language speakers, the SPs were proficient at a communicative level (ordering a meal, etc.) rather than at an abstract level (discussing theoretical concepts). Thus, attempting to explain abstract concepts like ‘aesthetic experience’ at the beginning of the research might have created confusion for some SPs.

Indeed, I encountered various challenges in designing the research tools for the participants. These challenges stem from a number of gaps. First, with the SPs there was an obvious linguistic gap related in creating research tools that they would find comprehensible, yet were also effective in eliciting their responses. A second gap involved “cultural distance”, i.e., the gap between the cultures of the participants and of the researcher (Moghaddam, Walker & Harré, 2003). The way in which I as the researcher understood concepts like ‘intercultural’, ‘engagement’, and ‘aesthetic’, might have differed from the participants’ understandings. Furthermore, a less obvious semantic gap existed since, even within one language, these concepts are slippery. Finally, a potential translation gap existed. As discussed above, translating is not a neutral operation, but one that involves actively assigning meanings across socio-cultural contexts (Esposito, 2001). In the Italian language, the common use of the term ‘aesthetic(s)’ has connotations with ‘grooming’ and is often associated with tanning and waxing (‘beauty salon’ is centro estetico)\textsuperscript{13}. My definition of ‘aesthetic’, on the other hand, involved one’s inter and intra-personal experience within the cognitive, affective and social realms, related to perceiving, interpreting and creating an art form. As will be obvious, a literal translation of ‘aesthetic’ engagement could have misguided the student-participants’ understanding of my research objectives.

\textsuperscript{13} Clearly, estetica also translates as ‘aesthetics’, the branch of philosophy (for example, estetica Kantiana). However, the SPs may not have known the philosophical meaning of the term, and would almost certainly have seen the sign ‘centro estetico’ in advertising or in beauty shop banners, popular in Milan’s fashion-oriented streets.
In light of these challenges, I needed to deconstruct the notion of engagement with the ‘aesthetic’ dimension in AL/process drama, stripping it back to its core meaning. My aim was to effectively empower participants to become aware of and discuss their meaning-making experience within the studied phenomenon, attempting to bypass the linguistic, cultural, semantic, and translation gaps discussed above. Initially, I identified a number of factors intrinsic to AL/process drama engagement. I then framed these concepts as: ‘communicative’, ‘intercultural’, ‘affective’ engagement, and ‘engagement with form’, in terms of ‘creating’, and ‘perceiving’. As shown in Figure 3.6, I used different methods to research these categories.

Based on the background of the participants, the engagement categories were addressed directly, or indirectly, as indicated in diagram 3.6 by the continuous or dotted lines. The ‘communicative’, ‘intercultural’ and ‘affective’ engagement values were addressed directly (continuous line), as the participants were experienced language teachers and learners. As for the concept of ‘engagement with dramatic form’ (both perceiving and creating), these categories were addressed indirectly (as indicated by the dotted line). In other words, these values were embedded in the wording of the interview questions, and unpacked through conversation, but never explicitly mentioned. For example: “Would you say that process drama is an art form? How?” informed the category of ‘perceiving’, while “Did you feel like an artist?” informed the category of ‘creating’. I chose to address these values indirectly, using simple language, to overcome the challenges of dealing with participants with no previous experience of drama, and who were not native speakers of the language being used.
3.3. QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative research is based on inductive analysis, an intuitive process emerging from an understanding of specific contexts, participants, cultural references and subtle body language signs. As Denzin and Lincoln (2005) note, qualitative research deals with interpreting meaning, with “attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 3). In particular, I attempted to make sense of, and interpret meaning, in relation to two research questions:

- What is the nature of engagement in AL/process drama within the Second Language Acquisition, Intercultural and Aesthetic domains?
- How can an AL teacher develop and harness process drama artistry to facilitate engagement?

Below, I report this multi-layered process, encompassing four stages: immersion, categorisation, interpretation, and synthesis.

Data Immersion

Fieldwork

In qualitative research, the data analysis phase begins with data collection (Ezzy, 2002). It follows that the first stage of my data analysis began during my fieldwork, when I was immersed in the data, designing and facilitating the interventions, recording my thoughts in the reflective journal, making sense of participants' responses, and interacting with them through the research tools. Following the experience of O'Mara (1999), I aimed to record my reflections as quickly as possible to avert being overwhelmed by the data. O'Mara admits that the immediacy of her reflections and observations proved invaluable to her later analysis. Similarly, the reflections I wrote during and after each workshop were vital for analysing of my reflection-in-action.
Data translation

Above I discussed the issue of translation with reference to the creation of methods and the participants' voices. Here I consider translation in terms of data analysis. The first step to analyse the participants' comments was to translate them from Italian into English. The interviews were transcribed and translated in full. I included significant paralanguage, such as changes in intonation, pitch and emotional cues. I checked each translation twice and, when in doubt, I worked with my associate supervisor, a NAATI accredited translator.

Wong and Poon (2010) argue that when translation is regarded as an integral step in the research process, this may provide the researcher with additional insights about the phenomenon being studied. In effect, by processing and re-constructing the participants' meanings from one language to another (Figure 3.4), I was able to deeply immerse myself in the data and derive more in-depth understanding of it. Temple and Young (2004) also reinforce that the researcher/translator role offers the researcher significant opportunities for close attention to data analysis. They point out that “researching with, from and inside the language can be an emancipatory epistemological position that can only be fulfilled by a researcher/translator who shares the common culture of those researched” (p.170, original emphasis). As already outlined, this applies fully to the translations of the TPs, with whom I shared cultural and professional background, but not to the translations of the SPs.

Categorisation

Data Coding

The second stage of my qualitative analysis involved the use of NVIVO 9 software. NVIVO has been used extensively in the field of qualitative research, as it allows the researcher to code imported data, annotate audio and video, create and code memos, generate hierarchies between categories, and run queries based on designated attributes and values (Richards, 2009). To begin, I imported all the raw data in NVIVO. I created one file per case study, and I kept each file separate, until I finished the whole coding process. For each case study file, first I classified all data according to data set and participant cohort. The classification involved assigning attributes (age, gender, nationality, pseudonym, and so forth) and values (21, male, Chinese, Tommaso), for each participant and each data set. Next I created a system of coding categories, or ‘tree nodes’, composed of: Art form & Aesthetics, Case Context, Engagement,
Each tree node had a series of branches and sub-branches (Appendix J.1). While some tree nodes were created \textit{a priori}, others emerged during the data coding process. I believe firmly that no software can replace the analysis of a qualitative researcher. I therefore used the software as an additional aid - a data management tool - rather than as a substitute to my own inductive analysis as researcher.

Once I created my system of tree nodes, I scrutinised the complete footage of the drama (45 hours in total). I uploaded the video files in NVIVO and logged each dramatic strategy minute by minute. Then, I coded these logs to the tree nodes. As I watched, I added more reflections to my journal, using a different colour to differentiate these comments (written after the three case studies) from the reflection written straight after class. As I wrote these reflections, I coded them to the tree nodes. I also added annotations to the reflection-on-action, and created several reflective memos, which were coded to the tree node system and also across themselves. I created connections between tree nodes, using the NVIVO ‘relationships’ function to highlight emerging correlations within engagement forms. Most data was coded to multiple tree nodes and reflective memos.

While coding for CS1, I documented the process in a coding protocol (Appendix K), a record that I then followed in the coding of CS2 and CS3. Concurrently, I developed a data referencing system (Table 3.4), which was refined throughout the coding process. I used this referencing system in discussing my analysis of the data, in chapters Five and Six.

Table 3.4.
\textit{Referencing System for Reporting the Data.}

\begin{table}[h!]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
\textbf{Referencing example} & \textbf{Description} \\
\hline
Video file from the recorded footage & Video file, from the footage, 1.4.2, 10:15-40 \textit{Case Study 1. Workshop 4. Video File 2, Minute 10: from second 15 to Second 40} \\
Visual Appendix DVD & V_SM1, 00:59:39 \textit{Visual Appendix DVD, minute 00: second 59 (indicated by the running time code on screen)} \\
Reflective journal & RJ, p.90:19-23 \textit{Reflective journal, page 90: lines 19 - 23} \\
Logbook & LB, 25/06/2010 \textit{Logbook, date of the entry} \\
Interviews & Viola, p. 3:40-45 \textit{Viola’s interview, page 3: lines 40 - 45} \\
Focus group & TP_FG, 3:5 \textit{Teacher-participant focus group, min 3: sec 5} \\
Teacher’s observations & OBS, p.3:12 \textit{Teachers observations, page 3: line 12} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}
With regards to the transcriptions, I used the following discourse markers: [caption] describes body language, paralanguage and directions; hyphen describes overlaps; italics in the text denotes the word was spoken in the original language (not translated); […] denotes a chunk of interaction not relevant for the analysis (for example, in CS2, when the teacher-participants intervene too often). When quoting data from classroom interactions, I present it as text with lines numbered, followed by: participant’s name/role s/he is playing: utterance. In the translations of the classroom interaction, I have not corrected the grammar mistakes in the original version; in the sample below, an example of this would be in line 3 (“three time”):

1. Erika/coordinator [addressing Yelena]: We decided to make an inspection, that is, we decided to go and meet Paolo to try to remove him from the lift. [To the others] How did that go?
2. Carme/psychologist: the first time [shakes her head, gravely]
3. Eduarda/psychologist: we’ve tried three time
4. Erika: uh uh
5. Eduarda/psychologist: the first time [looks over at Agate]
6. Agate/psychologist [mumbling]: -We have obtained
7. Carme/psychologist: -nothing!

This layout applies for all classroom interaction, except for what I define as the ‘Specific Moments’ (SM). To differentiate the SM data, I present it in a table format (see Transcript 3.1).

Cross-referencing

After having coded all the data for one case study, I proceeded to cross-reference the data sets within the case. In particular, I cross-referenced:

- The videos (footage); with
- The video logs of each dramatic strategy (captions); with
- My reflections during the class, written manually, in Italian; with
- My reflections straight after class, written on the computer, in English; with
- Teacher-participants observations of learner engagement; with
- SPs’ questionnaires; with
- SPs’ interviews; with
- SPs’ focus group; with
- TPs’ interviews; and
- TPs’ focus group.
I created hyperlinks between all these data sets with relevance to common categories emerging from the analysis, which I continued to feed into the tree node system.

A major part of the cross-referencing was related to the specific moments. The emphasis on specificity in the research gave birth to an intricate maze of connections between different moments in the drama. For example, in the questionnaires the SPs self-evaluated their engagement in a particular moment of the drama. Similarly, the TPs were asked to observe engagement, giving examples of particular students in particular moments. In my reflections, I was careful to always frame my comments on *specific* situations, students and drama strategies. Thus, within each case study, I identified and cross-referenced numerous specific moments.

**Data Interpretation**

**Mapping**

In this phase, I allowed myself to question the meaning of the coding categories that I had developed, stripping back the meaning of previous assumptions and looking at the data afresh. I printed all data contained in the three NVIVO files, and generated three hard copy dossiers (Appendices L, M, N). These dossiers contain the coding tree system, with every piece of data coded under it. I proceeded to ‘rediscover’ the data, by using sketches, symbols and colours (L.1, M.2, N.3) to highlight new themes, thus *mapping* the data (L.3, M.3, N.3). I temporarily put aside my previous coding categories, and attempted to assume a fresh, meditative stance in rediscovering the data. In other words, I took one step back to allow the data to “speak to me directly”, looking for patterns that I found “interesting, affirming or surprising” (O’Toole, 2006, p.142).

The mapping process was fruitful in propelling the following level of analysis. For example, a number of threads emerged, which I later used for the analysis of engagement as playfulness and dramatic irony (Chapter 5.1). Another aspect emerging from mapping was the presence of *one* Specific Moment in each drama intervention, mentioned across multiple data sets, by several participants. This moment stood out for its *distinct aesthetic nature*, in terms of student and teacher-participants’ affective, sensory, cognitive responses to this moment. Thus, while I initially had a *multitude* of specific moments for each case study, this mapping process highlighted the presence of *one* Specific Moment upon which I could concentrate my further analysis.
Case Study Reports

The case study reports are comprehensive analysis documents (Appendices O, P, Q), in which I articulated the themes emerged from the mapping of the coded data. In these reports (one per case study), I described each case study, data collection, and analysis process to date. In the case study reports I also expanded my literature review, and explored new threads for analysis, which were later used to inform the cross-case analysis (see below). The expanded literature review directed me towards microgenesis (Lantolf, 2000), and the role of gesturing in self-regulation (McCafferty & Stam, 2008). Thus, the case study reports were an intermediary step, which helped me to both elaborate some themes that emerged from mapping the coded data and fine-tune my understanding of how to analyse these themes.

Analysis of the Specific Moments

The mapping of the coded data culminated in the selection of the Specific Moments (SM1; SM2; SM3) - one per case study. Overall, the three Specific Moments were selected according to the following criteria:

- They stood out for their distinct aesthetic nature in the mapping process resulting from the inductive analysis;
- They were selected by the majority of student-participants in the questionnaires;
- They were mentioned as “the most vivid memory” of the drama intervention by most student-participants and teacher-participants in the interviews;
- They were singled out in my reflection-on-action as particularly “significant”;
- They featured a group improvisation, with the teacher-in-role;
- They were conducive to microgenetic analysis, that is, the interactions were captured clearly\(^{14}\) through video and audio devices, giving access to both verbal and non-verbal responses.

\(^{14}\) Although all workshops were captured on video (with the exception of workshop 3 in CS2 due to technical problems), not all the recordings are of good quality, especially in terms of sound, as I relied on the in-built microphone of a non-professional video camera. Thus simultaneous interactions where participants are in small groups could not be transcribed accurately.
In this phase of the analysis I was influenced by the microgenetic method (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). I cannot claim to deploy pure microgenesis in this research, as this method investigates the development of language over time. My main focus is not language acquisition over time, but engagement, and its relation to teacher artistry. I cannot make claims about language acquisition, as I have no pre- or post-intervention tests, or any other linguistic measure to assess acquisition. Indeed, this is outside the scope of my research.

However, to some extent I was influenced by microgenetic analysis in terms of its potential to allow the researcher to “grasp the process in flight” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 68). Microgenetic analysis involves scrutiny of visual and audio data of individuals in social interaction, looking at cognition and affect as inter-related. Both the interaction and the behaviour of participants need to be analysed together.

To analyse each Specific Moment (SM), I watched the footage numerous times, including in slow motion. I focussed on layers in verbal and non-verbal behaviour. I also captured still images from the videos, some of which are included in the discussion chapters.

The translated transcripts of the SMs can be found in Appendices R.1, S.1, and T.1, while the original transcripts in Italian are Appendices R.2, S.2, and T.2. The video data of the SMs is included in the Visual Appendix DVD. Each Specific Moment varied in length and occurrence in the drama intervention, as indicated in Table 3.5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LENGTH</th>
<th>OCCURRENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SM1 8 minutes and 33 seconds</td>
<td>Workshop 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SM2 12 minutes and 51 seconds</td>
<td>Workshop 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SM3 5 minutes and 54 seconds</td>
<td>Workshop 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the analysis chapter, in order to clearly distinguish the SMs from other transcripts, I present this data in a table format, as illustrated in Transcript 3.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TURN</th>
<th>UTTERANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>TI: So, let me ask you right away: where did you get these tickets?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Teodoro: (inaudible) Delay!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>TI: Where are they from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Vera: Centrale!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Mara: Shanghai!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transcript 3.1. Sample of Data from Specific Moment One, SM1: 25-29.
Cross-case Analysis

The next stage of qualitative process was a cross-analysis where I considered the three cases together. In doing so, I did not compare the participants’ linguistic or dramatic performances across the case. Rather, from a reflective practitioner’s lens, I compared my own practice and understanding through the case studies.

For this purpose, I merged the three NVIVO files (CS1; CS2; CS3) and carried out a variety of operations, including coding queries and a variety of searches, to reflect on the drama intervention as a whole. In merging the three case studies, I still kept a dual focus, considering each research question separately. As far as the first research question is concerned, my initial aim was to ascertain the relationship between engagement forms in my tree node systems. These were: ‘communicative engagement’, ‘learning engagement’, ‘task engagement’, ‘affective’, ‘intercultural’, ‘dramatic’ and ‘aesthetic engagement’. My attempts to correlate these relationships across the three case studies revealed that they were inextricably interwoven, and simultaneous.

As a result, I stopped referring to engagement forms as separate, and merged them into one construct. I considered the construct of engagement across the three cases, within the three areas identified in the literature review: Second Language Acquisition, Intercultural dimension and Aesthetic domain. This analysis is elaborated in Chapter Five.

As far as the second research question is concerned, I looked at my reflection-in-action across the three case studies in terms of my professional growth as a reflective practitioner. I used Underhill's (1992) teacher development model (Figure 3.1) to analyse my responses throughout the case studies, observing the evolution of my tacit beliefs, and how they impacted my development of the art form. This analysis is articulated in Chapter Six.

Data Synthesis

Connecting the Research Questions

As Janesick (2000) suggests, creative synthesis enables the researcher to synthesise and bring together the meaning of the lived experience (p. 391). In this phase of the analysis, I considered the connection between the two research questions as two sides of the same coin: the aesthetics of AL/process drama. For this purpose, I investigated the relationship between some of the categories that emerged through the cross-case analysis of engagement
Methodology: Ariadne’s Thread

(research question one), with the categories that emerged from reflection-in-action analysis (research question two). Some of these categories had emerged in the case study report following the mapping of the coded data and their articulation in the reports (in particular, these categories are ‘dramatic irony’ and ‘agency’). I found a positive relationship between these sets of categories and the findings from the two research questions. This culminated in a final section where I elaborate on the nature of aesthetic experience in AL/process drama (Chapter Seven).

Re-examining the Literature

After making some sense of the data, I returned to the existing literature. I revised the theoretical frameworks relevant to the field, and checked my emerging findings against the contemporary research. This was a lengthy, laborious but fruitful operation, which enabled me to question the meaning of emerging insights and look for points of tension. As O'Toole (2006) observes, in the data synthesis phase interrogatives may begin to turn into statements (p.149). In effect, the synthesis process influenced the ultimate stage of the analysis, when the main arguments were fine-tuned.

On a final note, the entire data analysis process described above was the fruit of an ongoing reflective attitude: throughout the process, I continued to use reflection-in-action to inform my inductive decisions on how to proceed in the analysis. Such reflective attitude, which lies at the heart of qualitative analysis, is embedded in the methodological paradigm of this research.

3.4. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have considered the methodology of the study in terms of research paradigms, data collection and data analysis. First, I introduced the research paradigms underpinning the study. Next, I described the methods and the research tools used to collect the data. Finally, I illustrated the data analysis process in terms of immersion, categorisation, interpretation and synthesis of the data. In the next chapter I focus on the three cases studies, which will be presented as individual microcosms.
4. THE CASE STUDIES: EXPERIENCING THE LABYRINTH

I now turn to my experience of the research process as the labyrinth, discussing the case studies. As Yin (2003) points out, in case study research each case is unique, and needs to be treated as a microcosm. Following Yin, in this chapter I provide a narrative account of each case and its idiosyncrasies. Case studies encompass details, richness and depth (Flyvbjerg, 2011). Below I illustrate the three cases that inform this research, aiming to offer an in-depth description. For each case, I first define the context and outline the background of the participants. Subsequently, I provide a narrative summary of the process dramas, including the pre-text, and some artefacts I have used to drive the work. Finally, I illustrate the Specific Moments chosen for the microanalysis, providing a contextual summary and photographs.

4.1. CASE STUDY ONE

Case Context

Case Study One (CS1) took place in a public university in Milan, Italy, in June 2010. This university has several campuses around Milan. The campus where the case study took place had just been built; it had brand new facilities and a contemporary architectural look. This is unusual for Italian universities, which are typically historic buildings from several centuries ago, with old, decadent premises. Traditionally Italian universities are located in the heart of the historic centre, but this campus is located in an outer suburb of Milan, in an industrial area on the city’s periphery. It was specifically built to accommodate the growing number of Italian students studying foreign languages, and international students studying Italian. The Dean of the Intercultural Mediation Department was a Chinese Studies expert, and the university had recently established a liaison with the Marco Polo Exchange Program in China. As a result, most of the university’s international students came from China, although students of other nationalities were also present in small numbers.
The gatekeeper of my research was the convenor of the Linguistics degree for international students. After pitching my research to the Faculty Vice-President, I met with the course convenor in October 2009, at the beginning of the academic year. We agreed to run the AL/process drama intervention with Second Year Undergraduate students, at the end of the academic year, i.e., in June 2010, just before exams. During our first meeting, I informed the course convenor that, in line with ethics protocols, the students’ participation was to be voluntary, free of charge and not assessed. She agreed to my request. However, when I met her again in June, she reported that, anticipating difficulty in recruiting student participants during the exam period, she had promoted participation in the research through what I define a ‘bargaining deal’: students who participated in the AL/process drama intervention could study one less chapter of their textbook for the oncoming linguistics exam. This incident deserves attention, as it inspired the creation of the process drama.

To understand this ‘bargaining deal’, it needs to be situated within the broader Italian cultural context. Within the Italian education system, assessment at tertiary levels is centred on the accumulation and reproduction of factual knowledge. Typically, exams at university level in Italy consist of a large number of volumes that students are required to memorise. At an oral exam, the examiner may ask the student to expose one notion, in one of many books that the student is required to study. Thus, within the Italian educational context, these kinds of ‘bargaining deals’ are a common negotiation between students and lecturers. In the context of AL learning, this approach to exams can be intimidating. In offering such a ‘bargaining deal’ the convenor’s intention was that of a ‘helpful ally’ toward her Chinese undergraduates.

When I was notified of the ‘bargaining deal’ for the participant selection, I experienced mixed reactions. From my Italian identity, I naturally understood the context of the arrangement; from my Australian identity, I was annoyed and frustrated. I felt that this ‘deal’ clashed with my research ethics, my educational beliefs and my values in conducting a drama workshop. Specifically, I found this deal devalued experiential learning, situating practice below theory; it positioned drama as an easy alternative to more ‘difficult’ subjects such as ‘linguistics’; and it drew on the extrinsic, rather than intrinsic motivation of students to participate in my research. Yet, I understood that it would have been culturally inappropriate for me to contest this arrangement. Thus, I chose to oppose it with the only power I had at my disposal: dramatic irony. I used the ‘bargaining deal’ as inspiration to design the process drama. I located the textbook La Lingua Italiana e i Mass Media (Italian Language and the Mass Media) (Bonomi, Masini & Morgana, 2003) with the specific chapter that the students could skip: ‘La lingua dei quotidiani’ (the language of newspapers) and I designed a process drama based on that very chapter.
Teacher-participants (TPs)

The teacher-participants (TPs) in CS1 were three female Italian teachers, aged between 21 and 30, who were all enrolled in an Italian (AL) Teaching Master Program, under the supervision of the course convenor. The drama intervention was embedded in their Masters’ program, in that the 15-hour process drama observation counted as a ‘practicum’, and they each subsequently wrote their Master thesis drawing from this experience. This arrangement placed an extra agenda on the TPs’ observations, in terms of their involvement and motivation to understand process drama. It also created a burden for me, to convey to them the basics of the pedagogy. Although I stressed that my project was not aimed at providing a coursework module for pre-service teachers, their participation as observers served this function. After the intervention, two of them published an academic paper about their experience.

These three CS1 teacher-participants were Italian and shared an arts-based background. Marisole had been a dance teacher for 10 years; she had graduated with a Thesis on Contemporary Dance and was a relief teacher of Italian history in a public high school. She had no direct experience in AL teaching. Paola was an Arts Communication graduate. She was interested in the arts and had practiced drama for three years at extracurricular level. Before enrolling in the Italian (AL) Master Program, she had been a tutor in Italian for a group of six students during an exchange program in Madrid, Spain. This experience had motivated her to study to become a qualified AL teacher. Valeria was a Cultural Mediation graduate. She had studied Chinese (AL) for three years, and was about to go to China for a one-year study program. She had practiced drama for five years and had one year’s experience as a teacher aide in a multi-level group of AL Italian in a public high school. The CS1 teacher-participants observed each drama workshop in this case study.

Student-participants (SPs)

The student-participants were 16 Chinese international students, enrolled in a second year Linguistics Undergraduate Degree within the Department of Intercultural Mediation. They came from different provinces of mainland China, except for one, Gianni, from Tibet. They were aged between 21 and 25, and were enrolled in the university’s Marco Polo Exchange Program. All except one knew each other well, having formed a strong bond from living in Milan as international students for two and a half years. The one exception was Teresa, a migrant who had settled in Milan with her mother.
The group members were in their second year of exchange in Italy, and all of them had studied Italian for between six months and one year prior to the commencement of the degree. In their interviews with me, most disclosed that they were studying Italian for business, or educational reasons. None of them had any experience in drama.

According to the convenor, this cohort came from middle-to-upper class Chinese families. In the interviews, they indicated that they lived together in student accommodation, and did not wish to mix with the working class community of Chinatown in Milan. Many of the students’ families placed high expectations on them, and would only accept them back in China only upon successful graduation. The coordinator informed me that some of the SPs experienced this condition as a burden and were often homesick, but unable to return home without a degree. This information resonated with me and influenced me in the choice of theme for the drama. Perhaps because burdened by such high pressures placed on them by their families, and/or because of living together with other Chinese students, the overall language proficiency of this cohort of students was low. Their Italian proficiency was officially expected to be ‘intermediate’, but in practice it ranged from low to low-intermediate. According to the tutors, the proficiency of these students had increased very slowly in the previous two years. Indeed, I noticed that they tended to use Mandarin in class, even when instructed to speak in Italian. Table 4.1 summarises some characteristics of the student-participants and the teacher-participants in CS1.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{15} Pseudonyms have been used for all participants. For the 16 Chinese student-participants, 14 adopted an Italian given name upon their arrival in Italy; two did not. I preserved the participants’ preferences in assigning pseudonyms: 14 Italian names and two Chinese names accordingly.
Table 4.1.
CS1: Student-participants (SPs) and Teacher-participants (TPs).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SP</th>
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<th>Years studied/taught Italian</th>
<th>No. of workshops attended (out of 5)</th>
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<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOMMASO</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIANNI</td>
<td>Tibetan*</td>
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<td>All</td>
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<td>TP</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VALERIA</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAOLA</td>
<td>Italian</td>
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<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARISOLE</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>N/A (dance teacher for 10 years)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Gianni chose to identify as Tibetan. Tibet is officially recognised as an autonomous region of China.
Drama Intervention

The intervention was offered as a semi-intensive AL/process drama course, divided in five three-hour workshops over three-weeks. The five sessions consisted of an initial workshop, to meet the participants and introduce process drama, and four process drama sessions. Each workshop consisted of an initial warm up, vocal and physical, and a process drama session.

I designed the process drama after meeting the group in the first workshop and before the second workshop. To create the dramatic world, I drew on the specific context of the case study, especially the ‘bargaining deal’ chapter outlined above. Thus, the drama was inspired by ‘La Lingua dei Quotidiani’ (The language of newspapers) (Bonomi, 2003), the textbook chapter that the students had managed to ‘skip’ through their participation in my process drama course. In this chapter, Bonomi argues that in Italy, the traditional profession of ‘Chief Editor’ is undermined by the rapid rise of on-line editorials, which do not need this professional figure. This inspired me to create a process drama set in an editorial office, and to take on the role of a proud Chief Editor who felt threatened by Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Within the dramatic context, the Editor had banned his fellow workers from mentioning this journalism textbook, albeit expecting them to know its content. In other words, through the dramatic world, I framed the journalism chapter as a forbidden but essential item to the success of the journalists’ careers. In this way, I was able to transform my initial frustration around the ‘bargaining deal’ into productive tension to fuel the drama.

Below I provide a narrative account of the process drama, as shaped by the participants. The drama was set in the year 2015. The student-participants took on the role of graduates looking for their first job, in Shanghai. Having spent many years in Italy, these job seekers were regarded by the Chinese as ‘experts’ in Italian language and culture. Most participants chose to play the role of Italians in China. The pre-text itself was a job offer for the Italo-Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai. The position advertised was that of ‘apprentice journalist’ for the company’s monthly bulletin. The description specified that successful candidates needed be able to cope with the Chief Editor, Mr. Righello.

Initially, the candidates were greeted by the Vice President of the Chamber (teacher-in-role), who announced that they had passed the selection criteria, and officially started their one-week trial to get hired. The Vice President warned that, in order to get the job, they would need to cope with the Chief Editor, Dr. Righello, who was behaving strangely in that period. He was obsessed with counting stationery, and felt strongly threatened by ICTs. In particular, the Chief Editor hated a seminal textbook, The Language of Newspapers. The Vice President urged the aspiring journalists never to mention that book in front of the Editor, for their own
sake. Candidates then met the obsessive-compulsive Editor (teacher-in-role), a rather peculiar figure, mostly preoccupied with sticking post-it notes everywhere to remember errands.

The Editor, Mr Righello,\textsuperscript{16} divided the journalists into four teams and gave them a task to complete for their job trial: writing a feature article for the bulletin. This involved: browsing newspapers to choose a topic of interest for the readership of the Editorial; identifying a key theme for a potential interview for the feature article; identifying an informant for the interview; and drafting five questions for the interview. Once their ideas were approved, the candidates could fly to Italy, conduct the interview, and write the feature article for the Editor. The quality of the article, in terms of depth of intercultural relevance for the readers, would determine whether or not the candidates would be hired as full-time journalists.

Just before they left for Italy, the Editor announced that only one team would be hired. This created competition between the teams, with each team plotting to develop a 'secret strategy' to prevail over the others. Rumours of 'secret strategies' were spread at the airport, on the bus and at the train station. On the train journey from Rome to Milan, the journalists discovered that their tickets were fake and they were accused of international fraud. They pleaded their innocence with the Ticket Inspector (TiR 3) but were arrested. When the charges were finally dropped, they resumed their journey, but had only one hour to run the interview, before departing to fly back to China.

The interviews were conducted in teams. Interviewers were briefed to ask succinct questions, taking notes of verbal and non-verbal responses. Interviewees were briefed to answer vaguely, and continually praise ICTs. This was, of course, the Editor’s taboo, which placed the journalists in a dilemma over how to manage the interviews. Once back in Shanghai the Vice President expected to see the finished article. Instead, she had to listen to their misadventures, and warned them not to mention the word ‘prison’, as this evoked ‘uneasy past memories’. She suggested they write the article before the editor arrived, providing them with detailed guidelines on how to write a journalistic piece (from the 'forbidden' textbook chapter). The three teams wrote their articles, using their notes from the interviews. After reading the articles, the Editor dismissed the first two teams, concentrating on the third team, which was his favourite. This team, however, demanded an explanation about the fraudulent tickets, provoking an impulsive reaction, and as a result were fired. To the disappointment of the aspiring journalists, nobody was hired. To conclude the drama, the Vice President hired them as business consultants. They provided some advice on how to improve the business, beginning with firing the Chief Editor.

\textsuperscript{16} Righello means ‘ruler’ (as in the stationery item used to measure length) in Italian.
Specific Moment One: The Train Arrest

SM1, the train arrest, occurred in workshop 4. This moment was unanimously chosen by the SPs in their interviews as “their most vivid memory”. It was also the moment selected by most participants (but not all) for the questionnaire in workshop 4, as well as the moment most discussed in the teacher-participants’ focus group and observations. Sixteen SPs were present (four males, 12 females). All three TPs observed the drama.

In Specific Moment One (SM1), the student-participants were in role as journalists, on a train travelling from Rome to Milan. The space was set up to reproduce a typical train compartment, with a number of chairs lined up next to each other, divided by a central aisle. The participants had been handed out train tickets. The episode begins as passengers sit in the compartment. Shortly after, the Ticket Inspector (teacher-in-role), asks the passengers for their tickets. As the Inspector questions the validity of the tickets, he tears them up in front of the passengers. Figure 4.1 captures a snapshot of this episode.

![Inspector Collecting Tickets](image)

*Figure 4.1. Inspector Collecting Tickets.*
Figure 4.2 shows a copy of the allegedly fake train tickets, in the original Italian version.

![Copy of allegedly fake train ticket](image)

*Figure 4.2. CS1 Train Ticket Artefact.*

The workshop took place in a professional drama studio, used by the university for film-making purposes. Although we were supposed to be able to access the drama studio for the full duration of the project, it was available only for workshop 4. Whereas the other workshops were held in the students' common room, this workshop had a distinct feeling due to the features of the studio, like movable blocks and theatre lights. The space was particularly conducive to drama work, with many participants commenting on the impact of space on their overall experience.

A full transcript (original and translation) is included in Appendix R. For the video sequence, refer to the Visual Appendix DVD, V_SM1.

**SM1 Engagement Scores**

The graph below (Figure 4.3) shows the SPs scores in the engagement questionnaire: ‘communicative’, ‘intercultural’ (IC), ‘affective’ values for those SPs who were present in workshop 4 and selected ‘the train arrest’ as their specific moment in the questionnaire.
Case Study 1 - SM1

Figure 4.3. Engagement scores, SM1 (workshop 4).

These scores have not been used for statistical purposes. I discuss them in Chapter Five, in relation to each participant’s experience.
4.2. CASE STUDY TWO

Case Context

Case Study Two (CS2) took place in an adult school of Italian (AL) in Milan. This school is nested inside the New Fine Arts Academy complex, adjacent to the Fashion Design Institute, in a nightlife suburb of Milan. The school is part of a national network of Italian (AL) centres, with branches in Milan, Rome, Siena and Viareggio. The Milanese venue is a colourful, vibrant hub, evoking a fresh and trendy atmosphere. The school is targeted at a young audience and offers many extra-curricular social activities, like drinking aperitivo in trendy bars, and wine boutique tours, to entertain the students in the target language.

The gatekeeper was the curriculum coordinator, an ex-colleague and dear friend of mine. She mediated with the school manager, who decided that the AL/process drama intervention would be slotted in the daily class program. To guarantee at least the minimum numbers, three language classes (levels 4, 5 and 6) would be merged into one group, with a total of 18 students and four teachers. Although I specifically requested that students be briefed about the project in advance, this did not happen, resulting in initial confusion as the students were diverted from their usual class for a ‘surprise’ drama lesson.

The first workshop was a briefing session, showing potential participants what the course would offer, and aimed at convincing them to return. The workshop took place in a small classroom, with no air conditioning, in overwhelming 35° heat. The teacher-participants sat at the four corners of the classroom but, due to the small space arrangement, they were practically breathing down the students’ necks. Out of 18 participants, 12 signed the Informed Consent form; 10 returned the following day. Four left shortly after, and six committed. Because of the low numbers, I asked the teacher-participants to actively participate in the drama. This generated unexpected power dynamics, in role, between myself and the other teachers. The students who left the drama asked to go back to a standard class; for this purpose, a ‘shadow’ grammar class was set up and taught (on rotation) by one of the teachers. Interestingly, although the shrinking of the class was perceived negatively by the teachers, it was perceived positively by the student-participants who remained, and who felt the group had become more intimate. As the students grew closer together and became more familiar with the process drama form, I tended to let them work independently, without the active involvement of the teacher-participants.
Teacher-Participants

Four TPs were involved: three experienced teachers and one teacher-trainee. Given that the TPs took turns to lead the grammar class, not all teachers observed all of workshops, which resulted in discontinuous observation. Their participation in this project was very competitive: as related to me by the curriculum coordinator, the staff fought to get a place in the research, as it was offered as a paid in-service experience, equivalent to 15 of their teaching hours.

The four TPs were participating in this project because they each had, in different ways, a personal interest in innovative approaches. Alfonso was an experienced teacher trainer, who had been teaching Italian for 10 years, running in-house school accreditations for trainees. He had a background in visual arts and was enrolled in a ‘Performance Studies’ Master for personal interest. He defined his teaching approach as ‘humanistic, visual and communicative’. Simone was a teacher at the school, with three and a half years of experience; he defined his approach as ‘open’ to the students’ suggestions, and he was a lover of grammar. Marcello had one year of experience as a teacher of Italian, and a background in publishing. He had a marked sense of humour that made him extremely popular among the students. Sabina was a trainee at the school, enrolled in the Master Program offered by the school as work-placement. She was a professional actor and had trained as a stand-up comedian in Zelig, a famous Italian stand-up show. She took delight in competing with Marcello in entertaining the students through puns and jokes.

In my reflections, I identify the mood of the school as ‘stand-up comedy style’, owing to the distinct attitude of the teacher-participants. As I began the drama intervention, I felt slightly irritated by the TPs’ continuous ‘gagging’ (Johnston, 1999), i.e., laughter generated by attacking the story (p.125), fearing it could be a threat to the meaning-making experience in the drama. This situation led me to contemplate the difference between ‘teacher as entertainer’ and ‘teacher-artist’ (Piazzoli, 2012) and, it led me to reflect on the difference between ‘gagging’ and dramatic irony, and the potential of irony for engagement (See Chapter Five, ‘Agency’).

Student-Participants

The CS2 student-participants were nine female learners of Italian as additional language (AL), ranging from 20 to 50 years old. They came from various countries, including Russia, America, Japan, Slovenia and Taiwan. Their proficiency levels spanned from low intermediate to advanced. Their reasons for studying Italian ranged from gaining access to
university, to personal reasons. One participant, Catherine, was involved in the school as an assistant receptionist, part of a voluntary work-experience program. She was second-generation Italian, with a high level of proficiency, but she was a rather shy speaker. Another participant, an American who we call Sandra, was also very shy, and had a slight speech palate impairment that prevented her from pronouncing some consonant sounds. The two Japanese participants, Hiru and Yoriko, were talkative and fluent, while Maggie, a Taiwanese teacher, was particularly reluctant to speak, due to low proficiency in the language. By contrast, Olga, from Russia, appeared confident and outspoken, despite having studied Italian for only seven months. Table 4.3 summarises some characteristics of the participants.

Table 4.2. CS2: Student-participants (SPs) and teacher-participants (TPs).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SP</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Years studied/taught Italian</th>
<th>No. of workshops attended (out of 5)</th>
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<td>CATHERINE</td>
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<td>Japanese</td>
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<td>All</td>
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<td>Taiwanese</td>
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<td>American</td>
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<td>All</td>
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<td>YORIKO</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLGA</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>7 months</td>
<td>All</td>
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<td>TP</td>
<td>ALFONSO</td>
<td>Italian (teacher trainer)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>SABINA</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>trainee</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
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<td>SIMONE</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARCELLO</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>
Drama Intervention

The intervention was structured as a five-day intensive AL/process drama course, offered during the first week of July, 2010. In a similar format to CS1, I offered an introductory session, and structured each workshop with a vocal and physical warm up, as well as some exercises to increase awareness and concentration. I designed the process drama after meeting the group for the first session, between the first and second workshop.

To design the drama, I drew my inspiration from the dynamics of the school: given the popularity of TP Marcello, who entertained the students with his charismatic attitude, I created a drama based on a male teacher of Italian who lost the ability to speak, and needed some help. I also drew on my own frustration as a language teacher, always having to find new strategies to get students to communicate. Ironically, the drama flipped this situation, with students (in role as psychologists) having to help a language teacher who refused to communicate. This created a paradox to which I could connect as language teacher.

The pre-text was an art house short film, Buongiorno, directed by Prino (2006), and produced by BêkaFilms17 (See Visual Appendix DVD). It is a silent film, which features a musical score by Ennio Morricone. The plot is non-linear and involves the protagonist, while brushing his teeth, discovering that his mirror reflection is alive. The only word spoken in the five-minute film is ‘Buongiorno’ (Good Morning), screamed out by his mirror reflection in a chilling twist. A sequence of ‘dreams within the dream’ follows, ending in a crescendo that leads the protagonist to insanity. Coincidently, the lead actor was strikingly similar in appearance to Marcello, the charismatic teacher.

Figure 4.4. Frames from the Film Used as CS2 Pre-text.

17 Image and film used with permission from the director and the producers.
At the beginning of each workshop, I facilitated a series of mime exercises based on mirroring. Each day I added variations, from exact mirroring to opposite mirroring, voice mirroring, and group mirroring, to transition between the context of the film and the drama work. The mirroring exercises, connected to the pre-text, aimed to help creating mood, bridging the gap between the pre-text and the film. In the fictional context, the protagonist of the film became the protagonist of the dramatic world.

Below I provide a narrative account of the process drama, as shaped by the participants. In role as psychologists, the participants were called to a meeting by the Italian Association of Psychology (AIP). The director, Dr. Colombo (TiR), opened the drama by announcing the schizophrenic case of an Italian teacher, found inside a lift, refusing to speak. The man, whom they called Fabrizio Ferro, only communicated by obsessively writing: “Mirrors should stop reflecting”. They worked on action plans to remove the catatonic ‘subject’ from the lift. Once he was admitted to the clinic, the doctors contacted his family, including his twin brother (played by TP Marcello, his ‘double’). This cross between the real context of the school and the dramatic context (O'Toole, 1992) stirred great excitement in the participants.

Just as the family members agreed to be interviewed, Fabrizio issued a threatening letter (Appendix U), warning that he must be left alone, otherwise “it will be the end”. The doctors carefully considered the message, but decided to ignore it. Despite each member of the family trying to cover up any traces of mental illness, the last interview with the twin revealed that the subject had run away from home at the age of 15 and, since then, he demonstrated a phobia of mirrors. The psychologists agreed on some interview questions, and decided to interview him in the bathroom, with toothpaste and toothbrush, to recreate a familiar environment. Unfortunately, just as they were going to interview him, the subject escaped.

The doctors eventually found the subject inside a bath tub, convinced him to come out, and interviewed him in front of a mirror, as he was having delusions. The subject hinted at a dark past, involving sexual abuse from his twin. Thus, as he looked in the mirror, he was reminded of that traumatic event. Finally, the psychologists presented their ‘findings’ and recommendations for recovery at an international conference. Each psychologist expressed concern for the subject and indicated that, with ongoing therapy sessions, he would be able to resume his normal life and go back to work in the Italian language school.
Specific Moment Two: Interviewing the Subject

SM2 occurred in workshop 5. 'Interviewing the subject' was mentioned by two participants in questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. Within the drama structure, strategies for 'interviewing the subject' include:

- A teacher-in-role meeting (SM2), where all the participants (including TPs), are in role as 'psychologists', to discuss the best strategies to interview the subject;
- An improvisation without the teacher, where SPs dramatising finding the subject (played by Yoriko) hidden in the bath tub. This is referred to as SM2 (b);
- An improvisation of a stylised interview, where SPs dramatising asking the subject (Yoriko) some questions (in front of a mirror). This has been referred to as SM2 (c).

The amount of data generated by the above material would be too vast to be considered for microanalysis. Thus, I selected the teacher-in-role meeting as SM2. This choice was dictated by practical limitations: in the improvisations (b) and (c), SPs are working independently, away from the camera; poor sound recording prevents an accurate transcription of the interactions. Given that in microanalysis both sound and video are essential to capture voice and gesture (Platt & Brooks, 2002), the teacher-in-role episode was selected as SM2. However, I occasionally refer to (b) and (c) as providing evidence supportive to my argument.

In SM2, the participants (both teachers and students) are in role as psychologists. I am in role as Dr. Colombo, the psychologists' director, holding a meeting to discuss where, how and who will interview the subject. During this meeting, the surprise announcement of the subject's escape is made (Figure 4.5).
In workshop 5, there were five SPs present (Sandra, Catherine, Olga, Hiru and Yoriko), all female, from America, Russia and Japan (Table 4.2). In addition, there were two TPs (Alfonso, and Sabina) who actively participated in the drama. The workshop took place in a medium-sized, air-conditioned classroom, with one long table at one side, and an empty space with a large number of chairs that were often used as building blocks.

The full transcript (original and translation) of SM2 is included in Appendix S. For the video sequences of SM2, including SM2 (b) and SM2 (c), refer to the Visual Appendix DVD, V_SM2.

**SM2 Engagement Scores**

In CS2, workshop 5, there were five student-participants. Of these, only Hiru and Catherine chose ‘interviewing the subject’ as their SM. Their self-evaluated engagement scores are reported in Figure 4.6.
Case Study 2: SM2

![Graph showing SM2 Engagement Scores for Hiru and Catherine. The graph indicates different engagement scores across Communicative, Intercultural, and Affective dimensions.]

**Figure 4.6.** SM2 Engagement Scores.

These scores have not been used for statistical purposes. I discuss them in Chapter Five, in relation to each participant’s experience.
4.3. CASE STUDY THREE

Case Context

Case Study Three (CS3) took place during August 2010, in an adult language school in Milan, Italy. This is a corporate centre, part of a world-wide network with 150 branches, in 50 countries across the world. This institute specialises in teaching several additional languages, including Italian. The Milan branch is located in the city’s historic centre, in an upper class, prestigious suburb. The venue is old but very well kept, with professional, dedicated staff. The school targets students learning Italian for business, often subsidised by their companies, as well as a middle-upper class kind of learner, pursuing Italian as a cultivated hobby.

The gatekeeper was the director of the school, whom I met in October 2009 to pitch the research project. The director seemed interested in process drama, and promoted the approach with the teaching staff in a series of meetings during the year. The research was officially approved by the President of the branch, by the staff, and the director, Renato, who also participated as a teacher-participant. The lead up to the intervention consisted of three meetings with the School Management, to organise how to market the course to attract participants, the course structure itself, and the teachers’ participation. Two weeks before commencement, I was invited to introduce myself to potential student-participants, to talk about process drama and to answer students’ questions about the research. Participants signed the informed consent prior to the first workshop. This constitutes a point of difference with the other case studies, where students were attracted because of a reduction in their study-load (CS1), or were not informed of the research until the commencement day (CS2).

Teacher-Participants

The seven teacher-participants were all accredited Italian (AL) teachers. All worked in the Milan branch, except for Giovanni, who taught in the Moscow branch. Because of the corporate nature of the organisation, all teachers received a formal in-house training, and shared a unified vision for their teaching philosophy, which they defined as ‘communicative’. In this case study, five teachers observed some workshops, on rotation, while two teachers (including the school director) observed each workshop, continuously. No more than four teachers observed one workshop at the same time.
From the outset, the TPs seemed interested in AL/process drama, and referred to my intervention as ‘a breath of fresh air’ in a rather corporate teaching environment. Many lamented the lack of creativity in the normal lesson plans, which were centrally designed and had to be delivered by all teachers in the same way. Teacher-participants therefore approached AL/process drama as a potential new technique to implement. Despite my several attempts to point out that this was a research-oriented collaboration, TPs related to this experience as professional development, a full-immersion in a new approach to be trialled. TPs appeared motivated to learn how to facilitate drama; upon conclusion of the project, they were enthusiastic about its potential, but realised that it was not just a set of techniques, and they were not comfortable to teach it. Ultimately, they engaged me to run an intensive training seminar for the staff (not included in the data set), although they continued to follow the traditional teaching guidelines of the school.

**Student-Participants**

The nine student-participants had diverse backgrounds. They were all women, aged from 23 to 51, from Brazil, German-speaking Switzerland, Iran, Taiwan and Russia. One SP (Agate) was employed by the school as a teacher of English (AL), and was not formally enrolled in a school course, while the others were all enrolled in the school. Two participants described themselves as third-generation Italian Brazilian (their Italian grandparents having migrated to Brazil). All SPs were studying Italian for personal reasons, except Jun, who was studying Italian to gain entry into a Master degree in Marketing. Table 4.3 summarises the participants’ characteristics.

Before the intervention, I was told by the teachers that those students who had enrolled as participants were some of the most motivated and committed in the school. The SPs’ proficiency ranged from low to advanced: Eduarda, for example, had only studied the language formally for two weeks but, due to her native language being Portuguese, her written and oral comprehension were sufficient for her to follow the drama. Similarly, Carme’s proficiency was low; nevertheless, being Brazilian, she could follow the language and actively participated in the drama. On the other hand, Jun, from Taiwan, had studied Italian for nine months, but struggled with fluency. The most language-proficient participant, Ariel, was the shyest of the cohort, and the most reluctant speaker.
Table 4.3.
CS3: Student-participants (SPs) and Teacher Participants (TPs).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SP</th>
<th>NATIONALITY</th>
<th>Years studied/taught Italian</th>
<th>No. of workshops attended (out of 5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>ARIEL</td>
<td>Swiss-German</td>
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<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGATE</td>
<td>Brazilian</td>
<td>2 (3rd generation)</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
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<td>EDUARDA</td>
<td>Brazilian</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
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<td>HERMINIA</td>
<td>Brazilian</td>
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<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINDA</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VANESSA</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BARBARA</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIOVANNI</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANGELA</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROSSANA</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Drama Intervention

The AL/process intervention was offered by the school as an extra-curricular activity, free of charge for the students. Upon completion, students received a certificate of attendance, and featured in photographs published by the online school bulletin. The intervention was offered as an intensive course, with five three-hour workshops over eight days.
For this case study, I did not design a new process drama, but relied on the CS2 pre-text. This choice was informed by the realisation that, by using a structure with which I was familiar, I could focus on reflection-in-action without the stressor of having to design a process drama, literally, from one day to the next (between the introductory session and the following session). I therefore kept the same structure as CS2, with some modifications. At a macro level of planning (Dunn & Stinson, 2011), I made a number of adjustments:

- I added another teacher-in-role (a constable), to announce the incident of the crisis;
- I refined the role cards, indicating the specialisation of each psychologist (e.g., Expert of Imaginative Therapy; Expert of Social Psychology)
- I used an extract from Il lupo della Steppa (Steppenwolf) by Hesse (1996) as a narration;
- I introduced a language-based game at the end of the fifth workshop.

At the micro level of planning, several adjustments were made. Arguably, given the improvisational essence of the form, a process drama can never be the same with different groups (O’Neill, 1995). In effect, the process drama created by the CS3 cohort was quite different from how it was for the previous cohort.

At the beginning of each workshop I facilitated a series of mime exercises based on mirroring. This time I introduced the soundtrack of the pre-text (composed by Ennio Morricone) to create mood. I built on variations from exact mirroring, to opposite mirroring, voice mirroring, and group mirroring. I also selected various frames of the film and used them to develop choral activities exploring the inner dimension of the character. Below I provide a narrative account of the process drama, as shaped by the participants.

The psychologists discovered that the language teacher, Paolo Marini, suffered from a dissociative identity disorder, on account of which he was convinced he saw another person in the mirror. This person was his alter ego, but appeared to Paolo as an external, distinct individual, whom he called Fabrizio Ferro. This vision frightened Paolo every time he would catch a glimpse of a mirror. For this reason, Paolo strictly avoided mirrors. On one particular day, however, Paolo caught a lift and, upon sight of his alter ego, squatted on the floor, and refused to speak and/or leave the cubicle. A constable in charge of the case contacted the team of psychologists to assist the subject.

'Fabrizio Ferro' was the name chosen by CS2 student-participants for the subject. In CS3, the SP chose this name as the subject’s alter ego after I forgot to replace the names in one of the artefacts.
After interviewing his family, the psychologists realised that only Paolo’s niece, a rebellious teenager, knew something about the existence of this sinister presence. When Paolo escaped from the clinic, the psychologists sought the niece’s help to locate him. They eventually found him hidden in a Luna Park, inside a mirror maze. They proceeded with a complex hypnosis session, hypnotising first Paolo, and then Fabrizio. Addressing his alter ego, they requested him to leave Paolo for good. Subsequently, they attempted to implant a new set of life memories into Paolo’s psyche. Finally, the team presented their discoveries at an International Psychology Conference, seeking funds to continue their research.

Specific Moment Three: The Rescue Operation

SM3 took place in workshop 3. Seven SPs were present: Eduarda, Ariel, Marika, Carme, Agate, Herminia and Jun. Four TPs were observing: Linda and Renato (who had observed each previous session), Rossana, and Giovanni (who observed for the first time). The workshop took place in an air-conditioned classroom, with a table and some empty space.

SM3, the rescue operation, refers to the team of psychologists rescuing Paolo from the lift. This was chosen by all student-participants, except for one, as their Specific Moment in the engagement questionnaire. The episodes involving the ‘rescue operation’ consist of:

- The preparation of the group improvisation, where participants brainstormed and negotiated the strategies of the rescue operation (SM3 [a]);
- The representation of the group improvisation, where the student-participants improvised, in role, the rescue operation; here Agate was in role as ‘the subject’ and the others as psychologists (SM3 [b]);
- A teacher-in-role meeting, straight after the group improvisation, where the psychologists reported to the director (TiR) on the outcome of the rescue operation.

For the purposes of analysis, I chose the teacher-in-role as SM3. This was selected for the microanalysis as the camera’s microphone captured clearly the social interaction. On the other hand, the discussion in (a) is not fully captured by the audio, as participants were whispering, facing away from the camera, and in a close-knit circle. As for (b), the actual improvisation, it is

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19 Carme is the student-participant who did not choose this SM: for every session, she chose the ‘intercultural reflection’ as her Specific Moment.
a long passage (10 min and 30 sec), but contains very limited audible dialogue, from only three student-participants. It was therefore not ideal for sociocultural analysis, which considers dialogue in social interaction. While using the teacher-in-role for the microanalysis, I occasionally refer to (a) and (b) to support my discussion.

In SM3, the student-participants are in role as psychologists, and I am in role as the coordinator. The sequence features a meeting called straight after the rescue operation, where the doctors report the outcome of the operation concerning ‘the subject’ (Paolo Marini). In order to convince the subject to leave the lift, the doctors have tried three strategies. First, they tried ‘speaking with a soft voice’; next they offered food and water; finally, they tried mirroring his position, squatting on the floor. This was successful in connecting to the subject, who slowly began to stand up and was persuaded to exit the lift. In the meeting that follows the psychologists recount these strategies to the director, and interpret the situation. Photograph 4.7 captures a moment during the meeting.

![Image](image.png)

*Figure 4.7. SM3: Discussing the Operation.*

A full transcript of SM3 (original and translation) is reported in Appendix T. The video sequence of SM3, including SM3 (a) and SM3 (b), can be found in the Visual Appendix V_SM3.
SM3 Engagement Scores

Figure 4.8 shows the SPs’ scores of the engagement questionnaire (‘communicative’, ‘intercultural’, ‘affective’ values), for those student-participants, present in workshop 3, who selected ‘helping the subject to exit the lift’ as their specific moment in the questionnaire.

![Case Study 3 - SM3](image)

*Figure 4.8. SM3 Engagement Scores.*

These scores have not been used for statistical purposes. I discuss them in Chapter Five, in relation to each participant’s experience.

4.4. CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have taken a narrative approach to describe the three case studies that inform the research. I have focused on each case as an individual microcosm, following Yin’s (2003) description of case study research. I illustrated the context of the cases, and how that informed the design of the drama interventions. I also described the participants of each case, and their unique contribution to the process dramas. Finally, for each case I have provided a description of the Specific Moment I selected as a unit for microanalysis. In the next chapter, I undertake the analysis of the three Specific Moments.
5. ANALYSING LEARNER ENGAGEMENT: 
INTERPRETING HECATE’S VOICES

In this chapter, I address the first research question:

- **What is the nature of engagement in AL/process drama within Second Language Acquisition, Intercultural Education and Aesthetic Learning?**

Here I take the point of view of the participants to examine the nature of engagement, how it appears and manifests across three domains that inform AL/process drama. These domains were used to structure the literature review; there, I visualised them as the three heads of Hecate, with each ‘head’ being separate, yet at the same time connected to the body of AL/process drama. In this chapter I consider the three heads as distinct but interconnected, and attempt to interpret them.

As discussed in the Chapter Three, the qualitative analysis process was multifaceted. It involved different phases: immersion, categorisation, interpretation, and synthesis. In the immersion phase, I collected the data, and translated it from Italian into English. In the categorisation phase, I coded the data, creating an NVIVO tree node system, outlined in Chapter Three. As part of the interpretation phase, I mapped the coded data through an inductive analysis, and compiled three case study reports. Through this process, a number of threads emerged, including the presence of three Specific Moments (SMs). The criterion for choosing these particular Specific Moments is presented in Chapter Three. I analysed these SMs, using a microgenesis-oriented approach, and cross-referenced the three case studies. Finally, I synthesised the findings in relation to the research questions.

In this chapter, I focus on the analysis stemming from the tree nodes Engagement and Specific Moments. The data sets I draw upon are: verbal and non-verbal interactions, interviews, observations, reflections from my journal, and questionnaires. In the chapter, I structure the discussion according to the three ‘heads of Hecate’, across the three case studies. I consider each ‘head’, and explore the phenomenon of engagement, how it manifests and appears, within specific frames of each Specific Moment.
5.1. SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

In this section I consider the nature of learner engagement in AL/process drama within the domain of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), for Italian as additional language, at an intermediate level of proficiency.

The analysis below adopts a Vygotskyan perspective, according to which learning is mediated, by tools or by systems of symbols, with language being a vital system of mediation. Sociocultural Theory (SCT) focuses on how (AL) learners influence each other, and how the external context affects the learners’ internal conditions, creating collective ZPDs. Of particular relevance for this analysis are the concepts (illustrated in Chapter Two) of internalisation, symbolic mediation and self-regulation (Lantolf, 2000). The analysis is also influenced by gesture studies: AL learners engage in embodied behaviour, including gesture and gaze to gain control of the self and transform from object- or other-regulation into self-regulation (Platt & Brooks, 2008).

To explore the construct of engagement, I draw on Van Lier’s (2004) ecological theory. As noted in the literature review, ecological theory is most appropriate for understanding engagement in process drama, as the it considers engagement as meaning-making that is not only social, but also in imagined worlds (Van Lier, 2004, p. 44). This is particularly relevant, as it establishes a common framework between the ecological approach, and process drama.

Van Lier (2004) frames engagement as an active relationship with the environment, which involves perception and action, or “perception-in-action” (p. 97). The perceptual process begins with exposure to ‘authentic’ language, i.e., language indexed to a specific context. When this is met with receptivity, related to a spirit of exploration, curiosity and play, learners can experience various degrees of ‘attention’, from focussing to attending, to the “rare” state of vigilance (p. 52). When AL learners engage they process language through a cognitive, emotional and physical investment.
Van Lier’s (2008) construct of agency is also relevant. His definition of agency relates to self-regulation by the learner (or group). Agency mediates and is mediated by the sociocultural context. It includes an awareness of the responsibility for one’s own actions, within the environment (p. 172). Van Lier maps agency across six levels:

- Level (1) Learners are unresponsive or minimally responsive;
- Level (2) Learners carry out instructions given by the teachers;
- Level (3) Learners volunteer answers to teachers’ questions;
- Level (4) Learners voluntarily ask questions;
- Level (5) Learners volunteer to assist, or instruct other learners and create a collaborative agency event;
- Level (6) Learners voluntarily enter into debate with one another, and create a collaborative agency event. (2008, pp. 169-170)

My analysis seems to suggest that that ‘perception-in-action’ in this context was fuelled by dramatic tension, and activated a process such as is illustrated in Figure 5.2. This process was initiated by an experience in the drama; this entailed exposure to ‘authentic’ language, which magnified receptivity, enhanced vigilance, and generated various degrees of agency. Throughout this process, the participants engaged in meaningful dialogic communication.

![Figure 5.2. Perception-in-Action Process in AL/Process Drama.](image-url)
Below I explain how this process operated, within specific frames of the three Specific Moments (SMs).

**Case Study One**

Within Specific Moment One the perception-in-action process started with the dramatic tension inherent within the train arrest episode (Visual Appendix V_SM1). Here the student-participants, in role as journalists travelling on a train from Rome to Milan, are accused by the Ticket Inspector of holding fake train tickets. I now proceed to illustrate each step of the process visualised in Figure 5.2, beginning with exposure to authentic language, then receptivity and vigilance, leading to agency.

**Exposure to ‘Authentic’ Language**

In ‘perception-in-action’, the perceptive process begins with ‘exposure to authentic language’. Turns 25-39 of SM1 illustrate the kinds of exposure to ‘authentic’ language that characterise AL/process drama, when participants are in role:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TURN</th>
<th>UTTERANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>TI: So, let me ask you right away: where did you get these tickets?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Teodoro: <em>(inaudible)</em> Delay!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>TI: Where are they from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Vera: <em>Centrale</em>!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Mara: <em>Shanghai</em>!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td><em>(Overlapping voices)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>TI [keeps inspecting tickets]: The tickets! Where did you get them? [Tears up a ticket]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Teodoro: Why, no!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Passengers: Nooo!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>TI: Where did you get them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Flora: We have paid!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Mara: In our… office… commerce…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>TI: And where’s that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Viola [whispering]: In China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Mara [to Inspector]: In China!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Transcript 5.1. SM1: 25-39.*
In this frame, a misunderstanding typical of a foreign language situation occurs. The Ticket Inspector asks “where are they [the tickets] from?” (T 27), and Vera replies: “Centrale” (T 28), apparently meaning *Stazione Centrale*, Milan’s Central Railway Station. Her answer suggests she might have understood “where are you going to?” instead. In the next turn, Mara offers an alternative answer: “Shanghai” (T 29), correcting her classmate’s error, and collaborating in the interaction. However, the Inspector is seeking a more detailed answer, and continues until, through a joint effort among several speakers, the desired information is reached (“In our office... commerce”). Here, the flow of the conversation is not broken by the initial misunderstanding; the teacher-in-role moves on to a new action (inspecting tickets), keeping the flow of the conversation. The Ticket Inspector reinforces the message (the tickets being fake) through the powerful gesture of tearing up a ticket. This injects dramatic tension, and provokes an affective response (“Why, no!” “Noo!”, Turns 32-33), followed by Flora calling out: “We have paid!” (T 35). From Flora’s utterance, a number of inferences can be drawn: Flora, using ‘we’, is speaking on behalf of the group, and is therefore engaged in a *dialogic*, rather than monologic interaction. As noted above, a dialogic construction of social experience is at the core of the sociocultural perspective (Lantolf, 2000). Moreover, Vera is creative in her interpretation of the context and her language construction, as her utterance was not previously scaffolded, but was created spontaneously, in role, in response to the context. The affective response generated triggers high communicative involvement. This is reinforced by Flora assigning the highest score (10/10) for both the ‘communicative’ and ‘affective’ values in her self-evaluation of SM1 (Figure 4.3).

Ultimately, the answer to the question: “where are the tickets from?” emerges from a collective, dialogic effort (T 39) which, in sociocultural terms, could be interpreted as collective scaffolding (Donato, 1994). The collective ZPD is triggered by exposure to authentic interaction, in response to the teacher-in-role: the student-participants are negotiating construction of meaning collectively, as a group. Rather than a one-on-one Initiation/Response/Feedback (IRF) exchange, which Van Lier (1996) describes as artificial classroom communication, this interaction involves a collective ZPD within an ‘authentic’ interaction, characterised by: an initiation, *in role*; multiple responses; a gesture (T 31); an affective response (T 31-33); feedback (T 34); and multiple students’ responses, *in role* T 36,38,39). This pattern may appear like an IRF, but it is quite different: the teacher remains in role during the feedback process; the students close the interaction; a misunderstanding occurs (T 27-28) but does not disrupt the flow. For Van Lier, rather than artificial classroom communication, ‘natural’ language resembles ‘real’ language, and is “indexed” to the specific setting (p. 124). In the teachers’ focus group, Paola states:
The train arrest seemed absolutely real, because that’s exactly the way it would be in reality. (CS1, TP_FG, 1:04:39).

The data above seems to suggest that, in SM1, student-participants experienced a kind of (AL) language practice, which reflects Kramsch’s (1985) qualities of natural discourse (see Figure 2.3), indexed to the specific context of the drama.

Receptivity

To explore how ‘receptivity’ was amplified by the dramatic form, I focus on a segment of SM1, Turns 47-59:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>TI: Fine [quietly, into the phone]: I’ll collect them now. [To the passengers]: passports! Thank you; thank you [collects nine passports] Thank you. Passports… excellent! You have the right to remain silent… [Passengers grow restless]: You have the right to make one phone call…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Viola: I’m not giving you my passport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>TI: I’m sorry?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Viola [shaking her head]: I’m not giving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>TI: Why not, Madam?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Viola: Because you are not the police—police man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Teodoro: When do the police come?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>TI: The police are on their way!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Teodoro: You, too!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Tommaso: Can You show me an ID? Who are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>TI: certainly. I am an officer of [looks at name tag] the Italian National Railway Network!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Tommaso: It’s fake! [Hysterical laughter]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Passengers [shouting all together]: Faaake! Faaake!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transcript 5.2. SM1: 47-59.

In Transcript 5.2, receptivity to the context, to other speakers, and to the language seems to grow with the group’s exchanges, increasing the degree of dramatic tension. A sense of exploration, curiosity and play, characteristic of receptivity, is evident in each of a series of utterances. First, Viola’s bold statement “I’m not giving you my passport” (T 48) reveals receptivity to the context of the drama, to the gesture of the Inspector collecting tickets, and to her fellow-passengers’ objection. Viola’s statement injects a strong tension of relationships, in a dramatic frame that is already charged with ‘tension of the task’ (Haseman & O’Toole, 1986). Further on, the other passengers show receptivity to Viola’s communicative act, refusing to
collaborate. As such, the passengers reveal a disposition to be explorative and playful, bouncing off her initiative.

In Turn 56, Tommaso manipulates the language used earlier by the Inspector, to create a paradoxical situation in which he is accused of being a fraud. Shortly afterwards (T 59), all passengers show receptivity to Tommaso’s language (“Fakake! Fakake!”), strengthening his accusation. This manipulates mood and injects further tension of relationships (Haseman & O’Toole, 1986). The participants’ echoing of Tommaso’s accusation suggests a willingness to explore and manipulate the language: by recycling the Inspectors’ accusation (the tickets are fake) passengers are now accusing the Inspector himself of having fake documents. Receptivity was thus considerably stimulated by the drama, in particular by the exposure of the ‘authentic’ language in the improvised interactions. Such receptivity seems to be enhanced by the dramatic context, and bounced around all of the participants engaged in the social interaction, creating a magnifying effect.

The augmented ‘receptivity’ resulted in some participants not just noticing but attending to the language more closely. For example, in Transcript 5.2, Teodoro’s utterance “You, too” (T 55), denotes noticing, and attending to the language. Here, his use of the formal register indicates a degree of language awareness; in Italian, the formal pronoun for ‘you’ - Lei - is required in this situation, rather than the familiar ‘tu’. Similarly, Tommaso notices and attends to the language, using the formal in addressing the Inspector in Turn 56 (“Can You show me an ID?”). This level of awareness is not reached by all of the student-participants, but only by some, in some instances (T 55, 56, 63, 87). In fact, despite my continuous use of the formal in SM1, only some SP notice, and attend to this aspect of the language. For those who do, it suggests a degree of perceptual awareness, in terms of noticing and attending to the language.

To sum up, in this exchange, student-participants seem to be receptive, in different degrees, to the language, to the dramatic context, and to each other. This receptivity seems to be stimulated by the social interaction, and the dramatic tension that fuels it. It appears to be magnified by the dynamics of the group, in role. This is in line with the dramatic form of process drama, a collective rather than individual form, where the ‘dramatic elsewhere’ is co-created.

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20 Indicated throughout the transcripts by the use of capital letter.
Vigilance

The analysis seems to indicate that, in SM1, some of the students might have experienced a degree of ‘vigilance’. For example, in the frame above (Transcript 5.2), Tommaso’s accusation, in Turn 58, seems reflective of Van Lier’s notion of vigilance: he appears alert, ready to respond quickly. His accusation is accompanied by an alteration of paralanguage (shouting; hysterical laughter), suggesting a heightened affective response and receptivity to the language. Both Tommaso and the rest of the passengers are ready to act (Turns 58-59) turning the allegations of fraud back against the Inspector. These responses seem to suggest Tommaso’s state of ‘vigilance’. This is consistent with Tommaso’s perception of his own engagement scores, with both the ‘communicative’ and ‘affective’ values rated at the same high score of 9/10 (Figure 4.3).

‘Vigilance’, is defined by Van Lier as a heightened response in dealing with not only predictable but also novel stimuli (1996, p. 52). In the Table below (5.1), I provide two examples: ‘vigilance’, intended as an example of heightened response in reacting to predictable stimuli (Turns 45-46), and ‘vigilance’ as responding to novel stimuli (Turns 47-48).

Table 5.1. SM1: Predictable vs. Novel Stimuli Response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response to a predictable stimulus</th>
<th>Response to a novel stimulus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45 TI: …do you have a passport?</td>
<td>47 TI: You have the right to make one phone call…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 Passengers [altogether]: Yes of course!</td>
<td>48 Viola: I’m not giving you my passport!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the dialogue from the left column, the learners, in role as passengers, are placed in a predictable communicative situation: being asked if they have something. This communicative transaction is likely to sound familiar, in terms of practicing the answer to a question regarding possession (“Do you have…?”). On the other hand, in the right column, learners are presented with a novel communicative situation (being arrested); this is arguably an unusual situation to practice in an (AL) classroom, and participants are not likely to have practiced this before. Nonetheless, they respond promptly to the novel stimulus, denoting a degree of ‘vigilance’ to the new language elements. I interpret this as evidence of a heightened response in the participants’ improvisation, in Turns 47-48.
For Van Lier, once in a vigilant state, the learner can respond to the language, processing it through a cognitive, emotional, physical and social investment. In Table 5.1, all speakers' responses, in role, are immediate, following the interlocutor's request. In this case, Viola's processing of the language in an emotional way is confirmed by her self-evaluation of engagement in SM1, in which she gives the maximum score of 10/10 to the ‘affective’ engagement value, and 9/10 for the ‘communicative’ value (Figure 4.3).

This ‘perception-in-action’ process may have entailed the ‘intensely lived experience’, perezhivanie, through which “interactions in the ZPD are individually perceived, appropriated, and represented” by language learners (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002, p. 49). Through this process, SPs seemed to engage in meaningful, dialogic communication. Within the lived-experience of perezhivanie, participants seem to have experienced various degrees of agency.

Agency

To consider agency in SM1, I focus on Turns 73-87:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>TI: I know. Just a moment! [Steps back to make another phone call] I think it's a different issue… [Returns with a different attitude, lower status] OK, I apologise… these tickets are… [looks at tickets] actually… fake… but it's not your problem. It’s a… wider problem [gesture to indicate an extended surface] So I’m going to ask you to kindly get off the train…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Passengers: Nooo!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>TI: I’ll keep you, I’ll keep you for a few hours… at most 24 hours…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Passengers [whispering in disappointment] Nooo!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>TI: OK? We'll carry out some identity checks and then…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Passengers: Nooo!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Alessia: We have… our commitments!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>TI [raising his voice]: Commitments? We’re talking fraud against the State Railways! What commitments- what commitments have you got, going to the hairdresser? Please!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Flora: no: If we are… la –late (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>TI [patronising]: Italy is the country of delays…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Marco [threatening]: Hey that’s enough [pointing] Call your manager!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>TI [to Marco]: Yes, he’s coming!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Marco: Yes!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>TI: He’s already asked me to get you off this train. Please stand over here!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Passengers: No… no… You cannot!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transcript 5.3. SM1: 73-87.
In SM1, agency manifests as learners self-regulate their behaviour in both verbal and non-verbal communication. An example of agency in verbal communication is Alessia’s justification of the passengers’ reaction by saying, “We have our commitments!” (T 79). Here Alessia is voluntarily answering the teacher-in-role’s question, i.e., level (3) on Van Lier’s (2008) scale. But her utterance is more than an answer to a teacher’s question: it denotes an effort in problem-solving, through a self-regulated verbal contribution. This is followed by Marco’s threat, “That’s it, call your manager!” (T 83), stepping up to level (4) in Van Lier’s (2008) agency scale. In terms of non-verbal communication, Marco accompanies his utterance with a gesture (pointing at the TI); here, pointing can be interpreted as embodied behaviour, promoting self-regulation in the speaker (Platt & Brooks, 2008). Viola’s reaction in Turn 93 (“No, I’m sorry. We want to talk to a policeman”), may appear like a level (4) on Van Lier’s scale, although, in effect, she does not ‘voluntarily ask a question’, but issues an order directed to the teacher. This dynamic also applies to Marco’s utterance (T 83), and is made possible by the unique context of the drama. 

Another example of agency in ‘verbal and non-verbal communication’ can be found in the exchange between Alessia the Inspector and Flora (Turns 79-81). Flora seems to display a high degree of initiative with language, in responding to the Inspector’s provocation and backing up Alessia’s justification. On a non-verbal level, Alessia makes a sweeping gesture with her hands (Visual Appendix V_SM1, 00:57:05) accompanying her utterance; this, again, is an embodied, self-regulated means to gain control of the self. Flora’s communicative function is to support and clarify Alessia’s utterance (“No: if we are late…”). She reacts in response to the Inspector’s lack of concern, without the need for any scaffolding from the teacher. Here, Flora is displaying a degree of agency in her verbal contribution, both in how and when to intervene (turn-taking), and in how to construct her sentence (utterance design). These observations suggest that Flora is operating from level (5) of Van Lier’s scale, and that she is highly engaged. Her questionnaire reinforces this point, as she self-evaluated her ‘communicative’ and ‘affective’ engagement at 10/10 (Figure 4.3). Her comment in the interview also aligns with this point:

Flora: In the past, I always sit down and then I don’t... hear anything. Now [I think] ehm ‘What is he saying? What is she saying?’ [...] How interesting; then I can remember, and then I go to class and say to all the students and then we discuss!
Erika: Very well; and is this something you’ve done before the process drama, or have you started doing it now?
F: Now! (Flora, pp. 3-4:41-5)
Here Flora suggests that since the drama intervention, she has started to engage in a process of conscious attention, leading her to become aware, focus, attend to the language, and actively engage in discussion. Many SP’s comments reinforce the idea of agency in terms of speaking. Below I report one example, Chun’s view:

Erika: What happens in my classes?
Chun: Speak, we can speak!
E: So you mean – you speak more?
C: Yes, because we can choose; because if... in the past, my course [...] the teacher decided everything. But in your course... it’s better; there’s room, we can choose, we can learn the thing we want. (Chun, p. 2:27-35)

This kind of comment, connecting process drama, agency and communication, is shared by the great majority of student-participants.

Moreover, the kind of agency fostered by the process drama seems to be characterised by a sense of playfulness, related to the language and to the manipulation of form. First, agency manifests as a sense of ‘playfulness with language’. Here ‘language play’ is defined, based on Lantolf (1997), as an active, playful attitude, involving repetition, expansion and substitution. While Lantolf concentrates on inner and private speech, in this analysis I observed ‘playfulness with language’ in the social speech of participants. This emerges in several instances throughout the drama. A key example from SM1 is when the inspector accuses the passengers of holding fake tickets, and the passengers (guided by Tommaso) flip the accusation, turning it back onto the Inspector (Transcript 5.2, T 58). Through repetition of the word ‘fake’ they turn the situation around, denoting a sense of playfulness.

Second, agency manifests as a sense of playfulness related to the manipulation of dramatic form, in particular dramatic role and negotiation of status. The student-participants’ agency in manipulation of status emerges strongly in the train arrest episode, as the SPs reject the Inspector’s orders. In particular, their agency is so resilient that it displaced my attitude, prompting me to re-evaluate my overt and covert attitudes (see Chapter Six). Across SM1, there is a definite re-negotiation of status: initially the Inspector holds higher status (Turns 1-49); this is challenged by Viola (T 50), followed by the others; ultimately, the passengers gain a higher status (T 101). Throughout this exchange, a sense of playfulness is evident in the way status is negotiated and re-negotiated, and manifested in the body language, paralanguage and frequent laughter (T 11, 102, 113). In his essay on laughter, Bergson (1900/2008) describes it as “a sort of social gesture” (p. 17, original emphasis). In SM1, the act of laughter binds the passengers together socially, in a playful revenge against the Inspector’s authority.
Third, a sense of playfulness emerges in the manipulation of dramatic form, with regard to the dramatic situation and its relationship with the real context. During SM1, the participants do not remain passive, but actively fight to protect their new-gained status. This is significant given that, during the interviews, student-participants indicated that they were used to a more teacher-centred style, with the teacher seen as an ‘expert’ who could never be challenged. Indeed, from the beginning of the intervention, the Chinese cohort had consistently displayed a “polite and subservient behaviour”, as Paola put it in the focus group. By contrast, in SM1, the SPs actively challenge the teacher, with a sense of playfulness engendered by the drama. Paola acknowledges that in the train episode, the student-participants were strong-headed and resistant. She adds: “when they were playing a role, they felt they had a right to rebel, since you were no longer the teacher” (TP_FG, 1:09:37) Paola here makes a connection between the student-participants’ agency, and being in role. Such negotiation of status, in role, was made possible by the dramatic form of process drama. In a sociocultural paradigm, this suggests that process drama mediated the participants’ ability to self-regulate. Paola’s written observation of SM1 seems to confirm this point:

On the train: I believe this moment worked really well. Great engagement on everyone’s behalf, both the kids and the teacher are improvising, everyone is in the moment, there is cooperation, everything works! Some kids in particular are really in role, really inside the situation. Everyone speaks Italian, even amongst themselves. Once again engagement plays in favour of Italian. (Paola, OBS, p. 6:1-5)

Paola’s comment points to the participants being engaged in the drama (“some kids…are really inside the situation”), in the target language (“everyone speaks in Italian”), at a dialogic level (“there is cooperation”), while being “in the moment”. Paola’s (TP) comment also reinforces agency as language learners and being in role.

In particular, the teacher-participants of CS1 monitored very closely the use of Italian (L2), versus Chinese (L1) in the classroom. At the beginning of the intervention, they all noted how the student-participants used the L2 only when addressing the teacher, but not amongst themselves. As the intervention progressed, all the TPs remarked that the use of the L2 increased substantially. An example:

I’m very happy to acknowledge that they’re all speaking in Italian, obviously feeling engaged in a situation, and identifying with a role (in this case, an Italian role) are an incentive to speak Italian, because actually in this instance the Italian language represents a fundamental element to make the situation realistic. I think this is very important evidence, considering that in all other classes the students tended to speak in Chinese among themselves. (Paola, OBS, pp. 4,5:46-3)
While watching the re-play of SM1, Paola points out that the participants actively respond “according to what they believed in” (TP FG, 1:05:31). Again, a connection is made between agency and playfulness in negotiation of status, enabled by role.

Finally, the SPs also manipulate dramatic tension, as I mentioned throughout the discussion. One example of active manipulation of tension is Viola by refusing to comply with the orders, in Turn 48, Tommaso in Turn 56, followed by the others, in Turn 59 (Transcript 5.2). Significantly, the active manipulation of tension created higher receptivity and vigilance, which resulted in more agency, feeding back into the perception-in-action cycle (Figure 5.2) into a new dramatic action. In effect, as diagram 5.2 shows, dramatic tension fuels the perception-in-action cycle.

To sum up, it appears that the perception-in-action process generated various levels of agency. This agency manifested in both verbal and non-verbal communication. In considering Van Lier’s (2008) scale of agency (Figure 2.6), the data suggests that SPs’ agency in SM1 spans across level (3), i.e., “volunteering answers to the teacher’s questions”, level (4) “voluntarily asking questions”, and can even take on stronger forms, like issuing orders directed at the teacher. Occasionally, agency reached level (5), “volunteering to assist other learners and create a collaborative agency event” (2008, p. 169). Moreover, this agency was characterised by a sense of playfulness with language, and with the manipulation of dramatic form, in terms of role (negotiation of status) and situation (real/dramatic context).

Case Study Two

I now explore the perception-in-action process outlined above (Figure 5.2) drawing on data related to Specific Moment Two (Visual Appendix V_SM2). Here the SPs, in role as psychologists, are discussing an interview with the schizophrenic subject, and find out that he has disappeared.

Exposure to Authentic Language

The exchanges in SM2 point to a similar dynamic to that outlined for SM1, with exposure to authentic language once again being critical to the cycle of learner engagement. To illustrate these points, I focus on Turns 1-6.
Analysing Learner Engagement: Interpreting Hecate’s Voices

TURN | UTTERANCE
---|---
1 | Teacher in role (TIR): Very good… very good… so before we meet our patient, let us revisit our strategies together: what are we going to do?
2 | Olga: To melt…
3 | Yoriko [searching through her notes]: Ice!
4 | Olga: Yes, to melt -to break the ice eh… we have to… go… all together to the bathroom, with toothbrushes… because we know that… Fabrizio Ferro likes brushing teeth a lot
5 | TIR: Brushing his teeth, of course.
6 | Olga: Yes, for this reason we have to find, to try something… all together… with… for… for… to gain his respect. And then, little by little, we begin to talk… about his problems… while we [mimes brushing teeth].

Transcript 5.4. SM2: 1-6.

Here, as teacher-in-role, I open with an initiation: “What are we to do?” (T1). A string of multiple responses follow: Olga and Yoriko respond in a collaborative effort. Olga: “to melt”; Yoriko: “ice” (T 2-3). In a sociocultural paradigm, this suggests a dialogic collaboration between Olga and Yoriko, to create meaning. Furthermore, Olga’s utterance in Turn 4 suggests that she is construing the situation as part of a social group: “We have to… go… altogether to the bathroom…”. Olga uses the plural subject pronoun ‘we’, and reinforces her meaning through the words ‘all together’. This reveals that Olga is framing the situation in a dialogical stance, speaking as part of a group.

As part of her response, Olga adds: “Fabrizio Ferro likes brushing teeth a lot” (T 4). Here she uses a form that is comprehensible, but not exactly correct. This is followed by my feedback, in role: “he likes brushing his teeth, of course” (T 5), using the required verb. This instance illustrates an example of the teacher giving feedback, in role, without breaking the flow of the interaction, or dramatic context. If I were to break the dramatic frame, I could have noted that we use the reflexive verb ‘lavarsi’ rather than the transitive verb ‘lavare’ to convey ‘brushing his teeth’. However, I remain in role, and re-phrase this utterance, modelling the correct version, so that the scaffolding occurs in role. This kind of (AL) language practice seems to reflect Kramsch’s (1985) qualities of natural discourse (Figure 2.3), indexed to the specific context of the drama.

In this exchange, it is a student, Olga, and not the teacher, who closes the interaction (T 6). As Van Lier notes, in an IRF exchange, the teacher starts and finishes the interaction. In this way, the teacher maintains control, and, through it, “strips turn taking and utterance design away from the student’s contribution” (p. 152). The data analysis suggests that, through

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21 Olga’s original version: ‘piace lavare i denti’. My feedback: ‘piace lavarsi i denti’.
process drama, the communication exchange has *empowered* Olga as a speaker, by letting her express an opinion (T 6). Such empowerment occurs in role; the teacher intervention (feedback) has not interrupted the dramatic exchange. However, it appears that Olga is still not sure about the correct grammar form to employ: in fact, she *mimes* the action that represents the verb (T 6). Olga thus compensates for her lack of linguistic knowledge by performing a gesture, which allows her to self-regulate, remaining in role during the exchange. Ultimately, the answer to the question: “what are we to do?” (T 1) emerges from a *collective* effort. This is an example of *dialogic* interaction, in responding to the teacher-in-role, and co-construction of meaning through collective ZPDs.

**Receptivity**

In SM2, *receptivity* seems to be ‘amplified’ by the dramatic form. I focus on Turns 32-62:
Analysing Learner Engagement: Interpreting Hecate’s Voices

32 TIR: Alright, so “what is the ghost who scares you –You”. Now, my dear colleagues: do you think we should we use formal or informal address with our patient?

33 Hiru: Formal!

34 Yoriko: Yes, I also think formal because he… was… also is, a teacher… and maybe he is… used to… using formal…

35 TIR: Using formal.

36 Yoriko: Yes!

37 TIR: But what effect would it have if…ehm

38 Hiru: In my opinion, we still haven’t… haven’t conquered his trust, so at the beginning we have to speak formal…

39 [Alfonso nods]

40 Hiru: And then little by little we’ll have time to change in formal.

41 TIR: So –informal- do You think that after a few questions we could

42 Hiru: Switch

43 TIR: Switch and use informal address? Do you all agree?

44 [Olga, Catherine, and Yoriko nod. Sandra shakes her head]

45 TIR: Dr. Torricelli doesn’t agree: let’s see…

46 Sandra: I think it’s better to use informal because… we are… his friends, are we not strangers… it’s better that… we… are informal

47 TIR: Quite honestly, I find myself… I agree with You.

48 Sabina: Me too!

49 TIR: Because… in my opinion… of course, in a similar situation, with a… [pause] normal person… we’d have to use the formal… because we don’t know him, because he is a teacher… but in this… very delicate context… dealing with… madness… mental illness… perhaps using an informal register could help our patient…

50 [Olga nods]

51 TIR: Well, the three of us agree. Let’s see what the others think. [To Olga] Dr. Comandi!

52 Olga: Yes, also we’ll be in the bathroom, right? It’s an informal environment…

53 [All laugh]

54 TIR: Yes, it’s an informal environment, yes! Let’s say… it’s a very peculiar context, isn’t it?

55 Sabina: Very intimate!

56 TIR: Very intimate, very ‘day to day’; we are trying to re-create this daily routine…

57 Olga: Yes!

58 Catherine: Ah, I think we should… use the informal!

59 TIR: Informal?

60 TIR: OK, let’s see who-

61 Hiru: -At the beginning? From the beginning? Informal from the beginning?

62 [Olga, Catherine, Sandra nod heavily]

Transcript 5.5. SM2: 32-62.
In Transcript 5.5, ‘receptivity’ can be observed from a variety of angles: first, student-participants are receptive to the language. Each participant also denotes a degree of receptivity to the dramatic context, and to each other.

Yoriko, for example, mentions ‘the subject’ being a teacher as a justification for using the formal address; this might denote a degree of receptivity to the Italian language, where the formal register is used according to status, and to the dramatic roles (‘the subject’ being a teacher). Hiru, in turn, is receptive to Yoriko’s contribution, and displays curiosity, exploration and play by building on it: she suggests starting with formal, but then switching to informal, once trust is gained (T 38,40). Hiru is therefore receptive not only to the Italian language, and to Yoriko, but also to the dramatic context.

Sandra’s shaking of the head (T 44) and vocalising an opposite point of view (T 46) also indicate a degree of receptivity to Hiru and Yoriko, to the language, and to the dramatic context: Sandra considers not only the Italian language, but also the purpose of the dramatic task (doctors trying to befriend a patient). From here, the other student-participants seem to become receptive to Sandra’s idea; her idea thus becomes persuasive for the others: initially Olga (T 50, 52, 57, 62), and then Catherine (T 58, 63) are receptive to Sandra’s utterance. As such, this exchange reveals that, in line with process drama being a collective form, receptivity seems to be stimulated by, and to bounce off, each participant. This echoes the discussion of SM1 and the receptivity of the other participants to Tommaso’s language (SM1, T 59-60), creating a magnifying effect.

Furthermore, this excerpt exhibits a degree of linguistic meta-awareness. In effect, all student-participants discuss the implications of formal/informal register, in role. This might suggest a degree of ‘receptivity’, as openness to the experience of speaking the language. Such degree of language meta-awareness was not present in any interactions produced by any participant in CS1 (in SM1, or in any other interaction).

To reiterate, in this extract of SM2, the student-participants’ ‘receptivity’ seems to be stimulated, and amplified, by the collective form of process drama. The SPs seem to be receptive to the language, to the dramatic context and to each other, and to demonstrate a degree of linguistic meta-awareness (function of formal/informal in the Italian language), woven through the dramatic roles and situation.

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22 In Italian, the choice between formal or informal address can affect the construction of a sentence in various ways, because in formal address the person spoken to is referred to in the third person, rather than the second. This affects the choice of personal pronouns, verb endings and possessive adjectives.
Vigilance

The frame above (Transcript 5.5) is marked by a steady, fast-paced rhythm. As I ask a question (T 32), Hiru responds promptly (T 33); with no gap of time, Yoriko also swiftly responds, overlapping with Hiru (T 34). Similarly, as I pose a question in Turn 43, Olga, Yoriko and Sandra react quickly, embodying their responses (T 44). The reaction time is immediate; there are no gaps, indicating an alert response to the language stimuli, which is not pre-planned, but improvised. To further explore vigilance, I focus on Hiru, in a different frame of SM2: Turns 60-78.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIR: OK, let’s see who-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hiru: -At the beginning? From the beginning? Informal from the beginning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Olga, Catherine, Sandra nod heavily]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIR [nodding to Hiru]: Keep going!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiru: When when when... when we go there... we go there, to visit our patient, we have to wear in a casual way...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfonso: Oh yes, yes!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiru: Not a suit...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfonso: Of course, of course!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiru: Things like a tie... it’s not good. [Points to Alfonso’s clothes] Like this!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIR: We have to... we have to be informal in our clothing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiru: Yes!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIR: And... can we wear our... white coats? [Mimes wearing something]... the doctor’s uniform, the white coat?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoriko: No!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIR: No... so we have to... wear our normal clothes-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiru: -Normal, yes yes!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Sandra and Catherine nod]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIR: In your opinion what would happen if we go there wearing our white coats? What effect would it create?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiru: It’d make him... give him scared!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Catherine nods]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transcript 5.6. SM2: 60-78.

In Turn 61, Hiru interrupts the teacher, to address another speaker:

TIR: OK, let’s see who-
Hiru: -At the beginning? From the beginning? Informal from the beginning?

The chronemics of communication are relevant here: During previous role plays, Hiru, a middle aged Japanese woman, would always wait politely before asking a question. In effect, it is considered unlikely that a Japanese student would interrupt the teacher speaking, as this
breaks the classroom etiquette (Yorozu, 2001). In my journal, I initially noted that Hiru did not verbally participate in teacher-in-role improvisations, where turn-taking needed to be negotiated by the students. Instead, Hiru would wait for the out of role discussions. After the first teacher-in-role intervention (workshop 1), I wrote in my journal:

TIR REFLECTION: Hiru did not intervene in the teacher-in-role intervention; however, when I come out of role and ask them to recap what has happened, she promptly volunteers to summarise the situation. (RJ, p. 64:12-15)

This comment concerned Hiru’s behaviour in workshop 1; in contrast, in workshop 5 (SM2), Hiru not only intervenes during the teacher-in-role (T 61), but actually interrupts the teacher’s utterance. I validate her willingness to communicate, and signal to her to continue, both non-verbally (nodding) and verbally (T 63). Similarly, in Turns 68 and 74, Hiru’s utterances are fast-paced and almost overlap with mine. Hiru’s act of interrupting the teacher, and responding promptly, could be regarded as a ‘readiness to act’ in a heightened perceptual awareness.

As for embodiment, after Hiru is given my ‘approval to continue’ (T 63), her utterance in Turn 64 is accompanied by a shift in body language: while uttering “when… when… when” she adjusts her posture, and straightens her back; when saying “we go there” she embodies the action, moving her hands in a circular motion (V_SM2, 00:44:05). As she speaks, she continues to gesticulate to express meaning: for example, as she says ‘wear’, her hands swipe over her body. She seems vigilant, focussed on the ‘here and now’ of the situation; as she is talking, she actively becomes aware of Alfonso’s clothing, and uses it as a symbol to mediate her meaning (“Things like a tie… it’s not good. [Points to Alfonso’s clothes] Like this!” (T 68). Overall, Transcript 5.6 shows how in Turns 64, 66, 68, 70, 74 and 77 Hiru initiates interaction and responds promptly, with no hesitation. Further into SM2, Hiru continues to respond promptly: for example, as I address the group to announce the escape, Hiru replies: “yes?” (T 144); again, after the escape is announced, she suggests promptly: “We have to look for him!” (T 155). These alert responses seem to suggest that Hiru was engaged in this frame. This is consistent with her engagement scores, with both ‘communicative’ and ‘affective’ values at 9/10 for this Specific Moment (Figure 4.6).

The analysis seems to suggest that not only Hiru, but also several other student-participants experienced a degree of ‘vigilance’. For example, I consider Yoriko’s reaction, in Turns 146 of SM2.
In my journal, I describe this frame of SM2 in terms of dramatic tension:

Once I felt I had generated enough expectation [...] I went to call [the subject]. I returned holding his striped pyjamas, in a state of shock: the subject had escaped! This generated some tension of surprise; the mood swiftly became alarmed. (RJ, p. 82-3-5)

In the entry above, I frame this moment as an injection of tension (of surprise), causing a swift change of mood, which I describe as “alarmed”. As I slowly walk towards the table holding the subject’s pyjamas, Yoriko looks alert, staring at me. When I say “something terrible has happened” (T 145), she promptly replies. Here, because of the building up of expectations, it is likely that the tension created an affective response in the participants. In asking “has he escaped?” Yoriko exhibits a degree of vigilance. Her comments seem to reinforce this point:

When we were having the meeting, this for me was a new experience because usually, I think first: if the teacher asks me something, I think a lot, I arrange [the thoughts] in my head and then speak. But during the meeting I couldn’t think, it was like a live conversation [...] [process drama] is different; this is like at home, in the street, very reality.23 (Yoriko, p. 3:4-24)

Yoriko’s comment suggests that she sees the kind of language emerging during process drama as more ‘authentic’, prompting her to respond in real time. This state may have generated a degree of vigilance which, in Van Lier’s definition (1996), involves a cognitive, emotional, physical and social investment. This evokes the experience of perezhivanie, where learners perceive, interpret and appropriate interactions. Through this process, SPs appear to have engaged in meaningful, dialogic communication, involving various degrees of agency.

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23 Original version: ‘molto realtà’
Agency

In SM2, agency once again appears to manifest as learners self-regulate their behaviour in both verbal and non-verbal communication. To explore this concept, I focus on Turns 79-85.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn 79</th>
<th>TIR: Alright, so: no white coat; no formal register; toothbrush and toothpaste for everyone. Ehms… how many people can approach the subject?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turn 80</td>
<td>Hiru: Two or three!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn 81</td>
<td>TIR: So not everyone?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn 82</td>
<td>[Everyone shakes their head]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn 83</td>
<td>Olga: No!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn 84</td>
<td>Hiru: The room is not very big!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn 85</td>
<td>TIR: Our bathroom is small, indeed. Ehms who? Who feels up to it? Who wants to interview Mr Ferro using toothbrush and toothpaste?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transcript 5.8. SM2: 79-85.

With regard to verbal contributions, student-participants seem to display a degree of agency in utterance design, i.e., the way they create their sentences. An example is Hiru’s utterance in Turn 84 (“The room is not very big”) in response to my question: “So not everyone?” (T 81). Hiru’s reply denotes a degree of self-regulation, as it follows her own independent idea: I had not scaffolded this language structure into the question (for example, asking: “how big is the room?”). Her agency here is related to linking my question to her own idea (about the space), in an autonomous way. This also indicates an engagement with the drama; in particular, her contribution in Turn 84 builds on, and sharpens, the dramatic focus. In my journal, I make the connection between agency, dramatic form and engagement:

I realised that all participants are dramatically engaged; they are in role, actively contributing to the co-construction of the dramatic world. Through a clear focus, role and situation the participants engage in autonomous dialogue. (RJ, p.80:18-22)

Further examples of agency in verbal communication abound in SM2. For example, in Turn 26 (Appendix S.1), I rephrase Alfonso’s utterance, with the purpose of clarifying it, as I ask Sandra: “Dr. Torricelli, in your experience, if we ask Fabrizio [slowly] ‘What – is – the ghost – who – frightens – you?’ how might he react?”. Here Sandra is faced with a complex question; instead of using it to scaffold her answer (like “he might react badly”) her response displays a degree of self-regulation in the target language: “I think ehm… at the beginning… he... might ignore us… and then… he might talk about his problems” (T 27).
In terms of turn-taking, from Turns 95 to 103 (Transcript 5.10), the contributions are managed autonomously by the student-participants, who enter into debate with one another. Another example of autonomous turn-taking is the discussion on the formal register (Transcript 5.5), a ‘collaborative agency event’ in the target language. Thus, in considering Van Lier’s (2008) scale of agency (Figure 2.6) learners in SM2 seem to oscillate between levels (3) and (5), and occasionally reach level (6), “entering into debate with one another” (p. 170).

Moreover, the kind of agency fostered by the process drama seems to be characterised by a sense of playfulness, related to the language and to the manipulation of dramatic form. As far as playfulness with language is concerned, an example is Olga's language pun about the subject's teeth, in Transcript 5.9, below.

Transcript 5.9. SM2: 7-16.

Here, Olga’s response in Turn 13 (“how ugly your teeth are!”) denotes a sense of playfulness with language: she twists Alfonso’s suggestion, exercising agency to self-regulate her contribution. In turn, this agency bonds the participants in laughter (T 16), defined above as a ‘social gesture’ (Bergson, 1900/2008). In the individual interview, Olga acknowledges the agentic quality of process drama:

[In process drama] you need to create the class yourself. Everything... like, it’s all about your imagination and things you want to say, want to... show [while] when you are going to a standard class, we’re just kind of following the rules. Here you choose the direction yourself. (Olga, p. 3:14-17)

Moreover, agency manifested as a sense of playfulness in manipulating dramatic form, especially with regards to negotiation of status, tension, focus, place and space. First, agency in SM2 seems to be characterised by a sense of playfulness related to negotiation of status...
and dramatic tension. An example is captured in the exchange between Olga, Sabina and the other participants, in Turns 74-104.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>TIR: How many people can approach the subject?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Hiru: Two or three!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>TIR: So not everyone?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>[Everyone shakes heads]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Olga: No!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>Hiru: The room is not very big!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>TIR: Our bathroom is small, indeed. Ehm who? Who feels up to it? Who wants to interview Mr. Ferro using toothbrush and toothpaste?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>Olga: I think... someone peaceful, someone calm...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>TIR [looking at Sabina]: So that rules out Dr. Rocca?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>[Loud laughter]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>Olga: Yes, that’s what I meant!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>TIR: Oh, of course... we know that... between the two of you-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>Sabina: -Bad blood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>TIR: -There’s bad blood! [Laughs]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>[Yoriko laughs]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>[... ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>TIR: So... excluding Dr. Rocca... who wants to interview, or attempt talking to...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>Olga: I think that the ones who have to go are Dr... [pointing to Hiru]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>Hiru [bowing]: Airoldi!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Olga: Dr. Airoldi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>TIR: [nodding] Airoldi!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Olga: [pointing to Catherine] Pazzarella... no, actually, not Pazzarella.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Catherine: No, not me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Sabina: You go, Comandi!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>Ona: Ehm, no. Torricelli! [Sandra smiles; looks serious, but excited]. Rossi [Yoriko looks at TIR then back at Olga. Tries to look serious but her eyes are excited]... ehm... four people?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Sabina: You. You go!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transcript 5.10. SM2: 74-104.

The SPs appear to autonomously negotiate their status in the drama: initially, as teacher-in-role, I delegate all decision-making related to the interview. Hiru decides that ‘not everyone’ will go; this creates a degree of tension of relationships, as it implies a selection among the psychologists. Olga responds to this challenge and takes charge, selecting who should go. This is done with a sense of playfulness: Olga’s suggestion of “someone calm” is a provocation aimed at Sabina (T 86-87). This exchange is marked by several instances of laughter (Turns 88-93). From Turn 95, Olga is reclaiming a higher status than TPs Alfonso and Sabina (who, as native speakers, initially acquired a higher status through a sophisticated use
of psychological jargon), as well as the other SPs. In this way, Olga exercises agency in the drama, by actively choosing who will conduct the interview. This, in turn, contributed to inject further tension in the drama.

Second, student-participants exercised agency in manipulating dramatic form in terms of focus, place and space. Here I quote an example from the improvisation immediately following SM2, when the doctors find the subject in the bath tub (Chapter 4.2, Visual Appendix V_SM2[b]). In my journal, I observe:

As they work independently without teachers, they seem to be engaged in active, explorative dialogue: they stand in a tight circle, looking directly at each other. Catherine (usually quite shy) takes a directorial role […] She moves the chairs and says: “this is the bathroom!” all of the others follow her idea and take chairs there. Hiru automatically accepts her role as director and asks: “is this the bath tub?” Catherine: “yes, this is the bath tub”… once Catherine has set the scene, Hiru feels the space with her hands and then starts to act within it: she knocks at the door, opens it. Yoriko (in role as Fabrizio) asks: what do I have to do? Catherine replies: you decide! (RJ, p. 83: 16-25)

This extract seems to indicate a level of SPs’ agency in manipulation of focus, evidenced by: Catherine’s proactive movement of the chairs to create space; Hiru feeling the space by sweeping her hands, knocking and opening an imagined door; and Catherine’s final comment to Yoriko “you decide”. Another example of manipulation of form is when the psychologists interview the subject in front of the mirror (Chapter 4.2, Visual Appendix SM2 [c]). As described in Chapter Four, in the warm ups preceding each process drama, I facilitated a series of mirror exercises. Later, the SPs autonomously re-worked ideas from the mirroring game, to include them in their interpretation of the subject’s interview.

Importantly, agency also manifested as a sense of playfulness in manipulating dramatic form, with a degree of dramatic irony. Pavis (1998) argues that an utterance is ‘ironic’ when, in addition to its primary, obvious sense, it reveals a deeper, different, perhaps even opposite meaning, or antiphrasis (1998, p. 189). The data from SM2 suggests that student-participants exercised agency by injecting dramatic irony into the roles and situation.

As a first example I quote Catherine, who named her role as “Dr. Pazzarella”. The adjective ‘pazzarella’ in Italian is a colloquial term for a woman who is ‘a little bit crazy’; this is an ironic choice for the name of a professional psychologist. Here, Catherine is playing with her knowledge of Italian to create a verbal paradox with an ironic effect. The irony here is to do with the opposition between the meaning of the word, and the concept it symbolises. This kind of playfulness entails what Pavis (1998) calls ‘verbal irony’, or what Bergson (1900/2008)
would call ‘the comic as language’: when the comedy is created by the language itself and cannot be translated, for “it is the language itself that becomes comic” (p. 53).

Another example of irony is more subtle, and involves the attitudes of the roles. As part of the drama, everyone was instructed to create a role as a professional psychologist. Yoriko constructs her role as a psychologist who is devoted to her dog, Mario. Her obsession with the dog pervades the drama as an ironic thread. She takes her dog seriously, too seriously; she loves only her dog, and “needs no man” (2.3.1, 21:55-22:04). Although she declares that she is happily single, she also admits: “the only thing hurts me… when I see a couple” (2.3.1., 22:09). Yoriko here exercises agency to construct a role that is blind to her own faults: she states that she is very happy being single, but actually has a phobia of couples. This is ironic in a Pirandellian sense: something that is obvious to everyone else, except oneself, and for this reason becomes comical (Pirandello, 1908/1966).

On the other hand, Olga creates the role of a psychologist who, until recently, was a busker in underground trains. The role is ironic as it is built on a contradiction (street busker; professional psychologist). Moreover, her street busker career becomes a significant detail, as her signature folk song, Felicità, was used on several occasions during the drama. The choice of song is ironic in itself; the song Felicità (‘happiness’) is arguably a symbol of ‘tackiness’ for Italians; yet in the way Olga presents it is highly serious. The contrast (tacky song; serious attitude; clinical psychologist) is a source of irony, which engaged the rest of the class in an active response, producing laughter (2.3.1, 21:30). The song is also particularly ironic in the context of the drama. It is a song about a couple living happily ever after; thus, it creates a sharp contrast with Yoriko’s role, the single woman with a phobia of couples.

In SM2 (b), Olga’s agency denotes a sense of playfulness, in weaving dramatic irony through the language, role and situation. As she persuades the subject to come out of the bathroom, she manipulates the double meaning of the song, using Felicità as a punch line:

1. Olga/psychologist: Everything is dirty… only your room is clean!
2. Yoriko/subject: I would like to go… somewhere clean!
3. Olga/psychologist: This room… very clean!
4. Yoriko/subject: Noo! I’ve already seen this room, there’s a lot of rubbish…
5. Olga/psychologist [puts pyjamas on the subject]: Here! Beautiful. Come on. 
   [Gently pushes the subject out of the bathroom]
6. [The subject leaves the bathroom, brushing his teeth]
7. Olga/psychologist: All good, as usual. Felicità!
8. [All laugh]
   (2.5.1: 56:57-59:57)

24 Felicità (Albano & Romina Power, 1982) with subtitles: www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYy1R7a1Cdw
Here *Felicitá* (line 7) functions as a punch line to conclude the negotiations between the psychologists and the subject. It would translate as “it’s all good”, as well as ‘happiness’, the title of the song. Olga’s playfulness in using this expression denotes a level of dramatic irony, which triggers a response in the participants, manifested as laughter (line 8).

This *sense of playfulness* carries through the whole intervention, until the final role play. Here Olga plays the role of ‘the subject’ with all the others in role as psychologists. She bravely mocks the doctors, and the drama itself, by revealing that everything (the subject) had done was just “for fun”:

1. Olga/subject: Why am I here?
2. Sandra/psychologist: Because... ehm... we heard that you... ehm... had a big problem with mirrors and you... ehm... had been... in the lift... ehm... to isolate...
3. Olga/subject: I had fun.
4. Sandra/psychologist: Was this fun for you? [Laughs]
5. Hiru/psychologist: [Disapproving] It was fun? [Crosses her arms]
6. Olga/subject: Yes. Then you came along with the dog [Yoriko raises her hand in objection] and with this terrible song... and...
7. Catherine/psychologist: Do you remember how we found you in the lift? You mean... that was fun?
8. Olga/subject: Yes.
9. Catherine/psychologist: OK...
10. Yoriko/psychologist: So... for you this was a game?

(2.5.3: 12:18–14:04)

Olga’s playfulness consists in re-incorporating previous elements into the drama (the song and Yoriko’s dog) and twisting their meaning (line 6). O’Neill (2006) suggests that when using irony, a message is transmitted in a manner that triggers a reinterpretation of meaning: “irony consists in asserting the opposite of what is taken for granted socially”. Through this process, she argues, irony can provoke “an active response” (p.148). Here Olga’s irony does provoke an ‘active response’, in Sandra (T 2), Yoriko (T 6) and Hiru (T 12) and also creates further tension of relationships, and of the task, as the psychologists try to interview the subject.

On the surface, it may seem that this playful attitude was influenced by the specific context of the case study, which I defined as ‘stand-up comedy style’ (RJ, p. 67:28-30). This is partly the case, as the TPs had a tendency to joke between themselves and the students (see Chapter Four, 4.2). However, while the TPs would often engage in ‘gagging’, i.e., laughing at the expense of the story (Johnstone, 1999), the SPs’ responses seemed to be more sophisticated, drawing on aspects of role and situation to weave dramatic irony into the drama.
To conclude, the SM2 analysis suggests that engagement manifested as a process of perception-in-action (Figure 5.2). This began from an experience in the drama, affording exposure to authentic language, augmenting receptivity, and provoking the ‘rare’ state of vigilance. All these processes mediated, and were mediated by, the dramatic tension in the drama. These processes, in turn, engendered agency. Such agency manifested as self-regulation in the target language, in verbal and non-verbal communication. Based on Van Lier’s (2008) scale, agency levels oscillated between levels (3) and (5), and occasionally level (6). Agency also manifested as a sense of playfulness with language and with dramatic form, in particular manipulation of status, tension, focus, place and space. Significantly, in CS2 agency also manifested as SPs weaved a degree of dramatic irony in the drama.

**Case Study Three**

Within Case Study Three, the significant moment selected involves the action of rescuing the subject (Visual Appendix V_SM3). Here the SPs, in role as psychologists, are discussing the rescue operation through which they managed to remove the catatonic Paolo Marini from a lift. Once again, the data relating to this moment is examined in relation to the perception-in-action diagram outlined at the beginning of this chapter.

**Exposure to Authentic Language**

To understand how this drama offered its participants exposure to authentic language, I draw on the transcript relating to Turns 1-18:
**Transcript 5.11. SM3: 1-18.**

In the frame above, after I provide the initiation in Turn 1, I physically leave the space. Eduarda then offers a second initiation (T 4), opening the discussion to the group. It is interesting to note that Eduarda feels safe to do so, despite having formally studied Italian for only two weeks, and admitting in the interview that she felt insecure about the language. From Turn 5 onward, the student-participants alternate in offering multiple responses, and feedback, *in role*, with Marika providing a final response. Even when the teacher-in-role returns (T 14), the participants continue talking among themselves, without the intervention of the teacher. This suggests that the student-participants in CS3 were able to sustain an interaction, *in role*, in the target language, without the mediation of the teacher. This was the case even though most of those involved in the interaction had the same native language (Portuguese). It was in sharp
contrast to CS1, where the support of the teacher was imperative to sustaining target language use in the students’ discussion.

The exchange that follows manifests the same communication pattern, but this time with the teacher-in-role present in the conversation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Erika: This shows us that hypnosis is not always necessary in these situations. Ehmm… how did you manage?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Ariel: First Dr… Ivanova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Carme nods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Ariel: Tried to…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Agate: Approach the subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Eduarda: Speaking to him, very sweetly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Erika: Yes, yes [taking notes] Ivanova… is a pretty sweet woman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>[Giggles: Agate pulls a face to Carme; Carme pulls a face back]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Agate: [whispering to Carme]: (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Here, the teacher starts with an Initiation (T 21); this is followed by multiple responses, in the form of dialogic collaboration of different speakers. In effect, in Turns 24-26, Ariel, Agate and Eduarda collaborate to create meaning, in role. I then offer my feedback (T 27), reinforcing a concept that Eduarda had introduced (speaking in a sweet voice); I also subtly highlight the relationship between adverb and adjective in Italian (sweetly; sweet), clarifying the adverb ‘sweetly’ for those who might not have known it. This response is part of my function as teacher: rephrasing and scaffolding language. Yet, I do so in role, without breaking the dramatic context, but integrating it in the context of the drama. My feedback produces an affective response in Agate and Carme (T 28), whose role has just been mentioned. Finally, in Turn 29, Agate makes a comment, building from my feedback. Although inaudible, Agate’s response to Carme is significant, as it shifts the focus back onto the learners and the dialogic interaction, rather than on the teacher. This is reflected in Agate’s self-evaluation of SM3, rating her ‘communicative’ engagement as 9/10, and affective engagement as 10/10. In this exchange, SPs appear to have created a collective ZPD.
Receptivity

The analysis of SM3 suggests that, similar to SM2 and SM1, when student-participants were exposed to authentic interaction, in role, their state of ‘receptivity’ was amplified, and augmented, by the collective form of drama. Below is an extract of SM3, Turns 30-46:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Erika: Did she talk a lot?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Everyone: No!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Marika: She’s an expert in communication (Overlapping voices) She’s an interesting woman!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Erika: And how – what was the outcome of this strategy? How did it go?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Everyone: No, no… [Shaking heads]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Agate: Unfortunately, not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Erika: Nothing. Then… what did you do? Did you manage to…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Juni: After we…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Eduarda: -The strategy of food!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Juni: Yes!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Ariel: We brought Spaghetti Bolognese, a glass of water, but…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Agate: I thought he was hungry!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Ariel: Yes, yes, but… didn’t eat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Erika: He still hasn’t eaten, has he?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>All: No!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Erika: He still hasn’t eaten. Yes; so what was the outcome of this strategy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Ariel: nothing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transcript 5.13.SM3: 30-46.

In this extract, ‘receptivity’ emerges in a variety of ways. In Turn 32, for example, Marika makes an observation: “She’s an expert in communication”. This is referring to Carme, in role as Dr. Ivanova, whose role in the drama was ‘Expert of Communication Theory’. Marika here denotes receptivity towards the drama, and in particular towards Carme’s role. In fact, it appears she is making a joke that crosses the context of the drama, and the real context, as Carme described herself as a very talkative woman. The other participants also show receptivity to each other, as they build upon one another’s utterances, from Turn 37 to 42, to address the teacher’s question in Turn 27.

A state of ‘receptivity’ also seems to be implicit in the participants’ choice of using food to comfort the subject. Using food as a soothing mechanism, and in particular choosing the typical Italian icon of ‘spaghetti Bolognese’, might point to the willingness to become open to the Italian experience, not only on a linguistic, but also on a cultural level.

In SM2, the ‘formal register’ meta-reflection was used as evidence of attending to the language. In CS3, formal register use is not discussed, but arises in another episode of the
drama, when drafting interview questions. Here, however, the issue of formal/informal register is raised by a SP, rather than the teacher:

1. Herminia/psychologist: We have to... ask... ask him something deeper!  
2. Marika/psychologist: Yes! Did he have a trauma, or... [...] Did you sleep in the same room as children?  
3. [Jun keeps talking over her but Marika keeps reading out her questions]  
4. Marika/psychologist: Do you remember any... recurring nightmares... how do you spell 'recurring'? [Looks up at the board]  
5. Agate/psychologist: Re...curring  
6. Marika/psychologist: Third [question]. What did he say while he was sleeping?  
7. Ariel/psychologist: Did he talk in his sleep?  
8. Jun/psychologist: -And the fourth question?  
9. Marika/psychologist: This was part of the third! [Laughs]  
10. Jun/psychologist: What’s the fourth? What was his relationship with...  
11. Marli/psychologist: How is it?  
12. Erika [out of role]: Can I hear your questions?  
13. Marika/psychologist: ‘Your’ or ‘your’? Do we use the formal...?  
14. Erika: I’d use the formal...  
15. Carme/psychologist: -Yes...  
16. Herminia/psychologist: -It’s more professional...  
(3.4.4, 5:15)

This extract reveals that, in the CS3 cohort, there was a degree of meta-awareness related to the formal/informal use. This also extends to the use of feminine/masculine. For example, in role as the (male) subject, Agate expresses her feeling after coming out of the lift:

Agate: I experience some relief, because I have been... been²⁵ in this situation for too long. (3.3.5, 20:15)

Agate’s self-correction, from the feminine form of ‘I have been’ (sono stata) to the masculine form (sono stato) indicates attending to the language, as she changes the verb agreement, showing linguistic awareness to the gender of her role. These examples of (AL) language communication seem to reflect Kramsch’s (1985) qualities of natural discourse (Figure 2.3), indexed to the specific context of the drama.

²⁵ Self-correction from ‘sono stata’ to ‘sono stato’.
Vigilance

The analysis of SM3 seems to suggest that all student-participants experienced a degree of ‘vigilance’. Below, I focus on a specific segment of SM3:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Erika: What next?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Eduarda: In the end we think… that we have to… look… like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>[Erika nods]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Eduarda: Look like him! Someone hadden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Ariel: Had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Eduarda: Had… to acercarse [to approach] to him, como se… [how do you]…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Marika: Be a mirror for him!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Eduarda: Yes!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>[Ariel nods]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Marika: So that he could lose his fear of… [whispering] Looking in the mirror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Erika: So, approach him and behave like the reflection in the mirror? And how did it go?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Everyone: Very well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Erika: A positive outcome?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Everyone: Yes!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Erika [writes down some notes]: What… did he say anything, any words at all or… nothing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>[Marika Nods]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Eduarda: He whispered!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Erika: He whispered… what?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Carme: The doctor! [Leaning towards Jun and pointing to her]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Jun: ‘Are… there’. He pointing the…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Everyone: Pointing to the mirror!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In this extract, the lower proficiency of Eduarda, who had only studied Italian for two weeks, does not become an obstacle for communication: in Turn 52, she uses some Portuguese words, but continues to speak. Rather than hesitating, or slowing down the conversation, she relies on the teacher and her classmates for prompting. In Turn 53, Marika displays ‘readiness to act’ in the way she quickly re-works Eduarda’s utterance. A ‘vigilant’ attitude in Marika’s response can be traced through not only her language, but also her body language: she is leaning forward, with her elbows on the table, her back straight, her glance alternating between the teacher and Eduarda. As the discussion progresses, Marika continues to stare intensely at the speakers, leaning forward with her back straight. Similarly, Eduarda is also leaning forward, with her elbows on the table, and she is moving her hands as she speaks. In Turn 57, she moves back slightly, having finished portraying her desired meaning. Eduarda’s
lack of proficiency considerably slows down the conversation; in turn, I slow down my speech. This, however, does not slow the pace of the conversation, thanks to the unanimous response of participants, in Turns 58 and 60. In Turn 58, the SPs reply immediately after my question: Ariel and Jun are nodding (00:25:32), while the others are looking alert, leaning forward, writing notes in their notebooks while talking. Here, vigilance could be seen to be manifested in these forms of embodied behaviours. In my journal, I reflect:

As I suspected, the group fully engaged with this activity. [...] They therefore plunge into writing with no hesitation at all. (RJ, p. 118:8-12)

This entry captures the pace of SM3, which is characterised by a fast-paced rhythm, with “no hesitation at all”. Thus, despite the language barrier of some participants, they maintain a steady pace in SM3, engaging in conversation as they annotate some points. This state of awareness, and animated discourse, is framed as a ‘need to talk’ by one of the teacher-participants, school director Renato:

[SM3]: They are all very engaged; they have done something very important and they need to talk about it. (Renato, p. 1:38-40)

Renato perceives these students’ engagement as a ‘need to talk’, which is characteristic of the ‘communicative classroom’ (Ellis, 1990), which Renato would associate with the school’s communicative methodology. In the interview, Jun framed her participation as a “completely spontaneous” contribution (Jun, p. 2:6). Indeed, during the lift operation, Jun’s contribution appears to be spontaneous, as I observe in my journal:

It is interesting because, just as Jun goes inside the lift, she panics to the others: “What do I say, what do I say?”, but the others just gently pushed her in. [...] This is a brilliant answer which points at real improvisation, spontaneity in her communicative act. This shows how she was fully responding to the situation. (RJ, p. 117:33-41)

Jun’s perceptual state, “fully responding to the situation”, seems to imply a degree of vigilance, the “readiness to act” in responding to the subject’s movement and language, as well as the other doctors who, from the outside, are whispering suggestions. Such vigilance, with Van Lier, seems to have involved a cognitive, affective, physical, and social investment, and may have occurred within the lived-experience of perezhivanie, triggering the learners’ agency.
Agency

In SM3, agency manifests as learners self-regulate their behaviour in both verbal and non-verbal communication. With reference to ‘verbal communication’, in terms of turn-taking, Turns 22-26; 37-42; and 48-56 (Transcripts 5.12; 5.13; 5.14) are instances of the student-participants autonomously self-regulating their contributions in the interaction, with the teacher being present, but not having to lead to keep a natural flow of discourse. These segments of autonomous interaction are considerably longer than those in SM1 and SM2, suggesting that, in SM3, the student-participants exercised a higher level of initiative, in role, in relation to turn-taking. In my journal, I describe the opening frame of SM3 (Transcript 5.11) as follows:

They end up talking spontaneously to each other; this is a clear sign of autonomy in their interactions, as I had not openly suggested they discuss this in the group. (RJ, p. 118:12-14)

In this entry, I comment on the spontaneous, self-regulated discussion in the group. Although my instructions were “think about it and write down quick notes” (Turn 1), instead the SPs engaged in a debate. In considering Van Lier’s (2008) scale of agency (Figure 2.6), learners in SM3 appear to be operating from level (6), that is, “entering into debate with one another” (p. 170). In a similar way to the CS2 cohort, they reach the peak of the agency scale. Yet, while in CS2 level (6) was reached only occasionally, in CS3 level (6) interactions occur more frequently, with most exchanges described as a “collaborative agency event” (Van Lier, 2008, p. 170). As for ‘non-verbal communication’, evidence of gesturing as self-regulation can be found in multiple frames. For example: in Transcript 5.11, Herminia leaning forward, nodding (T 2); in the same Transcript, Marika and Carme nodding (respectively, Turns 17; 23); and in Transcript 5.15, Carme’s pointing to Jun and leaning forward to supplement her meaning, while uttering: “The doctor!” (T 65).

Furthermore, the kind of agency fostered by the process drama seems to be characterised by a sense of playfulness, related to the language and to the manipulation of dramatic form. An example of playfulness with language in SM3 is the ‘sweet voice’ pun. As Eduarda states (Transcript 5.12, Turn 26), one of the psychologists’ strategies to get the subject out of the lift was ‘the sweet talking’ of Carme, the ‘expert of communication’. On the following day, the participants resume the joke, as they recount the lift operation to Yelena, who was absent in workshop 3. Below is an extract of that conversation:
1. Erika/coordinator [addressing Yelena]: We decided to make an inspection, that is, we decided to go and meet Paolo to try to remove him from the lift. [To the others] How did that go?
2. Carme/psychologist: The first time [shakes her head, gravely]
3. Eduarda/psychologist: We've tried three time
4. Erika: Uh uh
5. Eduarda/psychologist: The first time [looks over at Agate]
6. Agate/psychologist [mumbling]: -We have obtained
7. Carme/psychologist: -Nothing!
8. Erika: Dr. Ivanova
9. [Carme nods]
10. Erika: Has tried to convince him
11. [Eduarda mimes hitting her head to Agate; Marika, Eduarda and Agate laugh]
12. Carme/psychologist: -The sweet voice, not convince him! [Shakes her head]
13. Erika: But… Paolo remained in the lift
14. Agate/psychologist [sarcastic]: Expert of Communication, right?
15. Erika: But, unfortunately, this time, the sweet voice… of Ivanova… didn’t work.
16. Carme/psychologist: He was very amargo [bitter]
17. Erika: He was very embittered!
18. Carme/psychologist: He doesn’t like him… the sweet
19. [General laughter]
20. Marika/psychologist: Bitter!
21. [Laughter; Jun drops her head down, from laugh]
22. Erika: He wasn’t ready! [Smiling] He wasn’t ready; too embittered.
23. Eduarda/psychologist: -Too embittered!
(3.4.1, 34:20)

Here a sense of playfulness is evident in the extension of the ‘sweet pun’. The term ‘sweet’ is picked up again by Carme (line 12), who, in a playful pun, contrasts it with its opposite, ‘bitter’. Carme does not have the Italian adjective at her disposal, and says it in Portuguese. As I provide the Italian term, Marika is quick to reincorporate it as a punch line (line 20), which generates collective laughter (lines 19-21). This recalls Bergson’s (1900/2008) claim of laughter as ‘a social gesture’ binding the participants.

A sense of playfulness is also evident in Agate’s sarcastic tone in “Expert of communication, right?” (line 14) ‘Expert of communication’ was Carme’s expertise, according to her role card. In SM3, Marika had pointed this out (Transcript 5.13, Turn 32), making a joke by juxtaposing the real context, and the dramatic context (Carme was a very talkative woman). Agate’s ironic comment denotes a sense of agency manifested as playfulness with language, with roles, and with the dramatic context and its relationship with the real context.
Agency also emerges as a sense of playfulness with regard to the manipulation of dramatic form, with reference to *negotiation of status*. To illustrate this point, I focus on Turns 61-81:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Erika [<em>writes down some notes</em>]: What... did he say anything, any words at all or... nothing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>[Marika nods]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Eduarda: He whispered!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Erika: He whispered... what?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Carme: The doctor! [<em>Leaning towards Jun and pointing at her</em>]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Jun: 'Are... there'. He pointing the...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Everyone [<em>in chorus</em>]: Pointed... at the mirror!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Erika: The mirror; should we therefore deduce that... the subject has developed an obsession towards... the mirror, or mirrors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>[Marika nods]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Herminia: He's scared of mirrors... the images...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Erika: 'Are there'... but who? Did he say who he was talking about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Herminia: Himself!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>Marika: (inaudible) Images that...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Erika: Do you think he meant 'I am there' or 'they are there'?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Marika: The images!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Jun: No! 'They', because... I said 'let's leave them here and let's go'!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>[Herminia nods; Marika nods]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Erika [<em>thinking aloud, while writing</em>]: Them; them [<em>Looking up to the group</em>] Plural form?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Everyone: Yes!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Erika: We should investigate this... plurality!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>[Carme nods]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transcript 5.15. SM3: 61-81

In this extract, the SPs are re-negotiating their status within the group, assigning status based on the outcome of the rescue operation. Given that Jun successfully rescued the subject, Carme, who until then had seemed to act as the leader, re-negotiates her status by physically pointing to Jun (T 65). Jun takes on this higher status, interpreting the subject’s utterance with confidence (T 76), and gaining the respect of the other participants (T 77, 81).

Moreover, the SPs’ agency seems to denote a *sense of playfulness* in manipulating dramatic form, with regard to *dramatic focus* and *tension*. For example, each workshop started with a mirror exercise as a warm-up. In SM3 (a), the participants work independently to prepare the rescue from the lift. Ultimately, Jun is able to incorporate the idea of mirroring with a new dramatic focus, as a strategy to move the subject out of the lift. TP Rossana writes:
There’s great group cohesion when they are deciding what strategies to implement to remove Paolo (played by Agate) from the lift. [...] In this phase each one gives a significant contribution to the story. Particularly effective and successful is Jun’s mirror strategy; she imitates the movements of Paolo/Agate getting in tune with the subject, who repeats “they are there”, referring to his images reflected in the mirrors. Both are obvious evidence that everyone is inside the story and they are re-elaborating the elements experienced before to fuel the plot. (Rossana, OBS, p. 3, 13:30)

Here the SPs’ agency generates dramatic tension, in particular tension of the task, with the task being ‘removing the subject from the lift’. This tension is reinforced by the SPs structuring the rescue operation in three trials, with the first two trials failing, and the third one succeeding. As the first two strategies fail, the tension of the task increases. This is a result of the student-participants’ actively manipulating the form. In the third trial, Jun’s mirroring strategy denotes agency in actively manipulating dramatic form. In SM3, the SPs explain this strategy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eduarda: In the end we think... that we have to... look... like?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>[Erika nods]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Eduarda: Look like him! Someone hadden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Ariel: Had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Eduarda: Had... to acercarse [to approach] to him, como se... [how do you]...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Marika: Be a mirror for him!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Eduarda: Yes!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>[Ariel nods]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Marika: So that he could lose his fear of... [whispering] Looking in the mirror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Erika: So, approach him and behave like the reflection in the mirror? And how did it go?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Everyone: Very well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This extract highlights the SPs’ agency related to playfulness in manipulation of form, in re-incorporating a previously experienced mime game into the context of the drama.

As occurred in CS2, the ‘sense of playfulness’ in manipulation of dramatic form seems to denote a degree of dramatic irony. Several instances of agency in weaving dramatic irony recur in CS3. One example relates to the idea of the psychologists being ‘experts’, already mentioned above (Carme as the ‘expert of communication’). Throughout the intervention, the student-participants continue to refer to this joke, weaving a degree of irony through role and situation. This culminates in the final role play, when Agate rejects her colleagues’ proposals, suggesting instead the use of ‘imaginative therapy’ - her own expertise:
1. Agate/psychologist: Ehm... in my opinion... the case, case?
2. [Jun nods]
3. Agate/psychologist: Is more complex... than it seems. Ehm... I'm sorry, but... this therapy of breaking the mirror...would only cause a... [pause]
4. SP [off screen]: Trauma!
5. [Agate mimes something with her hands] deta- [mimes again, frustrated] ehm... if the personality...
6. SP [Off-screen]: Break?
7. Agate/psychologist: Ehm... maybe more... more...
8. Yelena/psychologist: Scared?
9. Agate/psychologist: More... more...
10. All [in chorus]: Personalities!
11. Agate/psychologist: Different personalities! Because many... a mirror breaks in... one thousand mirrors, tiny mirrors! [Raising her voice] and the subject will see... only himself, but... multiple forms. This is not working! [Hits her hand on her knee] […]
12. Erika/coordinator: And so, what would You suggest?
13. Agate/psychologist: Well, imaginative therapy, ehm...
14. [Yelena and Eduarda laugh, amused]
15. Agate/psychologist: Would be something that...
16. Marika/psychologist: Excuse me, but imagination is something which... he doesn’t need!
17. [Laughter]
18. Agate/psychologist [shouting, argumentative]: That's exactly why it would be better.
20. Agate/psychologist: Yes! We shou... shou... we have to guide him to imagine the right things, not to get fixated in his own image!
21. Marika/psychologist [composed, smiling]: We cannot guide anyone.
22. Agate/psychologist [frustrated]: Ohh! [Thumps her hand on her knees]
23. Marika/psychologist: Not even with hypnosis!
24. [Collective laughter ]
(3.5.4, 0:05-3:17)

Here, Agate’s reply in line 13 is ironical: the way she pronounces it makes it sound like a disinterested suggestion, while participants know that it is her very expertise. Shortly after, Agate makes an ironic statement, affirming: “it’s always very interesting to work alongside experts... and such experts!” (3.5.4, 0:05-3:17). In saying that, her paralanguage is pointing to the opposite meaning. As Pavis remarks (1998) intonation can indicate that the obvious meaning should be passed over, in favour of its opposite (p. 189). At the same time, Agate makes a gesture that is a typical Italian emblem, communicating at a non-verbal level that she is intending the opposite. This provokes loud laughter. Here, the irony is created by stating one concept verbally, and implying another non-verbally. On another note, this excerpt is also an example of agency as self-regulation, in terms of verbal and non-verbally communication, in particular lines 1-11, where the SPs create a ‘collaborative agency event’ (Van Lier, 2008).
To conclude, the analysis of SM3 confirms the analysis of SM1 and SM2, suggesting that engagement manifested as a process of perception-in-action (Figure 5.2). This began from an experience in the drama, affording exposure to authentic language, augmenting receptivity and provoking the ‘rare’ state of vigilance. All these processes mediated, and were mediated by, the dramatic tension in the drama. These processes, in turn, engendered agency. Such agency manifested as self-regulation in the target language in verbal and non-verbal communication; based on Van Lier’s (2008) scale, agency levels oscillated between levels (3) and (6) - most frequently at level (6), with SPs creating ‘collaborative agency events’. Agency also manifested as a sense of playfulness. Like in CS2, agency in CS3 also manifested as a sense of playfulness in weaving dramatic irony in roles and situation.

Conclusions

In this section, I have suggested that the nature of engagement within the SLA domain appeared and manifested as the process of ‘perception-in-action’ illustrated in Figure 5.2. This process began with an experience in the drama, entailing exposure to authentic interaction, characterised by: an initiation, in role; a string of multiple responses, in the form of a dialogic collaboration of different speakers, in role; feedback, in role (without breaking the drama); and a response, in role.

The perception-in-action process enhanced student-participants’ receptivity to the language, to the dramatic context, and to each other. This receptivity seemed to be magnified by the collective nature of the process drama form. The data also suggested that SM1, SM2 and SM3 were characterised by a degree of vigilance, defined by Van Lier as the all-absorbing state, when the speaker’s response is alert and “ready to act on partly predictable, partly novel stimuli” (1996, p. 52). The data suggested that, while for Van Lier ‘vigilance’ only occurs rarely during AL classes, in the Specific Moments analysed the student-participants often appeared vigilant. It actually seemed that process drama provoked and enhanced the state of vigilance. All these processes mediated, and were mediated by, the dramatic tension in the drama.

This state of vigilance promoted learners’ agency. The analysis indicated that agency manifested in a number of forms: ‘self-regulation’ and ‘playfulness’. Self-regulation manifested as verbal and non-verbal communication. ‘Playfulness’ manifested as playfulness with both language and the manipulation of dramatic form, in terms of role (negotiation of status), situation (real/dramatic context) and dramatic tension. This occurred across the three case studies. As Table 5.2 shows, the nature of agency seemed to become more diverse across the
drama interventions: in CS2 and CS3 the participants’ agency also manifested as playfulness in manipulation of focus, place and space, as well as weaving dramatic irony into the drama. This extends the concept of agency in additional language learning to include playfulness not only with language, but also with the other elements of drama.

Table 5.2.
The Nature of Agency in the Case Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SELF REGULATION</th>
<th>A SENSE OF PLAYFULNESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communication</td>
<td>Non-verbal communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS1</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS2</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS3</td>
<td>•</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The nature of agency seemed to also intensify across the interventions. Based on Van Lier’s (2008) scale, the analysis indicated that the SPs reached different levels of agency, beginning at level (3) (learners volunteering to answer the teacher’s question), and reaching level (6) (learners voluntarily entering debate). This seems to imply that the kind of communication engendered by process drama has an agentic quality, as there were no instances of communication below level (3). The three case studies differed in the levels of agency:

- In CS1, the level of agency spanned from level (4) to (5) of Van Lier’s scale. The analysis suggests that CS1 SPs did not appear to reach the highest level (6), neither in SM1, nor in any other moment in the intervention.
- In CS2, the level of agency oscillated between levels (4) and (5) and occasionally (6).
- In CS3, the level of agency oscillated between levels (5) and (6), most frequently at level (6).

The ‘perception-in-action’ process, generating these various forms of agency, seems to have entailed the ‘lived experience’ of perezhivanie (Vygotsky, 1994), through which interactions can be perceived, appropriated and re-presented by the language learners (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002). Through this process, the SPs engaged in meaningful, dialogic communication in the Italian language.
5.2. INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

In this section, I consider the nature of engagement in AL/process drama, within the domain of Intercultural Education.

The analysis is grounded in the construct of intercultural experience as an active process that begins with an experience, followed by awareness of this experience, the analysis of such awareness, and acting upon these insights (Alred, Byram & Fleming, 2003). This active process (illustrated in Figure 2.9) implies reflection, and leads to a “heightened awareness” of one’s identity, a psychological shift that might lead to a more integrated sense of ‘self’ and confidence in being ‘in-between’, socially and culturally (2003, p. 4). As Fleming (2003) argues, drama can be a form of intercultural education. In his own words, “drama can provide concrete contexts and affective engagement for the participants and by its very nature can be seen as a form of intercultural education” (2003, p 97). In this section, I explore how this process unfolded when the drama was conducted in an additional language.

In the analysis below, I also draw on gesture studies, a paradigm within Sociocultural Theory that frames individuals living through embodied experience, within specific cultural historical contexts (Stam & McCafferty, 2008). In particular, the analysis considers the regulatory function of gesturing as a potential indicator of internalisation (McCafferty & Ahmed, 2000), assuming an interconnection between inner speech, gesture and intercultural engagement.

The data seems to suggest that engagement within the intercultural domain followed a pattern similar to that of Alred et al. (2003), albeit adapted to the dramatic context. This is represented in Figure 5.4. This intercultural process began with an experience. As suggested in the sections above (5.1), the kind of experience triggered by process drama, in the Specific Moments analysed, could be described as ‘an intensely lived experience’, or perezhivanie.
(Vygotsky, 1994). Here cognitive, affective and social aspects are intertwined, while perceiving, interpreting and living through an experience. This kind of experience will be now viewed through an intercultural lens. In an intercultural perspective, experience generated degrees of intercultural awareness. This was facilitated by various kinds of intercultural reflection which, at times, resulted in intercultural meaning making. This cycle appeared once again to be fuelled by ‘dramatic tension’, occurring within a specific dramatic frame. The diagram below represents my attempt to visualise this process.

\[\text{Figure 5.4. Process of Intercultural Engagement.}\]

I draw upon the data from the three Specific Moments to support this interpretation. In particular, the intercultural engagement process appeared to vary considerably across the three case studies. These variations resulted in the meaning-making being acknowledged explicitly, or remaining implicit in the participants’ experience of engagement. I relate these differences to the ‘intercultural/dramatic structure’ of the drama: the presence of explicit ‘intercultural tension’ in the pre-text, the manipulation of the elements and intercultural reflection. Below, I illustrate these concepts.
Case Study One

The experience I analyse in CS1 occurred within the dramatic frame of Specific Moment One (SM1), the train arrest episode. Before discussing the intercultural process itself, I begin by illustrating the notion of intercultural tension.

Intercultural Tension

The concept of ‘intercultural tension’ is closely related to ‘dramatic tension’. As argued in the section above, SM1 can be described as a moment of high dramatic tension. In my reflective journal, I describe the nature of such dramatic tension:

TRAIN ARREST: I think this episode is one of the highest in terms of tension: tension of surprise (the tickets are fake), tension of the task (must get to Milan to carry out the interviews), tension of mystery (there's something suspect about the Chamber) this was done improvising, reflecting in action, but also metaxis - in terms of 1. Rejecting my authority as teacher - affirming their authority as students (as usually they are very polite and submissive); 2. As 'foreigners in Italy' (the Italian society is quite racist, they might feel disempowered); 3. Chinese citizens (usually Chinese may not dare to stand up to authorities). (RJ, p. 35:11-14)

In this way, I am making a tentative connection between 'otherness' and dramatic tension. Particularly, I focus on 'metaxis', defined by Bundy (1999) as the tension emerging from the disjunction between the way participants respond to the drama, and the way they would normally respond to a similar event in real life, “but only if they are moved/affected by the discrepancy itself” (p. 55). I believe the concept of 'metaxis', discussed in the literature review is significant for AL/process drama, as the dramatic world focuses on a foreign culture being studied by the learners, and the participants are invited to explore this dramatic world by embodying the dramatic-intercultural experience. This experience, I believe, may trigger 'intercultural tension'.

Throughout this research, I acknowledged the importance of AL/process drama having an intercultural dimension. Initially, I framed this as “choosing an educational objective with an intercultural potential” (Piazzoli, 2010, p. 10). Later, while compiling my reflective journal, I developed the expression ‘intercultural tension’. In the NVIVO coding phase of the data analysis, I wrote a reflective memo titled ‘Intercultural Tension’, in an effort to understand its nature:
So what exactly is intercultural tension? Given that 'dramatic tension' is the gap between what we know and what we don’t know, that electric, invisible force that drives us forward... Intercultural tension is a force that engages one at an intercultural level and operates within the gap existing between two (or more) cultural systems. (Reflective Memo, CS1)

Building from this definition, in the memo I reflect on the CS1 cohort:

[The CS1 cohort, as] international students, also experience two (or more) simultaneous cultural identities, are constantly re-negotiating, processing, handling two cultural systems; if this happens to occur when they are in role (a Chinese playing the role of an Italian) there could be a degree of intercultural metaxis, in terms of making choices in the drama according to the new role identity, which might involve controversial ethical/social behaviour according to the native cultural identity. (Reflective Memo, CS1)

In the memo, I continue to reflect on intercultural tension, and conclude that, rather than a type of tension in itself, I envisage ‘intercultural tension’ as a frame for existing types of tension. The intercultural domain adds a nuance, a new dimension to other types of dramatic tension.

For instance, 'tension of relationships' from an intercultural perspective might entail the potential tension stemming from different cultural values manifested in roles and situations. ‘Tension of the task’ from an intercultural perspective might entail the potential tension of having to accomplish a cross-cultural task, given the different cultural systems and rituals associated with it. As for tension of ‘surprise’ and ‘mystery’, an intercultural version might be framed as the gap between two (or more) cultural worlds involving a mystery and/or generating a surprise in terms of how an event or circumstance is perceived by different individuals and how they react to it. Finally, as for 'intercultural metaxis', AL learners engaged in a drama are constantly re-negotiating and processing various cultural systems; when they are in role, they might experience, and be affected by, a disjunction between how they responded in the drama, and how they would normally respond in their native language/culture.

Intercultural Tension of Metaxis

Below, I suggest that through the drama intervention, some participants went through a ‘felt-experience’, perezhivanie, which may have involved ‘intercultural tension of metaxis’. To illustrate this concept, I draw on Teodoro’s involvement in SM1. Below is an extract of his interview, where he connects a past event (copping a fine on public transport) with a significant aspect of the drama in SM1 (confronting the Ticket Inspector on the train):
Erika: What moment of the class do you remember the most?
Teodoro: Yes ehm… yes last class, ehm there is we have been… in… on the train, yes like this is more… more interesting yes!
E: OK. When we were on the train, and how did you feel?
T: Eh m [pause] Eh m… but usually is… I did this, because but… when I’ve gone I on the train, also on the bus I do this and… how do you say, how do you say this […] Yes, Ticket Inspector, also one time on the bus, checked my ticket, but… yes, there’s one time checked my ticket but… doesn’t work [raises his voice, agitated] But I don’t know why it doesn’t work, but he not is… he said… yes is, but [protesting] It doesn’t work… and yes I have to pay… some money!
E: A fine?
T [agitated]: Yes but in that moment is very angry, yes!
E: And so, in the drama, you remembered…
T: Yes yes!
E: And were you angry?
T: Yes yes yes. [Laughs] Ohhh!

(Teodoro, p. 2:22-43)

In this extract, Teodoro’s frustration emerges as he makes a connection with his lived experience in the drama. In the interview, he identifies the dramatic episode of the train arrest (SM1) and discloses some comments that might indicate a degree of intercultural metaxis, as the disjunction between the way he responded to the drama (playing the role of an Italian journalist), and how he responded to a similar event in his ‘real life’, as a Chinese international student in Italy. At the beginning of the train episode, Teodoro behaves according to the rules of ‘real life’ in the Italian cultural context:26 he reacts to the Ticket Inspector by scribbling some numbers on the ticket, and explaining: “Yes, yes, I’ve stamped it already! This one is stamped!” (Turn 11). As the improvisation progresses, he might have experienced a disjunction between what happened to him in the real frame and in the dramatic frame. In the real frame, according to the account from above, Teodoro was unable to react to the fine, although believing it was unjust:

But I don’t know why it doesn’t work, but he not is… he said… yes is, but [protesting] It doesn’t work… and yes I have to pay… some money! (Teodoro, p. 3:35)

Here Teodoro appears to be disempowered in the situation. Some of the reasons for his behaviour could be that his level of Italian was not proficient enough for him to stand his ground; he might have felt he needed to respect an older authority; or simply because he might have been unfamiliar with the Italian system of validating tickets (see footnote).

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26 In Italy it is not sufficient to buy a train ticket; in order for it to be valid, it needs to be stamped before departure. Tourists who are unaware of this are often fined.
On the other hand, in the dramatic frame, Teodoro shows a degree of *empowerment* in his reaction to the Inspector. First, he voices his dismay at the tearing up of the tickets: “Why, no!” (Transcript 5.1, T 32). Then, he firmly stands his ground, contesting the authority of the Inspector. It seems to be the tension within the dramatic frame, resonating with his past experience that fuels his response in the drama. Here, he might have experienced a degree *intercultural metaxis*.

A significant detail in Teodoro’s reaction is the *gesture* he performs as I say: “Shall we stop the train and let them off? (Turn 40). The gesture (Figure 5.5), performed by Teodoro in Turn 41, consists in a curled fist moving up and down, a typical Italian expression of disbelief (V.SM1, 00:54:47). In gesture studies, this is classified as an ‘emblem’: a culture-specific gesture, which completes an utterance by adding further meaning (Stam & McCafferty, 2008).

*Figure 5.5. Teodoro (First on the Right) Performing an Emblem.*

By performing this emblem, Teodoro is embodying a non-verbal behaviour, which is characteristic of the Italian language. This embodied response seems to indicate that Teodoro is engaged through his role as an Italian journalist. Such engagement manifested by:

- Offering the Italian culturally specific comment: “This one is stamped!” (T 11);
- Making the culturally specific Italian emblem (T 41);
Demonstrating agency by actively requesting to speak to the police: “When are the police coming?” (T 53).

Significantly, in the engagement questionnaire, Teodoro rated ‘intercultural’ as the highest value in his triad (8/10), well above the ‘affective’ (6/10) and the ‘communicative’ (7/10) value (Figure 4.3). His self-perception of engagement in SM1 seems to be focused on the intercultural domain.

**Intercultural Awareness**

Here I construe ‘intercultural awareness’ as “awareness of experiencing otherness”, based on Alred et al. (2003). The data seems to suggest that, in SM1, some participants reached a degree of intercultural awareness. For example, in the student-participants’ focus group, when I asked whether the process drama helped reflect on intercultural issues, Mara shouted: “On the train!” (1.5.5, 27:50). In the individual interview, Mara explained this connection:

Erika: What is the moment that you remember most strongly, most vividly?
Mara: Mmm… when… when… we catch the train! […]
E: And what do you remember in particular; in that specific moment how did you feel?
M: Mmm… the difference between… the culture difference between Chinese and Italy!
E: Oh. Why? In what way?
M: Because the Chinese, they… they are remained in their chair; they don’t don’t hear the… police order. But maybe Italians go!
(Mara, p. 2:4-14)

Here Mara’s comment seems to indicate that during the drama she reflected on Italian and Chinese behaviour (“the difference between… the culture difference between Chinese and Italy”). The drama prompted Mara to become aware of her ‘felt-experience’, at an intercultural level. Here she is starting to develop some features of the ‘intercultural speaker’ (Byram, 1997) like, for example, skills of comparing, interpreting and relating (Figure 2.8).

Through the drama, Mara seems to have embodied a behaviour that triggered a strong affective response. Transcript 5.17 captures her responses in a particular frame of SM1:
Passengers [shouting altogether]: Faake! Faaake!

TI: I’m sorry but this is an authentic document! Thes-

Mara: I don’t believe it!

TI: These are fake documents [tears up another ticket] I’ve never seen these documents before!

Mara: You, too! [Protesting calls]

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Transcript 5.17. SM1: 59-63.

Mara’s firm responses in Turns 61 and 63 suggest a strong affective reaction. This is reinforced by her further responses, in Transcript 5.18, in Turns 90 and 101.

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TI: The police are coming! They’ve requested you get off the train, over this way [open up a pathway through the space]: Thank you, thank you! Please, get off the train! [Extends his hands towards Mara] Madam?

Mara: No!

Passengers [echoing]: No, no!!!

TI [exhausted]: Madam, you must get off! Or else… look, I’m telling you: if you collaborate… we’ll be able to fix this problem: you’ll have a phone call, one phone call! You will be able to fix this problem with your… [Looks for the logo on the ticket] thingy [tears up another ticket]. If you refuse, then… we are getting into Legal… pardon me, into the Penal system. You could be detained for years… because you are refusing…. refusing… not collaborating…

Viola [very serious]: No, I’m sorry. We want to talk to a policeman!

TI: Of course, I’ll let you talk to a policeman! To do that, you have to get off!

Passengers: Nooo!

Viola: We stay here.

TI: Impossible. The police ordered to get you off!

Alessia: Nooo!!

Marco: I don’t believe it!

TI: What do you want to do?

Mara [provocative]: We want to wait.

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Transcript 5.18. SM1: 89-101.

These experiences may have invited Mara to reflect and analyse the situation, in terms of her own culture and the Italian culture. Indeed, from the interview (cited above), it appears that in SM1 she was reflecting and analysing what happened, based on the Chinese and Italian cultural systems. This process resonates with Alred et al.’s (2003) notion of being intercultural as experiencing ‘otherness’, as reflection, analysis and action. Mara’s engagement questionnaire is not available, as she chose to evaluate a different moment. However, her behaviour in the dramatic frame and her responses in the interview suggest a degree of intercultural awareness.
Another example is Teresa’s involvement in SM1. Her comments in the interview seem to indicate that the process drama might have triggered some intercultural awareness in her felt-experience:

Erika: So, think about Friday’s class; what is the moment that you remember most vividly?
Teresa: Eh, definitely on the train, hey!
E: On the train; and in what specific moment?
T: Eh, well… I remember, also because I also usually travels… on Trenitalia,
right? Then this way is so much fun […] There are memories like… like every time I… there’s on the train, like the Ticket Inspector used to do, usually really… just like that [smiles]
E: In that moment, when we were on the train, right, did you think… did you learn anything? Did you reflect on the Italian culture… on the Chinese culture?
T: Yes, well I remember it like I was already train in China… because… before passengers, before getting on the train… we must… oh the door… it’s not free entry… each the door there is a Ticket Inspector, right?
E: Oh, of course!
T: Before getting on the train we must… check the ticket too… stamp, everything […] So there’s a di –different! (Teresa, p. 2:5-29)

Teresa’s Italian proficiency is not high enough to clearly articulate her stream of thoughts during the drama. Yet, she seems to be processing the difference between the two cultural systems. She is aware of the system in Italy and in China; she seems to be interpreting and making meaning for herself. Here, she seemed to be operating as an intercultural speaker (Byram, 1997), interpreting an event from another culture, and relating it to events from her own. This process also resonates with Alred et al.’s (2003) notion of experiencing ‘otherness’ as reflection, analysis and action. In her questionnaire, she rated ‘intercultural’ and ‘communicative’ values equally at 7/10, with ‘affective’ at 6/10 (Figure 4.3).

A third example of dramatic tension generating intercultural awareness is drawn from Vera’s involvement. As she reflects on the train episode (SM1), she seems to point to a degree of intercultural awareness, experienced during the drama:

Vera: On the train mmm [pause] in this, in that moments ehm… I thought mmm [pause] I thought the Italian culture maybe like that, but in China this is very… it’s not cortile […] In China people don’t… didn’t do like this very much…
Erika: They don’t do that? And were you thinking this, as you were on the train?
V: I thought: hey… this is Italy! [Laughs] (Vera, p. 3:34-40)

27 Italy’s Railways system
28 Translator note: cortile here might be a made-up mix of ‘cortese’ (courteous) and ‘gentile’ (kind)
Through this comment, Vera grants access into her private speech at the time. It appears that she is processing the dramatic situation, while at the same time she is engaged in some degree of intercultural reflection (“Hey! This is Italy!”). This is reinforced as she states: “In your workshop… I’ve learnt ehm, how Italians, how Italians ehm… how Italians think” (p. 4:33-35). This comment reveals some qualities of Byram’s (1997) ‘intercultural speaker’. Her questionnaire (Figure 4.3) seems to support this argument; Vera’s intercultural value is the highest in the triad (8/10), with ‘communicative’ and ‘affective’ following closely (7/10; 6/10). The trigger here might have been a response to some ‘intercultural tension’ evoked by navigating two different cultural systems, engendering a ‘felt-experience’.

Intercultural Meaning-making

Below is an account of the group discussion (out of role) that stemmed from the train arrest episode (SM1), as described by Valeria (TP) in her written observations. This discussion took place during the reflective phase of the drama.

Intercultural reflection: Erika makes an observation about their behaviour on the train, Chun says "We have become like Italians because the roles are Italians", then others also point out that a Chinese person in the same situation would have resisted just like they did (because they were in the right). To the question "what do you think an Italian would do in a similar situation?” Huifang replies: "He’d call mummy!” Everyone laughs. They reflect on the fact that actually they refused to notify their parents when they ended up in jail […] In this situation, they say, they would be drawn to call someone powerful to resolve the problem, rather than a family member to be comforted. Many say that Italians are mammoni29 and that Chinese people are more independent. (Valeria, OBS, p. 9-10:35-7)

As Valeria’s observation depicts, the discussion following SM1 generated an intercultural reflection, comparing the Italian and Chinese cultural systems. Topics also emerging from this discussion ranged across reacting to injustices, dealing with emergencies overseas, acting under pressure, relationships with parents and being independent, framed comparatively across the two cultures. Thus, through reflection, some SPs were able to negotiate intercultural meaning.

Another point from the observation above is that, through the drama, followed by the intercultural reflection, one SP could become an intercultural resonator for the others. In particular, Huifang’s sense of humour is significant (“he’d call mummy!”), in guessing an Italian

29 ‘Mammone’ is a common Italian cultural trait of the grown-up man dependent on his mother.
way to deal with the arrest situation. This comment is very appropriate, and denotes a refined ability to pinpoint a classic Italian cultural trait. Indeed, Huifang stands out from the CS1 cohort: she travelled to Milan independently (before joining the exchange program), and she lived with Italian housemates (rather than with Chinese fellow students). Her witty reply suggests a degree of sensibility, an intercultural ‘engagement with otherness’ and an ability to make fun of it. As an ‘intercultural speaker’ (Byram, 1997), Huifang could share some ‘intercultural knowledge’ (Figure 2.8, savoirs) related to how social identity functions in Italy.

The intercultural process of meaning-making seems to be explicit for the participants of the CS1 cohort. This, again, emerges from the reflective phase of the drama. Below is an entry from my journal, reporting on the discussion that concluded workshop 4:

INTERCULTURAL REFLECTION: I say that I was surprised at their reaction [on the train]; I say that "I was expecting them to surrender, to act like children". They are obviously really pleased; they laugh as a group. It seems to me they are proud of their reaction (1.4.3, 49:18). I say that their refusal intrigues me, so I ask them: "Have you become like the Italians?" General giggles (embarrassed, but also delighted) follow here. I then pin down a question: if a Chinese person that doesn't know Italy were in this situation, how would she/he react?" We then start discussing the Italian habit of relying on family, and of protesting, to end up talking about ‘why we live’: “to eat”, “to sleep”, “for my family” are some of the answers. […] Teresa says that “she lives for working”, stirring everyone to react: everyone attacks her. I recall getting goose bumps when Rebecca said: “I live for life’s sake”. (RJ, p. 41: 8-19)

This journal extract can be contemplated through a number of lenses: first, in terms of shared negotiation of meaning, Teresa’s view (“we live for working”) is openly questioned by others, inducing the group to reflect, analyse, and negotiate meaning. Second, the group response connects the dramatic action, the ‘felt-experience’ in drama, intercultural awareness, and intercultural meaning, as represented in Chun’s utterance, quoted in Valeria’s observations: “We have become like Italians because the roles are Italians” (Chun, 1.4.3, 50:08). Here an association emerges between cultural identity and dramatic role. This relationship also appears several times in the comments of the participants. An example:

Erika: What have you learnt… about yourself [during the drama]?
Tommaso: Before I ehm… I have a lot of Italian friends but… actually, I don’t, I don’t, I don’t know Italian culture very well. Ehm… because… I’ve been in Italy only just… less, less less than two years so… the two cultures are very different; ehm therefore…. I think that… the Italian culture is more, more open to us foreigners… and then the Chinese culture is more, is closed off. I think that the two cultures can co-exist, this is a good idea. (Tommaso, p. 3:13-17)
Tommaso’s comments seem to imply a sense of not belonging to Italian society (“us foreigners”), as well as a reflection challenging his previous beliefs (“I have a lot of Italian friends but... actually, I don’t know the Italian culture very well”), which might have created a subtle shift of awareness. His questionnaire supports the argument of a high level of engagement, as he assigned the score 9/10 for all three values (Figure 4.3). This comment evokes Byram’s (1997) ‘intercultural speaker’ in terms of ‘skills of comparisons’ (Figure 2.8). It also reinforces the argument that ‘being intercultural’ leads to a more integrated sense of self, and confidence in being ‘in-between’, socially and culturally (Alred et al., 2003, p. 4).

To reiterate, it appears that the ‘felt-experience’ of the drama, and the intercultural tension within it, coupled with reflection, empowered some student-participants to generate intercultural awareness and intercultural meaning-making. This process was fuelled by dramatic tension.

Case Study Two

In SM2, the process leading to intercultural meaning-making seems to remain implicit. That is, the teacher and student-participants, when asked, could identify intercultural themes, but did not appear to make explicit intercultural meaning from these. Below, I explore the key data that led me to make this consideration.

(Implicit) Intercultural Tension

Above, I defined ‘intercultural tension’ as a force that engages an individual at an intercultural level, operating within the gap existing between two (or more) cultural systems. I conceptualised this as a frame around existing types of dramatic tension.

Whereas in CS1 this tension was explicit in the drama, starting from the pre-text, to roles, situation, focus, place and mood, in CS2 the intercultural tension was not explicitly tied to an intercultural domain. The pre-text was a short film showing a man in front of the mirror, scared by his reflections. The setting of the film had no strong cultural connotation; it could have happened in any location in the world. I suggested the film was set in Milan. Similarly, the focus and mood were not related to a particular cultural context. Consequently, in the discussion following the pre-text, the intercultural dimension was not addressed explicitly. The
private sphere of each participant, and their intercultural perception of the pre-text, remained implicit.

Furthermore, as the drama progressed, the tension that was injected was mainly tension of the task and mystery, rather than intercultural tension. For, example, in my journal, I discuss SM2 in terms of tension of the task:

Through my TIR intervention I stress that there is a lot at stake in carrying out this interview: I inject tension of the task as I say that this interview will be crucial to explain the origin of schizophrenia, which will attract funding. This will mean that their salaries will become higher. (RJ, p. 81-82: 56-1)

The tension of the task here is related to the psychologists managing to interview the subject and discovering information on his illness. In the dramatic world, this was connected to their reputation as professional psychologists at the conference. However, this was not explicitly connected to an intercultural theme; again, the intercultural dimension remained implicit.

Perhaps as a result of this intercultural tension being implicit, the data from teacher-participants in CS2 significantly reveals a low perception of intercultural engagement. For example, in his observations, from workshop 1 to 4, Alfonso writes:

Intercultural engagement – No! (Alfonso, OBS, p. 1:7)
Intercultural engagement is lacking. (Alfonso, OBS, p. 1:18)
Intercultural engagement – Lacking (Alfonso, OBS, p. 1:32)
Intercultural engagement – Still lacking (Alfonso, OBS, p. 5:31)

Finally, in his notes of workshop 5 (SM2), Alfonso comments:

Only black spot, intercultural engagement which is still underdeveloped during the five workshop sessions. (Alfonso, OBS, p. 7:25-26)

Whereas Alfonso mentions (the absence of) intercultural engagement, the other CS2 teacher-participants do not mention intercultural engagement at all. This lack of mention is worth noting, as TPs highly emphasised ‘communicative’ and ‘affective’ engagement in their observation notes. Similarly, in the TPs focus group, intercultural engagement was not mentioned at all.

In effect, initially, in CS2, I also struggled to connect with the intercultural dimension. In my journal, straight after class, I acknowledged this was due to a lack of explicit intercultural tension in the pre-text:
INTERCULTURAL REFLECTION: I feel embarrassed to say that but I decided to skip this, as there was absolutely no intercultural dimension to the drama today. Why? I don’t know. I somehow left this dimension totally unattended today. The pre-text itself did not hold any intercultural tension (my mistake) and the roles/situations I created did not allow for an (obvious) intercultural gap. Next time I look for a pre-text this is imperative! The pre-text must hold intrinsic intercultural tension. (RJ, p. 66:41-44)

As I realised that the pre-text of CS2 did not hold explicit tension, I decided to inject some intercultural tension, through role and situation. In my journal, I comment:

Now it's too late to change the pre-text of course, so I need to correct this oversight by injecting intercultural tension through role and/or situation; tomorrow I will introduce a new detail: the family of Fabrizio treats mental disorder as taboo, a strong trait of the Italian culture: this could be a platform for discussion. (RJ, p. 66:39-50)

The last two lines of this entry (“mental disorder as taboo”) encapsulate the intercultural theme of the CS2 drama. Thus, the intercultural tension was injected after the pre-text was launched. This seed was planted in the intercultural reflection of workshop 3, and during the drama work of workshops 4 and 5. However, this was not parallel with meaningful reflection: in workshop 4, we just briefly touched on ‘superstition and mirrors’ across different cultures, a discussion I described as “interesting, but superficial” (RJ, p.42:2). In workshop 5, rather than an intercultural reflection, the final discussion was a recapitulation of what previously emerged. These were, in effect, missed opportunities to create intercultural awareness.

Another potential source of intercultural tension which was not made explicit in the drama was implied in Olga’s dramatic role. As mentioned in Chapter Five, Olga created the role of a psychologist who, until recently, had been a busker in underground trains. This is a context-specific reference, with high intercultural potential, since buskers in Milan are associated with gypsy ethnic minorities, a very controversial issue (Rodari, 2008). Olga, who is Russian, originally came from a gypsy family. Her decision to embody the role of ‘a busker turned professional psychologist’ contains a degree of intercultural tension, as it juxtaposes

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30 In Milan there are hundreds of Roma people who populate the underground trains, begging, singing and/or playing Italian folk songs. This phenomenon has been steadily growing for the last 15 years, and has reached a stage where, in each carriage of each underground service in the city, there is usually a gypsy busker. Unfortunately, theft awareness has brought the majority of Milanese commuters to discriminate (http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/66563). Although some of them are talented, on average they are perceived as amateur musicians.
two concepts usually kept separate in Italian society: ‘the gypsy’ and ‘the professional’. Her decision to embody this dual identity may have questioned the Italian stereotype of all Roma people being uneducated and involved in petty crime. Indeed, this might have been a source of internal tension in Olga’s experience of the drama, which, nevertheless, remained implicit. I discovered that Olga actually had a Roma ethnic background only during the TPs’ focus group, from a teacher-participant, when the drama was finished.

**Intercultural Tension Made Explicit**

Throughout CS2, I managed to make a degree of intercultural tension explicit. To explore this within SM2, in this section I go back to some key moments prior to SM2. This digression will contribute to clarifying the nature of ‘intercultural tension’ in SM2.

At the end of workshop 3, I introduced the theme of ‘mental illness perceived as taboo’ in Italian culture (Balboni, 2007, p. 28). Here we were able to capitalise on the participants’ different nationalities to generate a discussion on different cultural perceptions of mental illness. I shared my view, as an Italian, of mental illness being treated as taboo and covered up by a family unit; other participants discussed the American, Japanese and Russian stances on mental illness. We concluded that, for some Italian families, it might seem important to maintain a façade of ‘normality’, even when mental illness existed within the family.

This reflection was crucial, as in the following workshop a letter was introduced from the subject (Appendix U) stating that “he was a very normal person”, and he did not want any of his family members to be contacted. Straight after reading the letter, the SPs had to interview the subject’s ex-wife (played by Hiru), and his sister (Olga). In both interviews, the discussion of mental illness injected a degree of ‘intercultural tension’ (of relationships) in the drama. In particular, the ex-wife was trying to cover up the mental illness of her ex-husband. The transcript below reveals how this connection was planted, in role:
1. Erika/psychologist: -Excuse me, May I ask You a question? In Your ex-husband’s family is there any history of… mental disorder?
2. Hiru/ex-wife: No, never. Not at all, not all.
3. Erika/psychologist: Has he ever talked about mental illness?
4. Hiru/ex-wife: Ehm… never time, I haven’t heard anything about these things.
5. Erika/psychologist: He… do You consider Your ex-husband a normal person?
6. Hiru/ex-wife: Yes yes! [Reassuring] He was born and grew up in a very normal family.
7. Erika/psychologist [thoughtful]: Very normal? Very-n-o-r-m-a-l [turns around to Sabina] Take note of this, please.
8. [General giggles]
11. Alfonso/psychologist: Very normal…
12. [An echo of voices, including Sandra, Olga, Yoriko]: v-e-r-y n-o-r-m-a-l… (2.4.3:2:03)

In my journal, I describe the chorus of “very normal” (line 12) in terms of “non-narrative tension”, (Styan, 1960); that is, tension that is injected not through the narrative, but through a non-narrative element; in this case, tone of voice, pause and repetition. This occurred by transforming two words (“very normal”) into a symbolic chorus, connected to the idea of ‘mental illness as a taboo’ in Italian culture:

I manage to create a moment of high non-narrative tension. I capitalise on Hiru’s answer (“oh, yes… he comes from a very normal family!”) and transform it into a symbolic line – the participants pick up on this and recreate a chorus. This line (“very normal!”) will then provide a motif for the role plays that follow. (RJ, p. 75-76:55-4)

In the episode that follows, Olga capitalises on this intercultural tension of relationships, and she makes it explicit:

1. Erika/coordinator: Do we have any other questions?
2. Hiru/psychologist: Yes. Ehm… any instances of mental disorder in your family?
3. Olga/sister [shaking her head]: No!
4. Sabina/psychologist: Not even Yourself?
5. Olga/sister: [giggling]. No, no! 100%… normal.
6. Everyone: Normal…
7. Stefano/psychologist: Very normal!
8. [Everyone echoes]: Very normal!
9. [Charged silence]
10. Olga/sister: Yes. [Nods] (2.4.9:51)

Here the participants seem to be able to play with dramatic form (supporting the discussion in Chapter Five on agency as manipulation of form) to inject ‘intercultural tension’. Olga denies
any instances of mental illness in her family, thus creating more tension of relationship (and of the task). The psychologists’ response in line 6 (“normal…”) further reinforces this intercultural tension. This was initiated by myself, as teacher, first out of role, and then in role. Most importantly, however, it was validated by the participants, who responded to my suggestions and made the intercultural tension explicit.

Intercultural Awareness

In light of the key moments discussed above, I now turn to SM2, to analyse how the ‘intercultural tension’, which had been rendered explicit, was lived through felt-experiences resulting in intercultural awareness. To begin, I consider Turns 49-50:

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<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Tir: Because... in my opinion... of course, in a similar situation, with a... [pause] normal person... we'd have to use the formal... because we don't know him, because he is a teacher... but in this... very delicate context... dealing with... madness... mental illness... perhaps using an informal register could help our patient...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>[Olga nods]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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In Turn 49, I deliberately hint back at the ‘intercultural tension’ related to the idea of ‘normality’. As I pronounce these words, Yoriko makes eye contact with Catherine, and Olga nods. Here, the paralinguistic responses like pausing, putting emphasis on the word ‘normal’, eye contact and nodding may suggest evidence of an awareness, mutually acknowledging something (perhaps the ‘mental illness as taboo’ theme). In effect, in the following episode, a degree of ‘intercultural tension’ manifests in the dramatic action. Yoriko (playing ‘the subject’) interviewed in front of the mirror, appears to embody this ‘intercultural tension’, through her verbal non-verbal behaviour: shaking and covering her face (Figure 5.6).
This intercultural tension also manifests in the dialogue:

1. Yoriko/subject *shrieks*: No, no! *Shakes her body; covers her face*
2. Olga/psychologist *placing a hand behind the subject’s back*: That’s just you! See?
3. *Reflections smile, moving frantically*
4. Yoriko/subject: It’s not, it’s not me! […]
5. Olga/psychologist: No, no, no, because you’re a bit *hand movement to indicate ‘loopy’* you have some issue…in your head…for this reason you see three.
6. Yoriko/subject: I don’t have a problem. I am always a confident man. OK? (V_SM2 [c] 00:10:08)

Here, Yoriko, in role as ‘the subject’, denies having a problem, perpetuating the ‘intercultural tension’ of relationships (psychologist/subject) and of the task (helping him to acknowledge his mental illness), arising from the intercultural discussion. She embodies these intercultural tensions, which now become explicit, both in her verbal and non-verbal behaviour, suggesting a degree of *intercultural awareness* emerging through ‘felt-experience’.

Another example in that episode is Sandra’s non-verbal behaviour in SM2 (b), as she says: “Everyone uses this bath!” (00:04:40), while trying to persuade the subject to come out of the bath tub. While pronouncing this phrase, Sandra performs a typical Italian gesture, an emblem (Stam & McCafferty, 2008) consisting of a curled fist rotating up and down twice. This
gesture, similar to that of Teodoro in CS1 (SM1, T 41), may suggest an awareness of the intercultural role that she is playing, embodied in the ‘felt-experience’ within that dramatic frame. In effect, in that specific moment of the drama, Sandra, in role as a psychologist, was confronting the subject about exiting the bath, by suggesting that the tub was dirty.

These arguments seem to point towards a degree of intercultural awareness. However, as I will outline below, it appears that the intercultural dimension remained implicit for CS2 participants.

**Implicit Meaning-making**

Although the ‘intercultural tension’ was eventually made explicit, the data from SPs’ interviews suggests that intercultural meaning-making remained implicit. For example, when asked if she learnt anything about the Italian culture, compared to her own culture, Olga replied:

> During the class, we spoke about… a lot about the psychological theme, thoughts, mentally disabled people; and we compared… different cultures like Italian, Russian and another student’s as well, like American and Japanese, so I… kind of… had a chance to compare this, how is it in different countries; and I think if… there are more classes, you can compare… other things. (Olga, p. 3:3-9)

Olga’s lack of articulation of intercultural meaning might be because this remained implicit during the drama. In effect, Olga was able to identify an intercultural theme that was explored during the drama, but she did not elaborate any explicit intercultural meaning-making triggered by the drama. Olga stated that she “had a chance to compare”, but did not discuss what she reflected upon, during the drama. In other words, what she felt during the drama, associated with this topic, remains implicit. This may also have been caused by my inability to follow-up in the interview. Yet, student-participants in CS1 were asked the same questions, and were able to elaborate, unprompted, with lower language proficiency. Arguably, Olga’s lack of elaboration was not due to her lack of proficiency in the language. However, as mentioned in Chapter Three, beyond the language gap, a number of other challenges existed in the design and execution of the interlanguage interviews, including a gap in ‘cultural distance’, a semantic gap and a translation gap. These gaps may also account for meaning-making remaining implicit.

31 Olga was Russian and spoke English fluently. During the interview, she chose to speak in English rather than in Italian. This means that her interview Transcript is original, it has not been translated. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that the interview was not conducted in her native language.
Similarly, Hiru recognised an intercultural dimension emerging from the drama, but did not explicitly articulate any reflection, or meaning-making, stemming from it. Instead, she framed the discussion as “something I told them” rather than ‘something she felt’, during the drama:

Erika: Has this workshop shifted your perception of Italian culture in some way?  
Hiru: Italian culture?  
E: Italian  
H: Oh yes, for example yes yes you told us that… the Italian family is always concerned to keep up appearances, yes yes. Therefore, you can’t talk about some things at home. But also, this is true in Japan, perhaps in the States, in other countries as well… but yes, yes, You told us about this. (Hiru, p. 2:24-32)

Hiru seemed to identify the topic, but was unable to expand on it, to articulate any intercultural meaning-making triggered by it. Yet, significantly, this contradicts the data from Hiru’s questionnaire, as she self-evaluated her ‘intercultural’ engagement at 9/10, in SM2 (Figure 4.6). It might be possible that the discrepancy between this high score and the lack of articulation of intercultural meaning is due to her reflection remaining implicit in the drama.

Catherine’s comments also seem to imply such a discrepancy. On the one hand, Catherine stated that her intercultural perception had not shifted as a result of the experience:

Erika: Since doing the drama workshops, do you think that something has changed in your understanding of the Italian culture?  
Catherine: I mean, I can just think of one moment, specifically when we discussed… ehm someone had a mental disability… and we discussed, from each of -you know, where we come from, each of our countries ehm… how it’s viewed, how it’s dealt with. But I didn’t feel… no, I didn’t feel surprised.  
E: Did you already know about?  
C: Yeah, I mean I spend a lot of time in Italy with my dad and I would sort of listen to… those reactions to things. (Catherine, p. 3:20-39)

Catherine did not think she had shifted her understanding or questioned her beliefs. On the other hand, significantly, in the same interview, she describes process drama in terms of ‘acquiring new intercultural perspectives’:

I would define [process drama] as a technique that allows the students to approach a language and leave their sort of cultural baggage... put it aside for a moment which can allow you to sort of... ehm... take in what you're learning... in a less filtered way. I would describe it as that. (Catherine, p. 3-4:49-4)

This remark points to Catherine’s view of process drama as a medium to increase intercultural awareness, de-centring from stereotypical view (“taking in what you’re learning in a less...
filtered way”). Her comment echoes Byram’s (1997) “readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and beliefs about one’s own” (p. 61). Nevertheless, while framing it this way, she was *not* able to apply this discourse to *her own experience* in the drama. Interestingly, in the questionnaire, she self-evaluated her ‘intercultural’ engagement for SM2 as 9/10. Yet, she was not able to articulate such engagement. Again, this suggests a *discrepancy* between her understanding of process drama, her self-evaluation score, and the opinion expressed in her interview. This lack of articulation is not due to language proficiency issues, as Catherine was American, and was interviewed in English. Instead, it seems to suggest that Catherine’s meaning-making remained *implicit*.

To conclude, *none* of the interviews in CS2 provide any evidence of intercultural awareness or intercultural meaning-making. Clearly, ‘meaning’ is an abstract, intangible concept; by acknowledging that none of the SPs shared their intercultural awareness with the interviewer, I cannot infer that they did not engage in intercultural meaning-making. However, what *can* be inferred is that a *discrepancy* between high self-evaluation scores, and the comments in the interviews, points to intercultural meaning-making, if it occurred, remaining *implicit* in the participants’ felt-experience. This might be connected to the specific ‘intercultural/dramatic structure’ of the drama, in particular to the absence of explicit ‘intercultural tension’ in the pre-text, as well as less opportunities for intercultural reflection.

Alred et al. (2003) argue that, in order to generate intercultural meaning, intercultural *experience* itself is not enough; it must be coupled with reflection, analysis and action (p. 5). In the analysis of CS1, I have argued that, through intercultural tension, this awareness, facilitated by reflection, generated intercultural meaning-making. In CS2, where the pre-text did not contain any explicit intercultural tension, intercultural awareness was *not* made explicit into meaning-making, neither in the drama or later in the interviews. This reveals the vital importance of the pre-text holding explicit intercultural tension, to generate intercultural awareness and meaning-making.
Case Study Three

(Implicit) Intercultural Tension

In CS3, I chose to use the same pre-text as for CS2 (the film ‘Buongiorno’), where the intercultural tension was implicit. As a result, there was again no explicit ‘intercultural tension’ raised from the launch of the pre-text. However, from the first workshop onward, I attempted to inject a degree of intercultural tension through the drama. This was not done at the level of the pre-text, but at the level of role-creation, and through reflection between tasks. For example, as the student-participants created their dramatic roles, I asked them to consider their nationality. Their choice of role, related to ethnicity, was very eclectic: many chose to play a psychologist from a different country; some chose to play psychologists from different regions of Italy. Choosing these roles was, for some of the participants, a source of ‘intercultural tension’, as in Marika’s case:

Erika: Why did you decide to come [to Italy] and study Italian?
Marika [giggles]: Because... my grandparents were Italian, from... Ravenna, in Emilia Romagna and... I don’t know, I was born with this desire [laughs] to study Italian! […]
E: Listen, in the... the drama, I remember you said you were from Ravenna, right?
M: No. Oh yes, I said that, yes.
E: Ah ah, so-
M: I was looking for a name... an identity and... my grandma came up!
E: Sure, right. Very interesting.
[Marika laughs]
E: Because perhaps you identified... with an Italian part of yourself?
M: Yes very much, yes. (Marika, p. 1:18-32)

Thus, for Marika, playing a role that validated her desire to reconnect with her Italian identity might have influenced her experience of the drama on an implicit level, in a similar way to Olga (CS2), from a gypsy Russian family. However, this was not discussed during the drama; similarly, the various nationalities of the participants did not have any explicit impact on the drama; its potential for intercultural awareness and meaning-making was not harnessed openly in the dramatic world, and did not result in explicit intercultural tension.

On the other hand, a degree of ‘intercultural tension’ was made explicit from a discussion, in workshop 3, about Italian families considering mental illness as a taboo (Balboni, 2007). This, similarly to CS2, created a degree of intercultural tension of relationship, and intercultural tension of the task, in the various role plays with the family of the subject.
Above I defined ‘intercultural metaxis’ as the dramatic tension triggered in participants experiencing a disjunction between how they are responding to the drama and how they would respond in real life, when these two frames relate to different cultural systems of beliefs.

Obviously, ‘intercultural metaxis’ is an intangible force; as a result, it is not possible to ‘prove’ its presence. However, it appears that some student-participants’ comments, for example Eduarda’s, indicate a degree of ‘intercultural metaxis’. During the ‘rescue operation’, Eduarda chose not to participate actively, but to just stand outside the lift, observing. At the time, I wondered whether she was engaged in the drama at all. Yet, in the interview, Eduarda mentions this moment as highly intense:

Erika: What is the moment that you remember most vividly?
Eduarda: Most vividly... the scene when we... how can I say? [Mimes pulling something]
E: Removed?
Eduarda: Removed Mr Marini from the lift.
E: [...] In that episode, you... mmm, were standing up, right? You were standing up and you didn't do... any movem -any action, you just stood there; when I watched you I wasn't sure if... for you... it was something intense, or not, because you didn't do anything [...] Eduarda: -Maybe I didn't, didn't participate [...] but the image was strong for me [...] [Pause] Eh... I have a case... of mental disorder in my family, too.
E: Oh I see.
Eduarda: My uncle; it reminded me... of him, a lot. (Eduarda, p. 2:3-26)

Eduarda proceeded to disclose that, during SM3, she had lived an intense experience (“the image was strong”) because of a personal case of mental illness in her family.

In SM3, Eduarda’s participation might seem minimal, compared to other participants; indeed, she is the one who moves the least in the group; however, a closer analysis suggests that she was engaged in the drama. In effect, by following her behaviour from frame to frame, she is far from inactive: as Carme is talking (first trial in the rescue operation), Eduarda bends towards her twice, whispering (SM3 [b] 00:6:08-12). Later, Eduarda reaches for ‘a bowl of spaghetti’ (using a book as a prop) and hands it to Marika, smiling. Then, she grabs a glass, and hands it to Ariel, who tries to persuade the subject with food. At this time, Eduarda remains still, outside the lift. Her gaze is intense, fixed on the subject; her look is concerned, her head tilted, her hands are clasped together in apprehension (Figure 5.7).
In other words, Eduarda seems to be embodying this ‘felt-experience’, in a way that is perhaps more discreet than the others, but highly significant at an affective and cognitive level. As the subject refuses the food, Eduarda makes eye contact with Herminia, nods and grins (SM3 [b] 00:7:41), as if to imply that she knew he would. Eduarda moves closer to where the subject is squatting, and then she withdraws. At this stage, the psychologists gather again to discuss a new strategy. Here, Eduarda seems to become the centre of attention, proposing a new plan as the others gather and listen attentively (V_SM3 [b] 00:8:18). In the last trial, Eduarda steps away, then again steps closer to observe. Then she bends down towards the subject (00:10:03). Finally, as Jun/psychologist tries to pull the subject up, Eduarda intervenes:

1. [Jun/psychologist tries to lift the subject]  
2. Agate/subject: Oh no, no, no!  
3. [Jun/psychologist tries to lift the subject]  
4. Eduarda/psychologist: Come on, up! Come on up!  
5. [The subject eventually crawls out]  
   (SM3 [b] 12:10)

In the interview, Eduarda stated that her engagement with this moment continued well after the workshop:
I was inside... the character, yes. Also, the moment when I returned home [...] Even then, it was difficult to [laughs] Desconectar.32 (Eduarda, p. 3:23-25)

From these comments, it appears that Eduarda was experiencing a degree of intercultural metaxis, connecting the situation to her personal family history. Yet, significantly, in the various opportunities for reflection following SM3, Eduarda chose not to share her family history (her uncle’s mental illness) with the group. She disclosed it only to me, privately, during the interview, at the end of the drama. By choosing not to share this information with the others, Eduarda in effect concealed the mental illness in her family from the group. Paradoxically, this ‘protective attitude' was the very topic we were discussing. This paradox may well have been quite obvious for Eduarda during our discussion, increasing her affective reaction, and potential intercultural metaxis. In effect, significantly, she was the only SP who did not voice an opinion in the final reflection on ‘mental illness as taboo'. These insights shed new light on Eduarda’s involvement in SM3:

1 Erika [out of role]: I’ll give you a couple of minutes and then I’ll be back.
2 [Erika leaves the group]
3 [7 seconds of silence]
4 Eduarda [whispering to the group]: What do you think?
5 (Overlapping voices, inaudible)
6 Eduarda: What do you think he says? An obsession, or…
7 Marika: He is scared of himself.
8 Ariel: Yes, stress -stressed
9 Eduarda: The same image
10 Agate [leaning forward]: I think that he lost his (inaudible)... confused, yes yes, feeling tired
12 (Overlapping voices, inaudible) [Herminia leans forward, nodding]
13 Marika: He has lost his identity; and he is scared of himself. When he sees himself in the mirror… he cannot recognize himself
14 [Erika/coordinator enters the scene and sits down on the table; everyone continues talking]
15 Carme: Relax…
16 Eduarda: I think that… his solitary life, without friends, without family close to him… too much, too much work…
17 Marika: Mmm [nods]
18 Eduarda: It’s a pity-


32 Portuguese for ‘disconnecting’.
This interaction takes place immediately after the rescue operation, which, Eduarda stated, reminded her of her uncle. In the discussion above, the psychologists are asked to interpret the outcome of the rescue operation. Here Eduarda assumes leadership in the decision-making process (T 4), showing empathy for the subject’s situation (T 16). As she speaks about ‘his solitary life, without friends, without family’, she might also be sharing her own feelings. In her final comment (“it’s a pity”, T 18) her voice sounds concerned; her intonation suggests sorrow, helplessness, or regret.

These observations seem to suggest that Eduarda might have felt a degree of ‘intercultural metaxis’ in SM3. Her metaxis might have been related to the feelings she experienced in the dramatic frame, as a professional psychologist taking care of a mentally ill man, and her real life, with her uncle in Brazil, over whom she might have no direct control. Furthermore, her choice not to disclose her family history while discussing mental illness as taboo could have generated a degree of intercultural tension. If so, the tension that Eduarda might have felt stemmed from a lived ‘felt-experience’ in the drama, connected to a personal experience in her real life, and, perhaps, a disjunction in the way she behaved in the two.

Intercultural Awareness

The dramatic tension that arose during the ‘rescue operation’ (SM3) seems to have created a degree of intercultural awareness. In the engagement questionnaire, Eduarda self-evaluated her ‘intercultural’ engagement as 8/10 and her ‘affective’ engagement as 9/10 (Figure 4.8). When asked to comment on the ‘intercultural’ scores, she replied:

Eduarda: Because we spoke about taboos...
Erika: Oh yes, sure
Eduarda I think it was that day, right?
Erika: Yes.
Eduarda: It also reminded me of my [family] problems.
(Eduarda, p. 3-4:40-2)

Eduarda mentions the intercultural reflection, where mental illness as ‘taboo’ was discussed. Below is my account of the intercultural reflection that followed SM3:

INTERCULTURAL REFLECTION: As I open the discussion, Carme is the first one to intervene; she says that she thinks everyone is ‘crazy’ (3.3.5, 57:40). She goes on to say that on TV everything is presented in a light-hearted, humorous way, but deep down, psychiatry is still a taboo. Marika says that in Brazil they are pretty open
towards mental illness; Herminia disagrees, saying that it is OK to talk about it between family members, but not to outsiders. This initially generates a bit of commotion, everyone is becoming more involved (1:00:00). Carme adds that, in Brazil, mental disease gets mixed up with religion; the mentally ill go to church, and everything is fixed. Marika says that in Brazil there are still mental asylums. Carme replies that they are about to close down, Marika disagrees. (RJ, p. 118-119:46-1)

This extract from my journal gives a lively picture of the social interaction, with participants engaged in a discussion that may suggest a degree of intercultural awareness. However, that reflection was perceived very differently by two observing teacher-participants from how it was perceived by me. TP Rossana, in the interview that followed the observation of workshop 3, commented:

Towards the end, they needed to be spoon-fed again, in the intercultural reflection, ehm... I don’t think it was working very well because... it’s not... it’s not like it didn’t work, but there wasn’t that kind of debate that a teacher always hopes for at the end of a class. […] Really, I saw them, they didn’t look into each other’s eyes, but... like they would turn towards you and reply to your question. (Rossana, p. 13:22-27)

Similarly, according to TP Giovanni’s written observation notes, the reflection in workshop 3 was ‘stilted’:

In the last phase, the intercultural reflection, everyone replied individually to the teacher, and more because they were asked to, rather than because they really needed to talk about it. (Giovanni, OBS, p. 1:46-48)

It is interesting to compare Giovanni’s comment with his earlier observation, related to SM3:

Report to the doctor, after recovering Paolo [SM3]: they are all very engaged, they’ve done something very important and they need to talk about it. (Giovanni, OBS, p. 1:38-41)

From these two pieces of observation, it emerges that in Rossana’s and Giovanni’s perception, the intercultural reflection generated no real ‘need’ to engage in the intercultural discussion. This condition might be related to the ‘intercultural/dramatic structure’ of the drama: the pre-text contained no explicit intercultural tension, and the structure of the drama did not encourage intercultural awareness. In particular, the structure of this drama differed from CS1 in terms of the elements of ‘dramatic focus’, and ‘place’, and their active manipulation within the intercultural dimension. While in CS1 the intercultural focus and place were variously framed (e.g., in the Shanghai office; at the airport in Rome; on the train from Rome to Milan; in

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Milan at the interview), in the CS2/3 dramas, there was no active manipulation of intercultural focus and place. Consequently, participants may not have become aware of such an intercultural dimension, and may have not felt the need to discuss it. Although I attempted to inject a degree of intercultural tension after the pre-text, and although I facilitated group reflections, these may not have been driven by intercultural tension.

(Implicit) Intercultural Meaning

Similarly to that of CS2, the analysis of CS3 reveals that student-participants showed a degree of intercultural awareness, but did not make their meaning-making processes explicit. As already mentioned, Eduarda is the only student-participant who did not contribute verbally to the reflection in workshop 3. However, in the focus group, Eduarda stated that she found the experience “very therapeutic”:

Eduarda says that for her [this experience] was also very therapeutic [everyone laughs]; she says that she always thought she was a very open person. However, here she found herself very shy [laughs] and this [becomes serious] is something that made her think. (CS3, SP_FG, 47:07)

Here, Eduarda pointed to the drama experience as having touched her, hinting at a degree of inner tension, leading to personal growth, which may indicate a degree of heightened awareness. However, she does not disclose what kinds of thoughts were triggered, and how these were therapeutic to her. In other words, although a degree of awareness may have been generated, this remained implicit.

Jun’s interview provides another example. There she spontaneously made an association between two apparently disconnected moments: her grandmother’s passing and her involvement in SM3. She did not openly acknowledge a connection between the two:

My grandma just passed away like two months ago, so…it’s really strong, and also ehm the role play when I go in the elevator… […] that time, is like: I have to try and it was like… it was like: I don’t know that’s going to happen to be me; you know, so when I go in, I just try but I don’t know, exactly what I was doing and the patient was out! So… it was strong to me to see things in a different way and to try different things. (Jun, p. 3:6-18)

From both her participation and interview, Jun appeared to have had a high intercultural and affective connection. This is supported by her questionnaire data, where she self-evaluates her
‘intercultural’ engagement as 8/10. Yet, she did not make this personal connection explicit; it remained implicit in her consciousness. Thus, although experiencing some strong emotions, she appears to have not explicitly processed her intercultural meaning-making in SM3.

Similarly, when asked to comment on her experience, Agate hinted at a process of intercultural meaning-making, but did not make it explicit:

Erika: Have you learnt anything about yourself as an individual, in an intercultural way?
Agate: Because I am constantly teaching... I'm also constantly... revisiting my values. Because I also teach people... from different cultures... so... this is just one more step, one more... way, just one more... opportunity to to question values, to compare cultures... but it has... yes, of course it has happened; and so... I feel I'm learning and growing all the time, because of what I do. (Agate, p. 2:1-10).

In this answer, Agate mentions having been exposed to many different cultures; she also mentions her teaching and ongoing questioning of her values. She hints at a process drama being a further opportunity, ‘one more step’ to question her values (“Yes, of course it has happened…”). However, she does not expand on this. Any intercultural meaning she might have generated remains implicit in her experience. This might have been due to my inability to follow-up with a pertinent question here. Yet, it might also suggest Agate’s lack of explicit meaning-making related to the drama, stemming from a weak intercultural pre-text. Most likely, it is a combination of both elements. In the interview, Agate also adds that, during this process drama, she did not feel like she was doing “anything really deep, too deep into the culture, into the Italian culture” (p. 4:11-16). As the data from her questionnaire shows (Figure 4.8), Agate rated her ‘intercultural’ engagement as neutral (5/10) but her ‘affective’ engagement as very high (10/10). This reinforces a lack of any explicit intercultural meaning-making.

Likewise, Ariel’s data is somewhat contradictory. She hinted at some intercultural awareness, but her meaning-making remained implicit. During the intercultural reflection that followed SM3, Ariel noted that in Switzerland, mental illness is “a closed issue” (3.3.5, 1:00:34). In the interview, she liked the intercultural discussions best (reflective phase of the drama), as they allowed her “to contrast and compare cultures” (p. 2:7-11). As Ariel was a very reluctant speaker, in the interview I asked her to expand on her reluctance to speak:

33 Agate worked in the school as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher. She was born in Brazil, lived in Australia for 20 years, Thailand for two years and Poland for three years. Throughout her travels, she continued to teach ESL, thus being exposed to a variety of cultures.
Erika: I didn’t understand if you weren’t speaking very much because you were thinking about other things, or… were you thinking about the story?
Ariel: A little bit of both, because this made me think a lot... about life, and everything. (Ariel, p. 3:32-36)

Ariel hinted at generating some intercultural meaning through a connection with other issues (“life and everything”) but did not articulate any further. However, she does appear to be involved in some kind of intercultural meaning-making, reinforced by her in the focus group discussion.

Ariel in particular adds that [through process drama] she has seen how other people think, and that very often they think the same, in different situations. (CS3, SP_FG, 48:39)

Ariel’s comments are confirmed by her questionnaire data, with the ‘intercultural” engagement self-evaluated at 9/10, followed by the ‘affective’ value at 8/10 (Figure 4.8). Thus, again, the questionnaire indicates a high perceived engagement, but in the interview she was not aware (or willing) to acknowledge any intercultural meaning-making.

In the same way, Marika could identify a thread for intercultural awareness, but she did not point to any explicit intercultural meaning-making.

Erika: Have you learnt anything about yourself and your culture?
Marika: Mmm yes in that moment… when we were talking… about different cultures, it was interesting, yes. Not that I have learnt… about my culture, I learnt about other cultures [laughs]. (Marika, p. 4-5:45-2)

Whatever Marika learnt about “other cultures” remains unspoken. In the same way, whatever she felt during the moment, and how this changed her perception, was undisclosed. Again, this might be due to my questioning skills as an interviewer, or to the interviewee being unaware of any meaning-making. Significantly, her ‘intercultural’ value for SM3 is as low as 1/10, while the affective is rated as 7/10, and the communicative as 9/10 (Figure 4.8).

Finally, Carme had a strong reaction to the drama. In the interview, she hinted at having been stirred by something, but did not make her meaning-making explicit. She identified the intercultural discussion following SM3 as her most vivid memory. The intercultural reflections were also her choice of specific moment, from workshop 1 to 4. Yet, in the interview she indicated that the topic of the drama was too ‘heavy’ for her.
Carme: Mental disorder! And these... types of topic... ah it’s a bit estrange, a bit sério\textsuperscript{34} [mimes something heavy]
Erika: A bit heavy?
C: Heavy!
E: Yes, yes, yes.
C: And for me, at this moment in my life, I prefer a topic... leve\textsuperscript{35}
E: Light!
(Carme, p. 3:24-33)

Later in the interview, Carme indicated that this theme was too confronting for her:

Carme: Because psychology, ehm mental disorders, todo\textsuperscript{36} of that thing, ehm the drama for... learning another language [shouting] for me, at this moment... I don’t like it!
Erika: Sure, I see.
C: Alright?
E: Yes.
C: If it was another... another topic: it’s all good, alright? [...] Psychology topic, mental disorders... all of that [shouting] it’s not my moment! (Carme, p.4:17-36)

Carme revealed a high degree of frustration, related to the drama being about mental illness, presumably because of some (undisclosed) issue in her personal life. In shouting: “it’s not my moment!” she revealed exasperation over the topic. These hostile feelings might have been the cause of a lack of intercultural growth on her behalf:

Erika: In these workshops, has anything changed in the way you see Italian culture?
Carme: Uh...no!
E: No; and what about how you see your culture?
C: Another no!
(Carme, p. 4:39-42)

Here, Carme’s refusal to consider any intercultural growth might be related to the topic being too confronting to her, resulting in dis-engagement. In effect, Carme appeared disengaged in the session after SM3 (workshop 4) and dropped out in workshop 5. The meaning that Carme made in SM3, relating to the drama, remained implicit in her experience, was not shared with the group, and resulted in disengagement from the drama intervention.

\textsuperscript{34} Portuguese for ‘serious’
\textsuperscript{35} Portuguese for ‘light’
\textsuperscript{36} Portuguese for ‘all’
To reiterate, despite a degree of intercultural tension and intercultural awareness in the intercultural/dramatic structure, intercultural meaning-making seems to remain implicit in the CS3 cohort. This might be related to lack of explicit intercultural tension in the pre-text. It might also be related to the dramatic context (mental illness) being too disturbing for some SPs, causing them to conceal, rather than to share, their intercultural meaning-making.

Conclusions

In CS1, I noted various degrees of intercultural awareness, which resulted in the SPs making explicit intercultural meaning. This evoked some traits of Byram’s (1997) ‘intercultural speaker’. This pattern, and the intercultural tension that it generated, was obvious to me, to the SPs, and to the TPs. However, in CS2 and CS3, the intercultural engagement experienced within the drama was not obvious to the participants; it may have been present (as indicated by some high scores in the questionnaire data), but it was not openly acknowledged. This discrepancy suggests that intercultural meaning-making remained implicit in the drama. In the discussion, I recognise that this could also be due to several reasons: the interview questions not being adequately phrased (i.e., lack of follow-up questions), but also, the drama not supporting a rich ‘intercultural/dramatic structure’.

I identified the major point of difference between the case studies in their intercultural/dramatic structure: the intercultural tension in the pre-text, the manipulation of the intercultural elements in the drama and intercultural reflection. In Table 5.3 I compare the intercultural/dramatic structures of CS1 and CS2/CS3. In CS1, the pre-text contained explicit intercultural focus, tension and place. This resulted in roles, situation, focus, place and mood implying an intercultural dimension to the drama. In CS2, the lack of intercultural tension in the pre-text and limited intercultural reflection resulted in no acknowledgement of explicit intercultural meaning-making. In CS1, ‘dramatic place’ was manipulated, and closely related, to intercultural focus and mood and the various types of intercultural tension. In SM1, the element of ‘place’ was crucial to the dramatic focus (being on a train from Rome to Milan) and it was manipulated throughout the drama (having to return to Shanghai to present the article, etc.). In CS2/3, dramatic place was not manipulated. In CS2 and CS3, the elements of ‘focus’ and ‘place’ were not clear to begin with; in particular, the intercultural focus did not shift, like in CS1 (travelling from China to Italy).
Table 5.3. 
*Explicit / Implicit Intercultural Tension in the Intercultural/Dramatic Structure.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-text</th>
<th>Intercultural/Dramatic Structure</th>
<th>CS2/CS3 Intercultural/Dramatic Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CS1</strong></td>
<td>Intercultural Focus: an editor is looking for apprentice journalists for an Italo-Chinese magazine</td>
<td>Intercultural Focus: not specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intercultural Tension: the journalists need to write an article appealing to Chinese businessmen interested in Italian business</td>
<td>Intercultural tension: not specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dramatic Place: an editorial room in the Italo-Chinese Chamber of Commerce, in Shanghai</td>
<td>Dramatic Place: in a lift, somewhere in Milan (not specified)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drama</strong></td>
<td>Manipulation of place: starting from the Editorial in Shanghai, travel to Italy, then back to Shanghai.</td>
<td>Manipulation of place: not specified (place remains fixed – the hospital; the bathroom, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manipulation of intercultural tension: apprentice journalists arrested on the train, preventing them from carrying out the interview</td>
<td>Manipulation of intercultural tension: discussion of mental illness as taboo; role plays with the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intercultural Reflection: ongoing, post-episodes and at the end of the drama</td>
<td>Intercultural Reflection: not always present or effective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These differences in the intercultural/dramatic structures may have resulted in the student-participants’ different degrees of engagement in the intercultural domain.

Moreover, the element of ‘mood’ associated with the pre-text differed. In CS1, the pre-text was related to graduates applying for a job as journalists in China; this might have been, in the real life of the participants, a desirable context, connected to their sense of high-achievement and business-oriented attitude; thus, the mood associated might have been one of ‘accomplishment’, aligning with, and validating the CS1 SPs’ motivation to learn the language. In CS2/CS3, the pre-text was related to psychologists dealing with a schizophrenic man. Setting the dramatic world in a hospital, dealing with mental illness might have been, in the real life of the SPs, a threatening context. Thus, for some participants, this mood might have been disturbing. As a result, some may have chosen not to partake, or to resist, intercultural engagement and meaning-making.
5.3. AESTHETIC LEARNING

In this section, I consider the nature of learner engagement in AL/process drama within the domain of Aesthetic Learning.

The analysis draws on Vygotsky’s (1971) theory of aesthetic engagement as ‘transformation’. Vygotsky considers form and content as inter-related, with aesthetic engagement being the influence of form on content. In this research, I construe aesthetic engagement through the lens of Vygotsky’s aesthetic transformation, in conjunction with his concept of ‘felt-experience’ as perezhivanie (1994): an intensely felt, interpreted, perceived and lived experience.

Vygotsky interprets the aesthetic process as a transformation, grounded within a social context. This process begins with an emotion and entails a ‘creative perception’. Next, it requires an interpretation, a ‘delayed reaction’, where one’s emotions and ideas need to be overcome: a period of time between ‘perception’ and the transformative process of overcoming the feeling. This can result in an aesthetic experience, entailing an action embedded in a social context, a reorganisation of future behaviour. I also refer to Vygotsky’s (2004) work on imagination, according to which the relationship between ‘imagination’ and ‘reality’ is twofold: on one side, emotions influence imagination; on the other, imagination has an effect on our emotions (p. 19).

In my analysis, I interpret the above theories in relation to the art form of process drama. O’Neill (1995) suggests that the purpose of process drama is expanding the participants’ capacity to perceive: to “arrest attention” and “extend perception”, in order to “involve interpretation” (p. 127). This, O’Neill holds, can generate and embody meaning. I also endorse Bolton’s (1979) theory of engagement in drama: emotions occur simultaneously in two contexts, and may contradict each other; it is precisely the dialectic between them that defines drama. This dual affective experience needs to be re-ordered, through reflection. Through this process, the resulting experience may be one of “heightened self-awareness” (p. 111). This
echoes Bundy’s (2005) notion of animation and connection with a metaphorical idea beyond the drama, generating a heightened awareness (Figure 2.15). Bundy defines ‘aesthetic engagement’ as “a type of engagement which may be stimulated in human beings as they perceive, experience and respond to the word in which they live” (2003, p. 180). This concept is not dissimilar to Vygotsky’s (1994) notion of perezhivanie.

The nature of engagement in the Aesthetic Learning domain seemed to manifest as a felt-experience, perezhivanie, entailing creative perception, interpretation and, in some cases, a connection with an idea leading to heightened self-awareness. This process differed significantly across the case studies: while in CS1 some SPs seemed to undergo the full process, and openly articulate their heightened self-awareness, in CS2/CS3 SPs could not explicitly articulate their heightened awareness. CS2 and CS3 SPs appeared to have had a felt-experienced and an active perception; some appeared to be going through an interpretation, a few could articulate a connection and none could articulate heightened awareness. As Fleming (1994) suggests, failure to articulate one’s aesthetic learning does not deny the power of an aesthetic experience:

Exponents of drama in education have been aware of having created a successful drama with a group but have been unable to articulate in precise terms the learning which has taken place. … That does not mean that specific new insights, new learning, new transformations do not take place as a result of drama. … the failure to articulate my learning in that way is not to deny the power and efficacy of the particular experience. (pp. 43-44)

In this analysis, I am not denying the power of the particular felt-experience; rather, I am observing that, while CS1 SPs seemed able to articulate their heightened awareness, CS2 and CS3 participants did not seem to able to. Here, I am paving the way for a connection between the ability to articulate one’s heightened awareness, and the degree of intercultural tension in the pre-text (see previous section, 5.2).

To explore these assumptions, while still focusing on the Specific Moments, I concentrate on selected individuals within each case. The process of selection needs to be acknowledged. In CS1, I chose Tommaso, Viola and Alessia because of their ability to express themselves in Italian and the amount of data relating to them in SM1. Some, but not all CS1 SPs were able to articulate their heightened awareness. Precisely, half of the SPs’ interviews reveal some evidence of heightened awareness. In CS2, I selected Yoriko, Olga and Hiru on the basis of the amount of data relating to them in SM2. All the SPs’ interviews reveal a similar level in their engagement. In CS3, I selected Agate, Jun and Marika on the basis of the
amount of data related to them in SM3. The SPs’ interviews reveal different levels in their engagement. Below, I articulate these differences and attempt to make sense of them.

**Case Study One**

For Vygotsky (1971), aesthetic engagement entails a transformative process, which begins with an emotion. In my reflective journal, I describe SM1 in terms high of emotional responses, in both verbal and non-verbal behaviour. Some of these are rendered by the captions in brackets in the actual Transcript, like “hysterical laughter” (T 58), “whispering in disappointment” (T 76), or “threatening” (T 83). In my journal, I made a list of enhanced affective responses:

- Tommaso’s stunned facial expression as the Ticket Inspector says: “that's enough, they are all fake!” (Turns 23-24);
- The collective reaction (“Nooo!”) in a genuinely disappointed tone as the Ticket Inspector tears up the tickets (T 33);
- The collective outraged response as the Inspector (talking on the phone) whispers “Yes, it is them!” (T 44);
- Vera’s sad facial expression and change of posture, as she hands in her passport (T 47);
- Viola's firm tone in her decision to refuse to hand in her passport (T 48);
- The collective, loud reaction as they accuse the Ticket Inspector of holding a fake ID (Turns 58-59). (RJ, p. 37:18-34)

These behaviours seem to suggest that those participants might have experienced a range of emotions during this frame of SM1. In particular, I concentrate on Tommaso, Viola and Alessia. Below I analyse their reactions to understand their unique and individual responses.

**Tommaso**

I begin by considering Tommaso’s responses in SM1. Upon hearing the Inspector’s accusation, Tommaso leans forward, drops his jaw, opens his mouth and opens his eyes wide. In the transcript, I describe Tommaso’s reaction as a “shocked face” (T 24, Appendix R). His body is upright and his gaze is straight at the Inspector. His alertness seems to intensify as the scene progresses: when the Inspector asks if they have passports, he nods, while the other passengers reply “of course!” (T 45). When the Inspector says “Yes, it is them” and starts collecting the passports, Tommaso stands immobile, open mouthed, staring at the Inspector.
As his passport is collected, he turns to follow the Inspector. When the Inspector says “You have the right to remain silent”, Tommaso slouches forward, looking at other passengers. By Turn 56, Tommaso openly challenges the Inspector, in a provocative move:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Tommaso: Can You show me an ID? Who are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>TI: Certainly. I am an officer of the [looks at name tag] Italian National Railway Network!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Tommaso: It’s fake! [Hysterical laughter]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Passengers [shouting all together]: Faake! Faake!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Transcript 5.21. SM1: 56-59.*

In this frame, Tommaso extends his arm and points his finger, amongst the hysterical laughter that accompanies the accusation. His bold statement has openly challenged the authority, and created a major shift in power and status. In the midst of the collective shouting, Tommaso stares directly at the Inspector, with a grin.

This snapshot of Tommaso’s behaviour in SM1 suggests that he may have experienced a wide range of emotions possibly including: astonishment, injustice, belittlement, mistrust, hostility, antagonism, revenge, empowerment, and ultimately, satisfaction, embodied through verbal and non-responses. Although we can only speculate on exactly *which* emotion he experienced in *which* moment, the data reveals that the *intensity* of his emotions was high, for Tommaso self-evaluated his engagement for SM1 as 9/10 across the ‘communicative’, ‘intercultural’, and ‘affective’ values (Figure 4.3). During the interview, I asked Tommaso to explain what kind of emotions he had felt. He replied:

> Because I like that! With my heart, I like this way of learning.37  
> (Tommaso, p. 4:13-14)

Here, Tommaso described AL/process drama through a *feeling* mode (“with my heart”). Significantly, in the interview, Tommaso repeatedly hinted at undergoing a *transformation* related to *identity*. In his own words, “accepting to become an Italian speaker”:

> Tommaso: [Doing process drama makes it] easier… easier to accept.  
> Erika: To accept… what?  
> T: To accept… speaking the language, to accept getting used to using the language.  
> (Tommaso, p. 2:16-20)

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37 Original version: “Perché mi piace quello! Dal mio cuore che mi piace questa maniera di fare lezione”
Tommaso repeated this concept of ‘acceptance’ several times: twice during the interview, once during the focus group, and again after the drama ended, in private conversation when I ran into him in the underground station. For example, during the focus group, I asked the participants to sum up their experience of AL/process drama through one key word. Tommaso’s key word was “accepting” (1.5.5, 30:54). He seemed to imply the negotiation of a new identity, as a Chinese speaker of Italian, enabled by the embodied dramatic experience. His insistence on this point may suggest that his cognitive connection was profound, triggering a heightened self-awareness related to ‘acceptance’ of becoming an Italian speaker.

Tommaso’s comments evoke Van Lier’s (2004) discussion on self and identity. For Van Lier, AL learners may feel unable to speak if the cultural identity that has been ‘allotted’ to them creates a barrier between their thoughts and their selves: “[AL learners] can only speak the second language when thoughts, identities and self are aligned” (p. 128). Tommaso seemed to gain a meaningful insight into accepting his identity as an Italian speaker.

Tommaso also reflected on his identity in relationship to dramatic form. He seemed fascinated by the idea of ‘dramatic role’, as a way to express one’s inner identity through a fictional identity:

Roles different from oneself… then it lets us know how people really are… therefore [process drama] is like an art form… (Tommaso, p. 3:38-42)

Tommaso extended his reflection to the artistry of teacher-in-role, in terms of playing a different role as a way to engage:

The role of Dr Righello [teacher-in-role] makes me… think of a lot of things, for example… the people that, that… mmm even if… from the same person, you can you can… be two very different people, so mmm…. I think this, this is a kind of… artistry. (Tommaso, p. 4:23-26)

Tommaso’s comments suggest he was reflecting on process drama as an art form. This appears to have triggered a reflection on some intercultural issues:

Tommaso: I think that… the Italian culture is more, more open to us foreigners… and then the Chinese culture is more, is closed off. I think that the two cultures can co-exist, this is a good idea.
Erika: And did you learn this during our classes together, or did you think about it before?
T: With You! With You! (Tommaso, p. 3:15-19)
Through a Vygotskian lens, it was the experience of the *form*, and the reflection on it, that influenced Tommaso’s understanding of the *content* of the drama. Tommaso’s comment also indicates a *connection* with an idea beyond the drama, leading to heightened awareness (Bundy, 2003). This awareness features some of the qualities of Byram’s (1997) ‘intercultural speaker’: intercultural attitudes, intercultural knowledge, skills of comparison, discovering and interaction (See Figure 2.8). This inter-relationship between the intercultural and the aesthetic evokes Nicholson’s (1999) theory of aesthetic engagement, conceived as the inter-relationship between other-understanding, self-understanding and dramatic form.

In light of the analysis, Tommaso’s experience seems to suggest a kind of engagement that involves the interrelation of cognition and affect across the three domains (SLA; Intercultural; Aesthetic Learning). It seems that process drama transformed Tommaso's language learning into an embodied felt-experience – an ‘aesthetic experience’, in terms of re-negotiating (“accepting”) his identity as a speaker of another language, while nurturing his identity as an ‘intercultural speaker’ (Byram, 1997). This transformative process culminated in Tommaso’s heightened self-awareness.

**Viola**

In SM1, Viola’s engagement in the drama emerges in many facets, the most obvious being her decision to refuse to hand in her passport. This action provoked the whole group to rebel against the teacher-in-role’s authority.

| 47 | TI: Fine [quietly, into the phone]: I’ll collect them now. *[To the passengers]*: passports! Thank you; thank you *[collects nine passports]* Thank you. Passports… excellent! You have the right to remain silent… *[Passengers grow restless]*; You have the right to make one phone call… |
| 48 | Viola: I’m not giving you my passport. |
| 49 | TI: I’m sorry? |
| 50 | Viola [shaking her head]: I’m not giving. |
| 51 | TI: Why not, Madam? |
| 52 | Viola: Because you are not the polic –police man |

*Transcript 5.22. SM1: 47-52.*

Viola’s emotional responses might be inferred from her verbal and non-verbal behaviour. As the Inspector starts collecting the passports, Viola sits upright and shakes her head. Then, as the Inspector says, “You have the right to remain silent” (T 47), Viola suddenly spins around, facing Stella and Alessia. She looks elated, quickly whispering something to them. She then
 swiftly turns back, just in time to face the Inspector. Looking defensive, with crossed arms, she firmly declares: “I’m not giving”. Immediately, the background chatting and chuckling stops. As Viola confronts the Inspector a charged silence follows (V_SM1, 00:55:24-29). Then, as the passengers rebel against the Inspector, the sound levels skyrocket (00:55:45). Here, the difference in sound level is remarkable. When the Inspector attempts to justify himself, Viola laughs in his face. These verbal and non-verbal behaviours seem to point to Viola experiencing a range of emotional reactions. In the drama, Viola might have experienced a range of emotions: mistrust, trepidation, defiance, boldness, exhilaration, satisfaction. The data from her questionnaire reveals that her perceived ‘affective engagement’ in SM1 may have been quite intense. Indeed, the ‘affective’ value in SM1 is the highest score she assigned across the whole intervention (10/10, compared to the ‘affective’ values of other workshops, respectively: 9/10; 8/10; 9/10; 8/10).

Moreover, Viola seems to have developed a connection (Bundy, 2003) with an idea evoked by the drama. To illustrate this point, I focus on Viola’s behaviour in the final 60 seconds of SM1. As the teacher-in-role leaves the space, Viola stays in role, and pretends to phone the editor, twice (Turns 111, 116), on behalf of the group.

| 107 | [Ticket Inspector leaves] |
| 108 | Mara: Bye! |
| 109 | [Stella whispers something to Viola] |
| 110 | [Vera whispers something to Viola] |
| 111 | Viola: [pretending to hold a phone, looking into the camera] Hello, Righello? What's happened? |
| 112 | Mara: Righello… |
| 113 | [Vera bursts into laughter] |
| 114 | [Viola pretends to hold the phone, and continues speaking, looking forward ] |
| 115 | [Passengers speak in Chinese: Viola ‘puts down’ the phone] |
| 116 | Viola [again pretending to hold a phone, looking upwards] Hello, Righello? What are you doing? Are you well? |
| 117 | [Stella laughs] |
| 118 | Viola [still on the phone to the editor]: We’re not doing well! |

Transcript 5.23. SM1: 107-120.

This frame illustrates Viola’s engagement, as she stays in role even after the teacher-in-role has left. Initially, she addresses the editor, in Italian, asking “What's happened?” (T 111). This interaction lasts only 10 seconds, but stirs the group: some peek at the Inspector, off camera; others stare intensely at Viola. Vera releases a potent laughter. The second time Viola phones the editor she looks up (Figure 5.9), preoccupied, and articulates a longer utterance: “Hello,
Righello? What are you doing? Are you well? We’re not doing well!” (T 116-118). Viola’s emotions seem to be influencing her imagination, while her imagination seems to affect her emotions. This evokes Vygotsky’s (2004) interdependence of ‘imagination’ and ‘reality’: on one side, emotions influence imagination; on the other, imagination affects our emotions (p. 19).

During the intercultural discussion at the end of the workshop, the group suggested that the idea they connected with was ‘defending their human rights when being accused unfairly’ and ‘standing up to protect their rights’ (1.4.3, 50:41). This seems to point to a connection with an idea beyond the drama, which resonated with the participants and with Viola in particular.

Figure 5.9. Viola (second row, right side) ‘On the Phone’ to the Editor.

Viola’s aesthetic understanding of process drama emerges during her interview:

Viola: [In process drama] we can do things more than other courses… therefore… more useful for us!
Erika: More useful… for what?
V: Mmm we can sense! Sensing mmm something; that verb\textsuperscript{38} …
E: Sensing with your ears (as in hearing), or sensing with your heart (as in feeling)?
V [Determined]: No, no! With your heart! (Viola, p. 2:14-21)

\textsuperscript{38} Translator’s note: depending on the context, the Italian verb ‘sentire’ (used here by Viola) can mean: ‘to hear’, ‘to feel’, ‘to smell’ or ‘to sense’. Hence the next clarifying question, which reveals Viola’s meaning as ‘to feel’. In the rest of the interview, ‘sentire’ has been translated as ‘to feel’.
Viola’s comment depicts process drama as a means to “feel” the Italian language. Significantly, this echoes Tommaso’s comment above ("from the heart"). Later in her interview, Viola’s experience of process drama points to a period of gestation, a ‘delayed reaction’ (Vygotsky, 1971), after which she began to understand the purpose of the form.

Erika: What did you find most difficult, in the course?
Viola: At first we didn’t understand what this is; [smiles] what is the reason… to do this performance, that performance, so… we didn’t understand very well; so we don’t know how - how to do it; this is a bit hard.
E: So you found it hard because you didn’t understand… how to do it… or because you didn’t understand… why we do it?
V: Mmm… why we do it. […]
E: So now, do you understand… why?
V: Yes [smiles] […]
E: So… why do we do it?
V: Ohhh… to help us mmm… to… feel the Italian language, more.
(Viola, p. 3:31-45)

Here, Viola’s comment suggests that, after a period of gestation, she came to interpret the purpose of the drama as “feeling the Italian language, more”. Before she came to understand this, she found the approach ‘confusing’. Significantly, she frames her answer in the plural (“we didn’t understand…”), revealing a dialogic stance towards the drama, in line with consciousness as a phenomenon born out of social activity (Vygotsky, 1978).

Viola also reflects on process drama as form:

[Process drama] is an art form in order to… show others. Yes for us as well, ourselves. I think that it’s a [laughs] it’s an art form to feel the culture and the language, that’s it. (Viola, p. 4:39-40)

Once again, Viola reinforces her perception of the aesthetic mode of the form. Her comment encapsulates the complexity of engagement within the aesthetic realm, grounded in a social dimension, both as creator (“to show others”) and as peripient (“for us as well”), as well as a feeling dimension related to the language and culture (“to feel the culture and the language”). Viola’s engagement seems to manifest within the Vygotskyan notion of perezhivanie, a ‘felt-experience’ of perception, interpretation and creation. Her idea of ‘feeling the language’ also resonates with Courtney’s (1995) notion of ‘embodied felt experience’.
Alessia

In SM1, Alessia’s body posture seems to suggest that she was undergoing an emotional response. As Viola refuses to collaborate, Alessia nods, and joins the others in the protest, gesticulating as she speaks. Later, Alessia points her finger at the Inspector, yelling: “faake!” (T 59). Meanwhile, she leans back and forth several times, fixing her gaze on the Inspector. During the focus group, I asked the student-participants to comment on the overall experience of the drama. Alessia burst out:

The editor didn't appreciate what we did! For this job [heavy gasps] we've suffered a lot! (1.5.5, 13:58)

During that moment, I empathised with the emotion that I sensed in Alessia’s heavy gasps. In my journal, I wrote:

I was particularly struck by Alessia's heavy gasp. It's a very disturbing gasp, a series of four short sighs, they sound like she is actually going to burst into tears any moment! This gasp is charged with meaning for me; it's struck me deeply. (RJ, p. 50:20-24)

The meaning that struck me in Alessia’s gasps was an overtone of her strong emotion, her identification with a struggle, in role, to impress an employer in order to be hired. This may have been influenced by my knowledge of the specific context of this cohort, in terms of the SPs’ business-oriented parents placing high expectations on their academic results (see 4.1). Alessia’s answer evokes Vygotsky’s (2004) interdependence of ‘imagination’ and ‘reality’. It can also be read as a quality of connection using Bundy’s (2005) framework: connection as imaginative projection with a specific moment, in a cognitive and emotional way (see Figure 2.15).

Here Alessia’s use of plural subject pronoun indicates a dialogic stance in her experience (“We suffered a lot”), grounding her experience in a social environment. In particular, here an image comes to mind: Flora grasping Alessia’s arm during the confrontation with the Inspector, and strongly holding onto it for over sixty seconds (V_SM1, 00:59:39 - 01:01:01). The questionnaire data confirms the intensity of her experience, with her self-perceived engagement in the ‘communicative’, ‘intercultural’ and ‘affective’ values rated, respectively, as 10/10; 9/10; 9/10.
A minor incident also helps shed light on the nature of her connection. When completing her questionnaires, Alessia did not write her own name, but that of her role (Simona). I noticed this and, during the interview, I asked her about it.

Erika: Why didn’t you write your real name, Alessia, why did you write the name of your role?
Alessia: Well, I mean-
E: -Were you distracted, or is there a reason?
A [shouting]: Nooo! I meant to!
E: You meant to. Why?
A: Because ehm [overexcited, defensive] because in the workshop, I am my role, Simona! [Determined] So… it’s Simona who participated in this class, it’s Simona that has… feels. (Alessia, p. 6:37-45)

Similar to Tommaso and Viola’s responses, this answer suggests a connection to the feeling mode (“It’s Simona that… feels”). In this extract, Alessia’s connection with role seems to be important to her, to the point of becoming defensive. Her overexcited mood surprised me, as her manners were always extremely polite; indeed, in Italian, they came across as excessively polite. In fact, she commented:

My mother tells me: in any given moment, you must be a gentle, elegant girl. All these regulations [laughs] and so [through process drama] you make me become another girl, a bit different. (Alessia, p. 4:6-10)

Alessia also reflected on process drama as form, mentioning the collaboration between students and teacher:

[Process drama] is full of… of creativity! Because a standard class can’t… can’t be done in this way, can it? So in my experience, to define this with the word ‘art’ has certain meaning! Like, the collaboration between teacher and students. It takes… mmm…. some things inside. (Alessia, p. 6:20-24)

Here, Alessia’s final line (“It takes… some things inside”) suggests that she might have experienced an inner process of transformation. This was reinforced when she stated:

Alessia: I found out… that I have a lot of energy inside that I don’t understand… I mean befo- maybe I didn’t know myself! Now I’ve come to know myself anew! I mean, I opened… a bit different, maybe I can be… a real journalist, or someone doing a traineeship… ehm it makes me learn… discover some new things, which is not only ehm what I studied, learnt… in terms of vocabulary, grammar… it’s not! Not just that; I find myself really… something unique!
Erika: Is this a new discovery for you?
A: Exactly, exactly... about myself, as if there were truly a mirror in front of me: [surprised] Oh! That’s what Alessia's really like! I mean, you are playing another person but really, it’s really the aspects... aspects different [quietly] than yourself. (Alessia, p. 5:12-24)

Alessia here seems to have connected to an idea beyond the drama. The drama experience has given her a heightened awareness of her identity. This awareness emerges as she proclaims, in a euphoric tone: “Now I’ve come to know myself anew!”, and then further: “Oh! That’s what Alessia’s really like!” This comment evokes Van Lier’s (1998) discourse on language learning as consciousness, voice and identity, in particular the phenomenon of AL learners realising that “they feel like a ‘different person’ when they speak a foreign language” (p. 138).

Alessia uses the metaphor of ‘the mirror’, which, significantly, is also employed by O’Neill (1995) to describe the essence of drama. These comments suggest that Alessia was able to use drama ‘as a mirror’, in order to see herself more in-depth, rather than confirming her previous understanding of herself. Through this process, she gained a deeper understanding, echoing discourse on aesthetic engagement as a transformative process (Vygotsky, 1971). In Vygotskyan terms, her engagement was activated by the influence of dramatic form on the content of the drama. In particular, her reflection hints at a transformation of feeling and perception, in a social environment, which may have resulted in a “re-organisation of future behaviour” (1971, p. 253), as she contemplates her future life (“maybe I can be... a real journalist...”). Through role and situation, Alessia connected to an untapped aspect of her life.

Her aesthetic engagement seems to be deeply intertwined with her motivation to speak, and with experience of identity:

I think... the most peculiar thing is that when I speak to the group, to the others... I really have a desire to talk in this language, in Italian, spontaneously; I think I am an Italian girl; I think I am doing something... to.... find, say, what is the secret weapon... and indeed I’ve got to think, what is the stra...tegy? What’s the way ehm... maybe the most unique way, to be able to win? This mmm... ehm, I really felt! (Alessia, p. 3:28-32)

Here, Alessia is still thinking in role when she wonders about her team's ‘secret strategy’ to write the feature article. Alessia's comments seem to indicate that she engaged with the language (“a desire to talk... spontaneously”), with the intercultural dimension, through role (“I think I am an Italian girl”). These domains co-exist, and reinforce each other, as part of her engagement in the drama. This evokes the experience of perezhivanie in her cognitive, social
and affective experience ("This... mmm I really felt") of the drama. It also evokes Courtney's (1995) notion of embodied felt experience and feeling as the aesthetic mode of thought.

To conclude, the analysis suggests that these three SPs underwent a transformative process, leading to heightened awareness. Their experiences highlight an inter-relation between the SLA, Intercultural and Aesthetic Learning domains. As for the rest of the CS1 cohort, the data seems to indicate that half of the SPs' comments hint to a degree of heightened awareness. The other interviews are problematic to analyse because of the language breakdown (for example, see Teodoro's interview, Appendix C.2, question on the art form pp. 4-5).

**Case Study Two**

I begin this exploration of aesthetic engagement within Case Study Two by examining a segment of SM2, the moment when I announce the subject’s escape.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td>TIR [talking to an imaginary nurse]: What? But... What do You mean? But...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>144</td>
<td>[slowly walking to the table, holding male pyjamas]: My dear colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145</td>
<td>Hiru: Yes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>146</td>
<td>TIR: Something terrible has happened [Shows pyjamas]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147</td>
<td>Yoriko: Did he escape?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148</td>
<td>TIR: He’s no longer there! He’s left his pyjamas behind!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>149</td>
<td>[Inaudible whispers]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>TIR: Mr. Ferro has escaped! [Throws pyjamas on the meeting table]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151</td>
<td>[Collective loud shrieks] (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>152</td>
<td>Yoriko: Did he escape?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>153</td>
<td>TIR: Something terrible has happened [Shows pyjamas]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>154</td>
<td>Sandra: He’s totally naked now! [Chuckles]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155</td>
<td>Alfonso: We have to look for him! [...]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td>Hiru: We have to look for him!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>157</td>
<td>[Olga scribbles something and shows it to Sandra, who laughs, shaking her head]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>158</td>
<td>Erika: Thank you. Let's go!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>159</td>
<td>Alfonso: [alarmed] It's absolutely important that we look for him right away! Perhaps we should take the toothbrush...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160</td>
<td>[Everyone stands up; confused looks]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>161</td>
<td>Erika/TIR: Let's bring the toothbrush...perhaps let's bring the pyjamas, too!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>162</td>
<td>Alfonso: Of course! The toothbrush!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163</td>
<td>Teacher: Freeze! [Taking glasses off] Thank you!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Transcript 5.24. SM2: 143-163.*
As I slowly walk towards the table (T 143), all participants gaze intently (Visual Appendix V_SM2, 00: 52:11). Hiru and Catherine turn around; Yoriko tilts her head up, while Olga is leaning forward heavily. When I announce that the subject has escaped (T 149), throwing the pyjamas on the table, the participants react by raising their volume, shrieking (T 150) and shifting position in their chairs. Yoriko laughs; Olga drops her chin and gazes downwards. As Sandra says “he’s totally naked now” (T 152), Olga and Yoriko burst into a laughing fit, which continues, until Olga scribbles something on a piece of paper, demanding Sandra’s attention (T 156). Although it is not possible for me to ascertain the nature of this note, the content might be related to the drama, and particularly to Sandra’s idea that the subject could now be naked. Finally, as I call ‘freeze’, a loud laughter follows (T 162).

Below I concentrate on the experiences of three participants: Yoriko, Hiru and Olga. The analysis seems to indicate these participants reflected on the form, but did not reflect on the content of the drama, nor did they reveal any heightened awareness related to the influence of form on content.

Yoriko

In my journal, I make a comment on Yoriko’s behaviour in SM2, when Olga decides who will participate in the interview (Turns 94-109). I write:

I am struck by the look on Yoriko’s face as Olga assigns her the task of carrying out the interview: she looks serious (in role) but at the same time you can see that she is excited, the tension of anticipation is strong. See for example Yoriko’s grin (00:46:30), the expressiveness of her eyes and her sudden laughter, charged with tension. (RJ, p. 81:42-46)

Here, Yoriko’s response suggests an alert, animated state (grin; expressiveness of her eyes; sudden laughter). As Olga is assigning the interviewing task to her fellow psychologists, Yoriko looks very serious: her gaze is fixed, and she looks attentive. Then, suddenly, she burst into laughter, leaning backwards. This entry describes a dual affect: Yoriko might have experienced seriousness (in the dramatic frame) and excitement (in the actual frame). In this specific moment, Yoriko’s role (Dr. Rossi) has just been mentioned. Charged with the task of interviewing the subject, she responds by looking seriously concerned (the subject’s schizophrenia is a serious matter!) At the same time, though, Yoriko might be aware that this is a fictional context, and might be experiencing a degree of exhilaration. In Bateson’s (1976)
words, she might be “weeping as a patient, but revelling as a player” (p. 549). Another example of Yoriko’s affective response in SM2 is evident in Turns 140-142:

| 140 | TIR [remembers something] Yes, I’m going to call the nurse… and as soon as the subject arrives, I’ll ask the four… one, two, three, four… doctors, to participate. Thank you [leaves] |
| 141 | [Yoriko looks at Olga, then chuckles] |
| 142 | [26 seconds of silence while TIR calls the subject] whispers (inaudible) |

Transcript 5.25. SM2: 140-142.

After I leave the meeting table (T 140) Yoriko makes a note, then looks sideways at Olga, and shares a glance of anticipation. Then she chuckles (00:51:43), visibly excited, and continues to grin. When I return holding the pyjamas, she is the first one to respond, guessing that the patient has escaped (T 146).

In the focus group, as I showed the pyjamas as a stimulus for discussion, Yoriko identified them with the subject and said that they provoked “some kind of fear” (CS2, SP_FG, 1:35). In other words, the data suggests that, during SM2, Yoriko might have experienced a range of emotions, across a dual plane: ‘excitement’ in the actual context, and “some kind of fear” in the dramatic contexts. Yoriko’s questionnaire for SM2 is not available, as she chose to evaluate a different moment. However, during the interview, Yoriko mentioned her affective responses pointing to a growing ‘interest’ and ‘curiosity’:

Yoriko: What kind of emotions? Again these emotions: interest, happiness, happy… always curiosity, interest! […] Because every day this interest and… p-participation?
Erika: Participation.
Y: Participation, it’s gro-growing. (Yoriko, p. 4:5-8)

Yoriko also hinted at a shift in her perception of the form, throughout the intervention:

At the beginning it’s a bit… at the beginning I feel… I felt… detached from this […] and every day we participate in this… like, meeting… etcetera … and [pause] yes, also in the same moment, my curiosity and interest are growing. (Yoriko, p. 4:9-12)

Yoriko identifies a progressive engagement, from feeling detached from, to feeling more interested and curious in the dramatic world. This might have implied a process of transformation, a gradual attitudinal shift, resulting in a heightened alertness.

Yoriko also reflected on dramatic form and ‘dramatic role’ as a means to reinvent herself, to express a different perspective:
Yoriko: [process drama] is… absolutely different, because uh… this lesson that you’ve done is… is very… how can I put it - participation.

Erika: It makes you participate?

Y: Yes yes yes yes. For example… we’ve done everything like… actress ehm… I wasn’t Yoriko, it’s another character, I had another character and this is… for me… I’ve had a lot of fun because… yes, how can I put it… because if I am always Yoriko, I… I have to speak my own opinion, but if I play… Dr. Fabiana, I can speak another opinion. (Yoriko, p. 1:30-36)

Yoriko reiterated this concept three times, adding that, through dramatic role, she could “think a lot of things” (p. 1:38). She also mentioned the function of ‘imagination’ (p. 2:47) and gradually becoming comfortable in improvisation (SP_FG, 9:40). This data suggests that Yoriko acknowledged and reflected on the form of drama.

Yet, she did not articulate a growth in awareness in relation to the content of the drama, or any connection with ideas beyond the drama. This, if it occurred, may have been still implicit in her experience; she may have been still in the period of gestation that precedes the emergence of new meanings (Vygotsky, 1971). Alternatively, my interview questions may have not triggered this (although they were the same as for the CS1 cohort), or she might have not wanted to share it in the interview. This data suggests that Yoriko focussed on form but did not focus on the content of the drama; nor did she reveal any heightened awareness related to the influence of form on content.

Olga

In SM2, Olga’s behaviour seems to denote she experienced a range of emotions, coupled with an active perception. For example, in Transcript 5.24 (above), Olga bursts into laughter after Sandra’s comment (T 152) and writes down something that extends a joke between them. This act of conspiring, writing a note to share privately, while continuing to laugh, might represent an indicator of an emotional response. On the other hand, during the focus group, upon seeing the pyjamas Olga said that during SM2 she felt “agitated, nervous” (SP_FG, 1:58). Olga’s engagement questionnaire data is not available, as she chose to evaluate a different moment. However, when asked to describe the emotions experienced in the drama, Olga, like Yoriko, mentioned ‘interest’:

Erika: What… what… do you remember what type of emotions? Like what-
Olga: -Well, first of all, interest; I was really interested in what we were doing, and... I never felt like... during normal class, you can sometimes [think] oh man, when is it gonna end? (Olga, p. 3:31-33)

Thus, Olga seemed to experienced emotions over a dual affect: ‘interest’ in the real context, and ‘agitation’ in the context of the drama.

In terms of reflecting on dramatic form, Olga, like most other participants so far, acknowledged and reflected on dramatic role. In her own words, “giving life to another person”:

My favourite parts are actually when you have to create this new... new person, for instance psychologist, or the sister... or whoever it is... when you have to... I don’t know, to give life to... another person. (Olga, p. 2:11-13)

Through the drama, she also realised being vocally shy, and gradually overcame it:

Erika: What about the most difficult part [of the drama]?
Olga: Probably for me, cause I am... kind of... a timid person, for me it’s to start to... to like... open myself to other people, to be for instance, speaking with different... intonation... this is quite... difficult for me because... I feel a bit shy. [...] There are a lot of things that I learn about myself as a language learner from the point of view of this... being timid and shy. ‘Cause when you speak one language you always need to, I don’t know, to kind of mimic the... intonations of learner and... especially in Italian it’s crazy, because my my my language, which is Russian, is quite cold and in Italian you really need to... sometimes shout, intonate really... emotionally...and for me... it was... like, the new thing... that I can do more... than I do before. (Olga, p. 2:26-45)

Here Olga hints at process drama having helped her to find an emotional dimension in her voice and her identity as a speaker of the Italian language. Olga also hints at her sense of agency, stating that, in process drama “it’s all about your imagination and things you want to say, want to... show [...] Here, you choose the direction yourself” (p. 3:15-17).

Olga’s comments echo Van Lier’s (2004) discourse on language learning as identity, voice and agency. Yet, interestingly, her comments focus on form, but do not highlight any significant shift of awareness related to the content of the drama, or to her attitudes as an intercultural speaker.

Hiru

Hiru’s behaviour in SM2 seems to indicate evidence of a range of emotions. At one point she appears to shift from boredom to anticipation: as I leave the meeting table, Hiru is fidgeting, tediously swinging her foot from side to side. Suddenly, upon noticing the pyjama top, she
changes posture: her head tilts forward, her eyebrows rise with an intrigued, shocked expression of surprise (00:52:09). As I address the group (“My dear colleagues”), Hiru is the first to reply (Transcript 5.24, T 143). This might reveal that, in that frame of SM2, Hiru experienced an emotional response. In effect, in the questionnaire data, Hiru self-evaluated her ‘affective’ engagement in SM2 as 9/10 (Figure 4.6). In the interview, when asked to explain her questionnaire, Hiru indicated a growth pattern:

More every day, yes I’ve been engaged more, the first, the second, third day yes yes, and yes yesterday I was very engaged yes. (Hiru, p. 3:43-44)

Hiru also reflected on the form of drama. In particular, she referred to the idea of ‘inventing’:

Hiru: In your drama class, you learn by doing drama yes doing drama and we study Italian, moving our body and invent -inventing, how do you say it?
E: Yes, inventing.
H: By inventing something. (Hiru, p. 1:26-30)

Similarly to Olga and Yoriko, Hiru framed her understanding of process drama in terms of engaging with a creative act, exercising the faculty of imagination. Hiru’s comments also reveal an initial resistance to process drama, which was gradually overcome:

Hiru: The first few... maybe two days, three days I felt a bit resistant
Erika: Ah ah! Resistant in what way?
H: Because yes, every -no sometimes, it seemed like... a bit stupid, yes... pretending, pretending [...] all of this is made up!
E: That’s right.
H: But these things yes [laughs] at the beginning seemed a bit strange to me [...] But yes ehm... maybe yesterday... I understood... why; the theatre, also cinema, also novels, all these things... were -are very important for our culture, your culture, which is the culture of all peoples. But all of this is a pretence; a made up thing.
E: Make-believe
H: Yes yes make-believe, so at the beginning I... was a bit resistant: why do I have to do this? But... by doing this, yes, ehm I had an idea that ehm yes... this is very beautiful, yes, it makes ehm... pretending, pretending, pretending to... pretending, pretending to... live this world... in this world... in this new world.
(Hiru, pp. 2-3:38-14)

Similarly to Yoriko (CS2) and Viola (CS1), Hiru admitted experiencing some resistance, before becoming accustomed to the form. Her comment hints at a shift in her awareness, related to her understanding of the arts (“the theatre, also cinema, also novels, all these things”). After some scepticism, Hiru appears to be contemplating the form, having an insight (“I had an idea that... yes, this is very beautiful... pretending... to live in this world”).
However, Hiru did not articulate any heightened awareness related to the influence of form on the content of the drama, or to a connection with ideas beyond the drama. In other words, Hiru’s behaviour did not (at the time of the interview) articulate any heightened awareness about herself as an individual, or as an intercultural speaker.

To conclude, here I have argued that these participants appeared to have an emotional response, and hinted at an interpretative process related to form, but did not seem to reflect on the content of the drama. The analysis reveals that, overall, in Case Study Two, none of the student-participants interviewed seemed inspired to explicitly articulate their heightened awareness as the influence of form on content.

Case Study Three

All CS3 participants described SM3 in terms of an animated experience that touched them, using words like ‘theatrical’, ‘powerful’ and ‘intense’. Particularly, the interaction between student-participants and teacher-participants helps to shed light on the nature of CS3 SPs’ engagement in the aesthetic domain. For example, in the focus group, Renato (school director) described the SPs’ engagement as a ‘letting go’ and ‘doing what they were feeling’:

Renato: In [SM3] we were holding our breath to see what would happen. The students were willing to take risks, without any self-consciousness; they did what they felt, and they were all engaged. (TP_FG, 44:30)

Renato stressed how, during SM3, the four observing teachers were “holding their breaths” as SPs “did what they felt”. Likewise Linda stated that, in SM3, she too became engaged, as a result of (her perception of) the students being engaged:

Video-Stimulated Recall [SM3]: Linda says “amazing tension; I really felt it here!” She recalls how this was the moment of transition for her, when she stopped feeling ‘like an observer’; she entered the situation ‘as a participant’. “Honestly, I felt sick... like, in a good way! I was really inside the scene... because they were, too”. (TP_FG, 39:48)

Here, Linda frames SM3 as “the moment of transition”. In the interview, she mentioned such ‘transition’ again, specifying that after SM3, she noticed a change in the SPs’ engagement (p. 13:9). Similarly, Rossana, while describing her perception of the students’ engagement in SM3, revealed her own engagement with the performative dimension:
Rossana says that, in that moment [SM3], she stopped taking notes, because it was “a moment to watch” where the students “really let themselves go... a lot.” Rossana also recalls the moment when Jun reproduced the subject’s movements; “that was brilliant”, she thought [laughs] also because “actually it was... very beautiful!” (CS3, TP_FG, 40:55)

Rossana framed SM3 as “a moment to watch” no longer operating from an analytical mode, but appreciating, perceiving the situation through her senses, and evaluating it as ‘beautiful’. Interestingly, after the rescue operation, all teacher-participants (as well as student-participants) clapped enthusiastically, as if to acknowledge the performative quality of the work. These, alongside similar comments, suggest that in SM3 the teacher-participants were moved by the engagement of the student-participants. Such condition differs substantially from the CS2 and CS1 cohorts, where no such observations were made by any teacher-participant at any time.

Before discussing individual participants, I paint a collective picture of SM3. During the lift rescue operation, Agate, in role as the subject, is squatting down in a corner, inside a narrow row of stools (the confined space of the lift). Initially, Jun is standing outside the lift; then she squats down, too. As the second trial fails, Jun promptly walks towards the others, to brainstorm new possible solutions, and then volunteers to go inside the lift. In the third trial, Jun mirrors the subject’s movement in a long, tense sequence, until she persuades him to stand up. As Agate/subject utters “They are there”, she is shaking, breathing deeply, visibly altered. Marika, Eduarda, Ariel and Herminia, on the other hand, chose not to actively go inside the lift, but to stand outside, observing. Throughout the operation, they remain alert and shift their position within the space. For example, at the beginning Marika stands one metre away from the lift; she gradually steps closer, until finally she is bending down towards the subject (SM3 [b] 00:6:25). All the participants remain absolutely silent throughout this long sequence. These observations seem to reveal that, in this moment of the drama, the SPs experienced a range of emotions.

**Agate**

The description above seems to indicate that Agate experienced a wide range of emotions, embodied in non-verbal behaviour (shaking, breathing deeply; visibly altered). Indeed, the questionnaire confirms the intensity of Agate’s emotions, as she self-evaluated her ‘affective’ engagement of SM3 as 10/10 (Figure 4.8). After the episode ended, I asked Agate, out of role, how she was feeling. She responded in role:
I experience some relief, because I have been\textsuperscript{39} in this situation for too long. I’m still tired, hungry and afraid… but [voice breaking] I have some relief because I feel [gasp] that I can trust… the doctor. (Agate, 3.3.5, 20:15)

Agate’s self-correction from the feminine to the masculine form (see footnote) confirms that she was speaking in role as Paolo (the subject), relating to that experience through affect and cognition. In my journal, I focused on her classmates’ reaction, as she uttered those words:

Note Marika and Eduarda’s look, as Agate utters these words with such gravity; they seem in awe. (RJ, p. 118:3)

Here, an aspect of process drama’s aesthetic engagement emerges: the response in Agate, related to aesthetic creation, which I describe as “gravity”; and a response by the others, related to aesthetic perception, which I define as “awe”. In the interview, Agate commented:

That time when I was coming out of the lift [SM3], I could feel that… there was… consistency… in the [way] I was feeling, I was thinking, I was moving, I was communicating. (Agate, p. 4:32-33)

Agate’s comment evokes the Vygotskyan notion of perezhivanie: perceiving, feeling, interpreting, re-creating though a unity of affect and cognition. This comment underpins the intuitive, feeling mode of aesthetic learning.

Agate also reflected on the form of process drama:

Erika: Did you feel like an artist? During the-
Agate: Yes! Yes! As I was… [during SM3] I feel I am talented! I know I am talented; in different ways and… these activities have… brought up some… of the things that I don’t usually use, so… the skills I don’t use and I would like to… ehm make use of, and develop. (Agate, p. 4:26-31)

Agate referred to her artistic qualities that, she felt, emerged during the drama, which she would like to develop further. Thus, the intervention was effective to help her reflect on her identity, on her artistic development, and on some potential future action (“…I would like to make use of, and develop”). This comment hints at a Vygotskyan transformation of aesthetic

\textsuperscript{39} Translation note: Agate self-corrects from the feminine form of ‘I have been’ (sono stata), to the masculine form (sono stato). This change denotes that she is speaking not on behalf of herself (female), but of the subject (male).
engagement as a ‘re-organisation of future behaviour’. Agate also stated that she was “impressed” by the process of creating, identifying with, and coming out of role (p. 2:21).

Yet, Agate did not articulate any reflection related to the content of the drama. Her Italo-Brazilian-Australian citizenship was a source of group discussion from the beginning of the drama, in terms of ‘not belonging’. In the interview, she admitted that this multiple identity, her job, and her extensive travelling had informed her value system well before the drama intervention. She also hinted at this process continuing through the drama intervention (p. 4:7-10). However, she did not expand upon, or articulate, how this was engendered by the drama. Rather, as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, she related to the intervention in terms of planning. When I asked her about any shifts in her self-awareness, she could not pinpoint this clearly:

Erika: Has your perception changed in any way?  
Agate: Some things, related to the language, ehm... terminology, ehm... the input you give us [pause] but no, not too much, because we are not doing anything really deep, too deep into the culture, into the Italian culture. (p. 4:11-16)

Agate’s comments reveal that, although in SM3 she was deeply engaged at an affective level, at the time of the interview, she did not acknowledge, or articulate, any heightened self-awareness, in terms of being an intercultural speaker. This is certainly not due to a language proficiency issue, as Agate was interviewed in English, a language in which she was fluent. Significantly, she could reflect on the form, but not on the influence of the form on content.

Jun

Jun describes a range of emotions she experienced during SM3, immediately after the rescue operation. In the focus group, I reported this discussion:

Jun says that when Agate/subject came out [of the lift], the only thing that she was thinking was: “do not go back in there!” [All laugh] I ask Jun if she was tense in that moment: she says that she was. (SP_FG, 31:34)

This comment suggests that Jun was experiencing concern, care, apprehension for the subject’s wellbeing, through a degree of ‘imaginative projection’ (Bundy, 2005), i.e., articulating how she imagined the character to be feeling in that moment. The intensity of her ‘affective’ engagement is also confirmed by her questionnaire, self-evaluated as 8/10 (Figure 4.8).
In the interview⁴⁰ Jun also reflected on the form of drama, which she described as a medium to perceive, interpret and create:

For what we’ve been doing in the five days it’s more about… the thoughts, the perception, the interpretation and then to create… (Jun, pp. 5-6:46-1)

Here, Jun’s comment evokes the Vygotskyan notion of *perezhivanie*. Jun also made several comments referring to her experience as a progression, from being controlled, to freely improvising. In the focus group, she revealed a shift in her understanding of drama as an improvised form:

Jun says that at the beginning of the drama intervention, she thought that there was only one right answer to a (dramatic) task; later on, however, she didn’t face tasks looking for the right answer... she “just did what she did”. (SP_FG, 26:53)

The idea of ‘surrendering to the moment’ emerges several times in Jun’s interview; she repeated this concept on a number of occasions (Jun, p. 2:4-7), highlighting the notion of agency in her self-expression and self-regulation.

Moreover, Jun seemed to reveal being affected by process drama for language learning in terms of voice and identity (Van Lier, 2004). From the beginning of the drama, Jun reflected on negotiating her identity as a Taiwanese English speaker, on not belonging, and on feeling ‘other’ in her country. In the interview, she repeated this concept:

You know what it’s... the thing, calling others, my identity... and also I am from Taiwan but I never what to... I don’t want to stay there, so I’m a Taiwanese, I’m a Chinese but what... I don’t know how to explain to people like, OK I don’t want to stay in my country because I don’t feel home there, I feel at home in London; so... that that thing [the voice exercise] eh... I have a really strong sense... (Jun, pp. 3:3-7)

This sense of ‘non-belonging’ was an issue raised from the first day of the drama, during group discussions. During the drama intervention, Jun was considerably affected by a vocal warm up exercise, where I asked participants to pronounce their name with their native accent, then as someone local would pronounce it, and then as someone Italian would pronounce it. She chose to reproduce the way her late grandmother would pronounce her name, and was moved

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⁴⁰ This interview was conducted in English, Jun’s second language. Therefore this is not a translation, but the original version.
by this experience. Significantly, in the interview, she free associated this incident with her involvement in SM3, despite any overt connections between the two episodes. However, Jun did not articulate any explicit connections between the two episodes. This connection remained implicit: Jun appeared to connect with this idea, and may have experienced it as the influence of form on content, but this was not made explicit in the interview.

Marika

Marika makes an interesting case, as her behaviour oscillated between detachment and engagement throughout the drama. In the interview, Marika disclosed that she only enrolled because, as a journalist, she wanted to be ‘up to date’ with the school’s projects. She had used scripted drama to teach English in Brazil, thirty years earlier, for one term, and was interested in the genre. She admitted that, initially, she found it difficult to engage, as she was trained to observe rather than participate (Marika, 5:22-28).

Yet, in analysing her behaviour during the drama, and specifically SM3, a degree of active perception emerges. For example, as Marika hears the word ‘obsession’, in Turn 6, she leaps forward, places her hand under her chin, and smiles to Eduarda. As she addresses the group (T 13), she leans forward, speaking in an alarmed tone. While the others talk, Marika makes direct eye contact, nodding. She continues leaning forward throughout SM3. Throughout the drama, Marika’s contributions are poignant; for example, she coins the expression “mirror-dependent” (RJ, p. 114:9). She also focuses the dramatic action in the mirror maze, provoking a reaction described by Linda as “super-engaging” (OBS, p. 8:19, Appendix D.2). These behaviours seem to indicate a degree of active perception. In the interview, Marika expressed feeling a “deep emotion” in SM3:

Erika: What is the moment you remember most vividly? […] The most intense memory…
Marika: That moment when all of us were trying…
E: Trying…
M: -We were trying to remove Paolo Marini from the lift; it was really engaging [sighs] it was a deep emotion. […]
E: I wanted to ask you, in the first moment you mentioned, the one with Paolo coming out of the lift, you were standing up, right?
M: Uh uh!
E: Because I… in that moment… I wasn’t sure, I was thinking: OK, surely Agate and Jun are very engaged because they’re inside [the lift], but the others are just out there; just standing there… are they engaged, or disengaged?
M: -I think so, I was but... at the same time, I was thinking... I wanted to speak to Jun, giving her some ideas I was thinking: no! I don't have to... interfere...
E: [...] Were you inside the story?
M: Yes! Yes, yes, I think that all of us [were]. (Marika, p. 2:20-45)

Here Marika encapsulates her engagement in the dramatic frame, as a participant, which, in SM3, seems to prevail over her journalistic stance. Particularly, she found herself engrossed with creating a means to advance the drama:

I was thinking the whole time... that the story... had to... develop [laughs].
(Marika, p. 3:40-41)

As a result, she admitted to constantly thinking of ideas to fuel the plot, to the point where, by the end of the interview, I thanked her “for making the story livelier” (p. 6:30). Yet, throughout the drama, she self-evaluated her ‘affective’ engagement as low as 1/10 (Figure 4.8). In the interview, I asked Marika to comment on this low score:

Erika: Didn’t you feel any emotions?
Marika: No, no. I was thinking [...] things about the story! For example, that... question... if there were mirrors... in a way... making our story much more interesting. (Marika, p. 6:10-17)

Marika suggested that her engagement with the form was disconnected from her affective engagement; that she was concerned with advancing the drama, rather than feeling through the drama. Yet, to provide those suggestions, Marika had to connect with her personal experience. For example, her clue of the mirror maze was based on her childhood memory (p. 3:40). Similarly, the role she took on was informed by a memory related to her grandmother (p. 1:28). However, at the time of the interview, Marika did not elaborate on this aspect of drawing on personal experience to engage in a creative act, in terms of her identity as a language learner, or intercultural speaker.

Marika engaged with an aspect of the form - what O’Neill (1995) would call the ‘playwright function’ - and articulated her engagement on this level. Nevertheless, she did not share any comments related to the content of the drama, nor that she was affected by influence of the form on the content of the drama.

To sum up, I have argued that these three participants appeared to have reached different stages of aesthetic engagement’s transformative process. Despite the difference in their responses, all of the participants’ experiences seemed to evoke the felt-experience of perezhivanie.
Conclusions

In this section, I analysed the responses of nine student-participants, within the three Specific Moments. I interpreted their behaviour through the lens of Vygotsky’s (1971) theory of aesthetic engagement. The analysis suggests that the nature of their aesthetic engagement occurred within a ‘felt experience’, perezhivanie, entailing perception, interpretation and creation. This, however, differed substantially across the case studies.

- In CS1, the three SPs analysed appeared to have undergone a transformative process, resulting in an explicit heightened awareness. Specifically, for Tommaso the heightened sense of awareness was related to identity as a speaker of Italian. For Alessia, it related to enhanced self-awareness of her identity. These SPs reflected on the form with regard to dramatic role, and seemed to be affected by the influence of form on the content of the drama. Their experience of AL/process drama related to feeling the Italian language, operating between cultures. Thus, the nature of their engagement in the Aesthetic Learning domain interconnected the language, the intercultural and the aesthetic dimensions.

- In CS2, the selected SPs seem to have experienced an emotional response on a dual affect, and, in some cases appeared to have undergone a process of interpretation. SPs reflected on the form, with regard to role, agency and imagination. However, at the time of the interviews, none of the SPs offered any comments suggesting any explicit heightened awareness related to the content, nor did they reflect on the influence of the form on the content of the drama.

- In CS3, the selected SPs appear to have experienced an emotional response and, in some cases seem to have undergone a process of interpretation. A stronger ‘imaginative projection’ (Bundy, 2005) than in CS2 was noted. Participants reflected on the form, with regard to role, interpretation, expression, and creation. However, none of the participants offered any comments suggesting any explicit heightened self-awareness related to the influence of the form on the content of the drama.

In other words, all the participants reflected on the form, particularly dramatic role, and on how this affected their language learning, especially in terms of voice, identity and agency.
However, while some CS1 participants appeared to have undergone the full process of aesthetic engagement as transformation, leading to heightened self-awareness, and were able to explicitly articulate it, none of CS2/CS3 participants seemed able to articulate explicitly their heightened awareness. Some CS2/CS3 participants appeared to be undergoing a phase of gestation, which, according to Vygotsky (1971), precedes the emergence of new meanings, “the reorganization of future behaviour” (p. 253).

Here, it is important to acknowledge that the interviews were not conducted in the participants’ native language (see ‘interlanguage interviewing’, Chapter 3.2). This might have been an impeding factor in discerning the participants’ self-awareness. Yet, paradoxically, the CS1 cohort was the weakest in terms of Italian language proficiency, but expressed a higher level of heightened-awareness than the CS2 and CS3 cohorts. Furthermore, some participants in CS2 and CS3 were interviewed in English, a second language they had mastered fluently, but did not indicate any explicit heightened awareness. Thus, the language barrier, although hindering accurate comprehension and expression, cannot be considered the primary reason for the lack of explicit heightened self-awareness. Furthermore, it is not possible to ascertain whether this apparent ‘absence’ of explicit heightened awareness was due to the interviewer’s questioning skills (i.e., not being able to follow up leads). However, the same questions were asked in each case study, at the same interval during the intervention.

Another possible explanation connects to the arguments presented in the intercultural section. As discussed in section 5.2, in the CS2/CS3 cohorts, intercultural meaning-making remained implicit, due to the pre-text not containing explicit intercultural tension, insufficient active manipulation of intercultural focus and place, and less opportunity for reflection by the student-participants (what I referred to as the ‘intercultural/dramatic structure’). It might be that in CS2/CS3 these shortcomings in the intercultural domain affected the aesthetic transformative process – slowing down, or impeding, participants’ heightened awareness. This may explain why CS2/CS3 student-participants were able to reflect on dramatic form but not on content, and were not able to make new meanings from this dialectic.
1.4. CONCLUSION

The data seems to reveal that the nature of engagement in AL/process drama is a complex phenomenon. I have analysed this in specific frames of Specific Moments in the drama, within three domains: Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Intercultural Education and Aesthetic Learning. I have used the Vygotskyan unit of experience, perezhivanie, as a lens to observe the interrelation of affect and cognition. Below I summarise key findings.

1) Second Language Acquisition (SLA). The nature of the student-participants’ engagement manifested as a perception-in-action process (Figure 5.2), beginning with a dramatic action and affording exposure to ‘authentic’ language (Van Lier, 1996). The exchanges were characterised by: an initiation, in role; a string of multiple responses, in the form of a dialogic collaboration of different speakers, in role; feedback, in role (without breaking the drama); and a response, in role. The essence of the form seemed crucial in magnifying receptivity and amplifying vigilance, creating collective ZPDs. This state of vigilance led to agency in the target language. Significantly, such agency mediated, and was mediated by, the dramatic tension in the drama. Agency reached different levels of Van Lier’s (2008) scale, ranging from level (3) to (6). Agency manifested as self-regulation in verbal and non-verbal communication, and as a sense of playfulness. The nature of agency as playfulness varied across the case studies (Table 5.2).

2) Intercultural Education. Here, the nature of engagement seemed to manifest as a process of meaning-making (Figure 5.4). This occurred within a ‘felt experience’, Vygotsky’s perezhivanie, generating intercultural tension and triggering both intercultural awareness and intercultural meaning-making. This process appeared to be explicit in CS1, but remained implicit in CS2 and CS3. That is, intercultural meaning-making might have occurred, but it was not explicitly acknowledged during the interviews. The analysis indicated a connection between participants making these processes explicit, and the ‘intercultural/dramatic structure’ of the drama. This refers to the pre-text containing explicit intercultural tension, conferring an intercultural dimension on the dramatic elements, especially focus and mood (see Table 5.3). In particular, the active manipulation of the elements of focus and place during the drama seemed to influence positively the process of intercultural engagement.
3) *Aesthetic Learning.* Some student-participants seemed to experience aesthetic engagement as a transformative process, starting from an emotional response – entailing a creative perception (Vygotsky, 1971), an interpretation and a connection with an idea (Bundy, 2003) – and resulting in heightened awareness. This process differed through the case studies. In CS1, the student-participants I analysed revealed they had undergone the full process, reaching a heightened awareness related to their *identity* and *voice* as language learners (Van Lier, 2004) and to their attitudes as *intercultural speakers* (Byram, 1997). This appeared to be related to their experience of the influence of *form* on *content.* However, in CS2 and CS3, all the participants reflected on the form, and some seemed to experience the influence of form on content, but none was able to articulate *explicitly* their heightened awareness.

Across the three domains, the nature of engagement appeared to involve affective, cognitive and social aspects, which may have entailed the ‘intensely lived experience’ of *perezhivanie* (Vygotsky, 1994). By considering these findings together, it appears that in AL/process drama, a rich ‘intercultural/dramatic structure’ (explicit attention to ‘intercultural tension’ in the pre-text, active manipulation of intercultural ‘focus’ and ‘place’ in the drama, and opportunities for intercultural reflection) can be beneficial to inspire a kind of engagement that allows participants to ‘feel’ the language and the culture at a visceral level, impacting on their sense of *identity* and *voice* as language learners (Van Lier, 2004), and as *intercultural speakers* (Byram, 1997). This assumption advances a direct connection between the Second Language Acquisition, the Intercultural Education, and the Aesthetic Learning domains.

Only when the three heads were fully in focus could the nature of Hecate emerge in her complexity. With this emergence, Hecate’s three voices merged in a rich and riveting harmony.
6. ANALYSING TEACHER ARTISTRY: MAKING SENSE OF THE LABYRINTH

In this chapter, I address the second research question:

- How can an AL teacher develop and harness process drama artistry to facilitate engagement?

I take a reflective practitioner’s stance, addressing this question from the point of view of the practitioner. I attempt to make sense of the labyrinth by analysing how I was able to develop and harness process drama artistry through reflection-in-action to generate engagement. Schön (1983) describes ‘reflection-in-action’ as a mode of ‘knowing in action’, involving the implicit decision-making that practitioners bring to situations of instability and uniqueness (p. 49). ‘Reflection-on-action’, on the other hand, refers to those implicit choices after they occurred. Both kinds of reflection, Neelands (2006) argues, entail “reflexivity-in-practice”: a commitment to make one’s practice reflexive in terms of transparency of the processes that underpin it (p. 19). In this chapter I examine my tacit knowledge, and the way it evolved in the case studies. I endorse Dunn and Stinson’s (2011) discourse on ‘micro’ and ‘macro’ levels of reflection-in-action and build from it. Emerging from this analysis, a further distinction emerges within micro reflection-in-action: intra-episode and inter-episode reflection-in-action.

- The intra-episode level refers to reflection-in-action within one episode: thinking on my feet to manipulate the elements of drama, in one particular dramatic frame, with the co-participants;
- The inter-episode level refers to reflecting-in-action to re-structure across episodes: thinking on my feet to re-organise the learning sequence and the way the episodes are inter-connected.

The analysis suggests that, while I was confident at a micro intra-episode level, I struggled at an inter-episode level. To illustrate this point, I draw on data from my journal (written after class, in English), my logbook (written in Italian) and the learning sequences and other artefacts I created. I also examine the interviews with the teacher-participants, focusing on my own responses to their comments.
Significantly, this analysis reveals that at the onset of the intervention, a *mismatch* existed between my overt attitudes and my covert attitudes, and this mismatch impacted on my ability to fully harness the artistry. This finding is the fruit of a multi-layered analysis process, grounded in reflective practice methodology. As described in Chapter Three, I began the analysis process by “re-languaging” the data (Swain et al., 2010) from Italian into English. I then coded the data in NVIVO, creating ‘tree nodes’, memos and annotations. Next, I proceeded with a mapping process, to strip back the meaning of previous assumptions. Subsequently, I cross-analysed the case studies to identify overarching themes. In particular, this chapter emerged from the NVIVO tree node *Reflection-in-action*, with the themes from the cross-case analysis being: ‘addicted to plot’ (CS1); ‘trapped by the plot’ (CS2); and ‘structuring for spontaneity’ (CS3).

To map the development of these themes across the case studies, I used Underhill’s (1992) model of teacher development. As illustrated in the methodology chapter, Underhill’s competence model is based on four phases of development (Figure 3.1), that teachers experience in a cyclical phase to establish new competencies. These phases are:

Stage 1. *Unconscious incompetence*. I am not aware of what I am not doing well;  
Stage 2. *Conscious incompetence*. I become aware of what I am not doing well;  
Stage 3. *Conscious competence*. I am aware of doing it more competently;  

Below I use this model to map my overt and covert attitudes and beliefs. I do so while reflecting-in-action and reflecting-on-action, both in Italian, my first language, and English, my acquired language, employing my ‘translingual writing’ (Pavlenko, 2005) as a method of enquiry.

Throughout the chapter, I explore what Dunn and Stinson (2011) define as the “dual pedagogical content knowledge” or “integrated understanding” necessary in AL/process drama (p. 630). In the literature review, I identified three domains that inform such understanding: Second Language Acquisition, Intercultural Education and Aesthetic Learning. Here I consider the three domains in an integrated way, without separating them in different sections. I observe them as a whole, in action, as they inform my praxis.

In particular, from CS2 and CS3 I noticed a shift from ‘developing’ process drama artistry to ‘harnessing’ this artistry to create engagement. Therefore I have organised this chapter to map this progression. In the first section (developing the artistry) I discuss CS1 and CS2; in the second section (harnessing the artistry), I discuss CS3. In the last section I recapitulate the main arguments of the chapter.
6.1. DEVELOPING THE ARTISTRY

Introduction

I begin by defining the chapter's key terms: ‘belief’, ‘attitude’, ‘artistry’ and ‘art form’. With Rokeach, I define ‘belief’ as “any simple proposition, conscious or unconscious, inferred from what a person says or does” (1968, p. 113). ‘Attitudes’, on the other hand are “a relatively enduring organisation of beliefs about an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner” (p. 112). Attitudes are therefore a system of beliefs, which can be overt, or covert, which influence behaviour. From an etymological perspective, the term ‘artistry’ refers to the artistic ability related to working within an art form (Harper, 2001). Furthermore, ‘art form’ can be defined, with Stolnitz (1960), as the sensory elements that have been chosen from a particular medium, and exist only in their relation; “a web organising the materials of which it is made” (p. 27).

Being a collective art form, process drama is a dynamic art form shared by a group. As Bowell and Heap suggest (2005), a process drama facilitator needs to perform several creative functions: playwright, director, actor and teacher. This requires Quadripartite Thinking (QT), as discussed in the literature review (Figure 2.11). In turn, the participants, as co-artists, respond through playwright, actor, director and learner functions, in a Quadripartite Response (QR) (Figure 2.12). Bowell and Heap argue that the QT/QR exchange constitutes a ‘multifaceted spiral of creative discourse’, represented in Figure 2.13. This spiral is initiated by the teacher, and bounces back and forth between co-participants. Balancing the QT/QR functions is based on the artistry of reflection-in-action.

Discussing innovative pedagogy, Shulman (2004) emphasises the importance of maintaining a playful intention and disciplined improvisation in teaching situations (p. 480). As Sawyer argues (2004), ‘disciplined improvisation’ is a dynamic process combining planning and improvisation; it refers to teachers improvising within pedagogical frameworks (p. 16). On the other hand, a playful intention refers to “an attitude toward the use of the mind” (Bruner, 1983, p. 69). In my case, my playful attitude refers to an ability to actively listen and co-create with the group. In hindsight, after conducting and analysing the case studies, I believe that combining ‘playful intention and disciplined improvisation’ encapsulates my struggle towards ‘structuring for spontaneity’. Throughout this chapter, I share with the reader my attempts at balancing a ‘playful intention’ with ‘disciplined improvisation’. 
As I began the first drama intervention, I had worked as a teacher of Italian (AL) for ten years. I felt my ‘content’, ‘pedagogical’ and ‘pedagogical content knowledge’ (Shulman, 2004) of Italian to be ‘validated’ – although, given language and culture are ever-evolving systems, my ‘content knowledge’ could never feel complete. On the other hand, I had been familiar with process drama for only three years. I felt fairly confident with my ‘content knowledge’, and my ‘pedagogical knowledge’ of drama teaching; however, I was still developing my ‘pedagogical content knowledge’. In truth, the final goal of attaining a dual pedagogical content knowledge seemed, at the time of commencing the drama intervention, still a long way away. I felt that my artistry was still developing.

The first key point in terms of developing process drama artistry is to design the process drama. I chose to write my own learning sequence, rather than using a pre-existing one. This is because pre-existing process dramas (O’Neill & Lambert, 1990; O’Toole & Dunn, 2002; O’Neill, 1995; Owens & Barber, 2005) are based on cultural contexts different from what I needed. As Fleming (1994) points out, since ideas for drama are drawn from specific cultural context, “to take someone else’s lesson plans or ideas and try to use them uncritically can often lead to disaster” (pp. 2-3). I knew from the start that I would not adapt a drama from English into Italian; I wanted to create one specific to my cohort’s needs.

Since I had to design the drama myself, the first step was the pre-text. O’Neill (1995) argues that in process drama, the quality of the pre-text is essential to launch the dramatic action. Effective pre-texts transform an idea into dramatic action, however “it may not always be easy for the leader to identify the most fruitful pre-texts for process drama” (p. 33). In sourcing a pre-text for AL/process drama, these choices become more subtle, since participants are additional language learners, and their proficiency impacts on their understanding of the pre-text itself. In other words, a pre-text that could be highly effective for native speakers, might be dis-engaging for non-native speakers, if the language is too complex to be comprehended. In a previous paper, I reflected on the qualities of a good pre-text for AL/process drama: being visual; having an intercultural potential; and generating process-oriented, rather than product-oriented language (Piazzoli, 2010). Thus, in AL/process drama, distinct pedagogical choices inform the selection of effective pre-texts. Below, I analyse what informed the nature of these revisited choices, in terms of: 1) searching for a pre-text; 2) creating the pre-text; 3) using the pre-text to design the learning sequence; and 4) launching the pre-text in the drama workshop.
1) Searching for a pre-text. Due to the unique context of Case Study One, I had limited time to find a pre-text. After the introductory workshop, I had only four days to get an idea, source a pre-text, and design the drama. This pressure strained my inspiration. Initially, in my pre-text hunt, I considered creating a drama on the participants’ coursework in their geography exam, the only resource that I had access to. In my journal, I write:

HELPPPP!!! I've been searching for pre-texts desperately for the last 24 hours. I feel a lot of pressure. [...] The only resource I had access to was their geography exams. Lots of graphs and stats about earth population, density, growth, city structure and agriculture. Also a module on migration patterns and type of tourism. I have it here, I keep looking at it. No pre-texts there. I would like them to be in role as experts of something so they can dig these graphs [...] BUT I'm stuck, I cannot find an idea for a pre-text, I've seen thousands of photos and short films. I need to have a solid idea... I am looking for something with intercultural and dramatic tension. What kind of expert needs to research geography stuff? And where? Italians in China or Chinese in Italy? What would produce enough motivation for them to stop speaking Chinese in their own groups? (RJ, p.9:32-53)

This piece of writing is fruitful for reflective practitioner analysis; its immediacy in style exposes the beliefs which, at a time of stress, I called upon to guide me in the pre-text selection. Embedded in these lines are a number of imperatives informing my pre-text search: role and status ("Experts in something..."), tension ("Looking for something with intercultural and dramatic tension"), focus ("Where? Italians in China or Chinese in Italy?") as well as motivation to communicate in Italian ("What would produce enough motivation for them to stop speaking Chinese") and the kind of material (photos; short films; graphs). These aspects suggest an implicit agenda in my pre-text hunting, informed by a ‘dual pedagogical content knowledge’ of: teaching drama, attending to the intercultural domain, and facilitating SLA. These features shed light on my overt attitudes on the artistry of AL/process drama, at the beginning of the intervention in CS1. In Table 6.1, I unpack these aspects.
Analyzing Teacher Artistry: Making Sense of the Labyrinth

Table 6.1.
Aspects Related to Pre-text Searching, CS1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects related to process drama teaching</th>
<th>Aspects related to the intercultural dimension</th>
<th>Aspects related to Second Language Acquisition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dramatic focus</strong></td>
<td><strong>Intercultural focus</strong></td>
<td><strong>Visual pre-text</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“What kind of expert needs to research geography?”</td>
<td>“And where? Italians in China or Chinese in Italy?”</td>
<td>Photos, films, graphs, charts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role/status</strong></td>
<td><strong>Intercultural role</strong></td>
<td><strong>Motivation to communicate in Italian</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I would like them to be in role as experts of something…”</td>
<td>“And where? Italians in China or Chinese in Italy?”</td>
<td>“What would produce enough motivation for them to stop speaking Chinese?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dramatic tension</strong></td>
<td><strong>Intercultural tension</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I am looking for something with […] dramatic tension”</td>
<td>“I am looking for something with intercultural tension”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inspiration came the next day, as I was forwarded an email conversation between the course convenor and the students. The email was a ‘friendly reminder’ to attend the five workshops, with a reference to the chapter that they would need to study (The Language of Newspapers, Bonomi, 2003) should they choose not to join the course. This message sparked a certain degree of frustration (see Chapter 4.1), which I quickly transformed into an insight: I would base the drama on that very chapter. The decision instantly resonated with me, and illuminated the journey in my pre-text hunt.

What I learnt from this is that I cannot design a process drama if I don’t get a gut feeling for it. It’s got to work for me, first of all. I need to feel it; it’s my creation as a story. No feeling; no resonance; no inspiration. (RJ, p. 7,8:53-7)

Thus, in order for an idea to work, there needed to be a certain level of affective resonance; in my own words, a “gut feeling”. This ‘resonance’ resulted in setting the drama in a context inspired by the journalism chapter. Thus, The Language of Newspapers (Bonomi, 2003) informed the roles and situation, giving shape to the dramatic world. This choice contained a degree of dramatic irony, as I designed the drama based on the chapter they were allowed to skip, with the teacher-in-role being an Editor who hated The Language of Newspapers textbook, and banned it (see 4.1). This also informed my educational objective, as ‘writing a newspaper article’ became my educational goal.

2) Creating a pre-text. In order to create a pre-text, I needed to find a ‘hook’, that is, something of interest for the participants (O’Toole & Dunn, 2002). I used my knowledge of the cohort to research authentic material that could provide a hook, which I made to be setting the drama in
a business-oriented environment. To this end, I researched various websites, and found the Italo-Chinese Chamber of Commerce; I noticed it had a quarterly bulletin\(^4\). This provided the link between the hook (business-oriented) and the educational objective (journalistic language), from which I invented my pre-text, reproduced in Figure 6.1.

The creation of the pre-text was informed by my knowledge of the case context: this cohort was business-oriented, of Chinese background, and committed to getting an education in the Italian language and culture. To sum up, in order to source a pre-text, I relied on resonance with an idea; setting an educational goal; thinking of a hook; and researching the context of the case study. Analysing the construction of the pre-text itself (Figure 6.1) a degree of dramatic tension is injected by the words “once again” (opening paragraph) and “must be willing to work alongside...” in the closing paragraph. Those two sentences contain inherent tension, in terms of the Chamber and the Editor being suspicious.

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This is an opportunity to work in our Shanghai branch; the job will involve working in the Editorial ‘Quaderno’ - the CCIC trimestral magazine coordinated by Editor-in-chief Dr. Righello.

Applicants must have an excellent knowledge of the Italian language and culture and must be willing to work alongside Dr. Righello.

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*Figure 6.1. Pre-text for Case Study One.*

\(^4\)For the website bulletin see [www.cameraitacina.com/index.php?nav0=94&nav1=115&setlang=1](http://www.cameraitacina.com/index.php?nav0=94&nav1=115&setlang=1)
This pre-text hints at a past and suggests a future (O’Neill, 1995); it also raises questions in the unknown, and elicits an impulse to generate action, all features of effective pre-texts (Bundy & Dunn, 2006, p. 20). Furthermore, it does not imply a linear narrative, but it has potential to explore what happened in the past, opening possibilities for a non-linear narrative.

3) Designing the learning sequence. As the idea for the pre-text came to me, I did not have a detailed set narrative in mind; rather, I was guided by a dramatic structure. Below is an extract from personal correspondence with my supervisor, Dr. Dunn, written the day before beginning the drama. This entry sheds light on how I framed my decisions, and is useful to attempt to unravel some attitudes towards my macro planning choices.

I've had an idea for tomorrow's process drama! [...] As pre-text, I'm using a JOB OFFER (I've written) to potential journalists, fluent in Mandarin but experts in the Italian culture. The offer is from the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai and in particular from an editorial [...] I'll open in role as Vice-president of the Chamber congratulating the students for their new job as journalists. I'll say that, if this trial goes well, they will be hired. Then I'll be in role as the (controversial) Editor, giving them a task which implies flying to Italy and interviewing someone that they believe is important to portray the Italian culture in Shanghai. The 1st task will be to decide on what topic to prepare the interview: I will give them a bunch of newspapers and they will have to select and justify to the Editor why they believe the article/event they have chosen is worth investigating. I am not sure yet, but there will have to be an impediment when they are getting to the interview itself. There will be tension between the journalists and the Editor because he strongly dislikes the newspaper they will be using do to their research. This might go for a few sessions; I'll see about the others. (13/06/2010, personal communication)

From this conversation, my beliefs seem to be that in order to design a process drama some elements are to be figured out straight away (pre-text, role, situation and tension), while others (like the conflict-bearing ‘impediment’), can be resolved later. Although I have not resolved every detail in the planning, I seem to be content, as I can rely on the drama structure. From the way this message is framed, it is possible to identify an attitude towards structure, rather than a plot-bound approach. In other words, at this stage, it is not important what the ‘impediment’ will be, as long as something will obstruct the completion of their task. This is a classic device related to dramatic tension, described by O'Toole (1992) as ‘retardation’. In his words, “the function of the teacher is to create ‘retardation’ towards the urge of swift gratification of [the learners]” (p. 134). At the time of designing the process drama structure, the concept of ‘retardation’ was tacit in my attitudes, as the correspondence above suggests.

Thus, I proceeded to create my learning sequence: a structure, rather than a scripted lesson plan, which can vary according to the group’s response. Every teaching day I created and/or modified the learning sequence for the following workshop, based on what had
occurred the previous day. In the learning sequences, some parts appear crossed out. This was my system for keeping track of any changes from the original planning: I crossed out what I did not do on the plan, and I added in italics what that I did do.

4) Launching the pre-text. Next, I analyse how I launched the pre-text. i.e., the kind of thinking on my feet that informed it. In doing so, I switch from the macro level of planning (planning choices undertaken before the drama), to the micro level planning (choices undertaken during the drama). Within the micro level, I further differentiate between intra-episode, and inter-episode reflection-in-action. To examine how I launched the pre-text, I analyse the opening,\textsuperscript{42} of my learning sequence for workshop 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE / EPISODE</th>
<th>CS1: WORKSHOP 2</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-text</td>
<td>Job offer from the Italian Chamber of Commerce in China. Read and discuss.</td>
<td>Pre-text photocopy A3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>What type of applicants are they looking for? What could this job involve? Think of 3 questions that start with ‘why’ that the pre-text evokes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning Sequence 6.1. CS1, Workshop 2: Launching the Pre-text.

As Sequence 6.1 indicates, my instructions about launching the pre-text were simply: “read and discuss”. How did I ‘translate’ that into pedagogical action? My actual actions were: reading the pre-text aloud, passing it around the group and inviting student-participants to form pairs and formulate three open questions. These decisions were taken ‘on my feet’, to create a sense of mood about the Chamber of Commerce. When sharing these questions as a group, I seized the occasion to hint at the Chamber having a ‘mysterious dark past’. Thus, through reflection-in-action, we created mood, and paved the way for some tension of the mystery. Watching the video later and reflecting on my actions, I observed:

PRE-TEXT: By formulating some questions, and getting the rest of the group to answer them, we in fact create a lot of tension! Some of the questions in particular ("Why do they say what they need and not what they offer?"; "Why do they look for inexperienced staff?") are very valuable. The decision to do this activity (which was not written in my plan) definitely helps to add tension; it also helps to create focus, to frame the pre-text. (RJ, p. 11:29-46)

\textsuperscript{42} In this chapter I include short extracts of the learning sequences. For the complete learning sequences, refer to Appendices X, Y and Z.
Significantly, the pre-text was launched every day with a different technique. This afforded opportunities for language revision, while recreating the mood of the drama and exploring further layers of tension. On the first day, I read the A3 poster aloud, and passed it around. On the second day, I had A4 copies for all, and I asked one student to read it aloud. On the following day, I re-constructed it with the group. On the final day, participants interpreted the text vocally, in small groups. Thus, so far, it appears that my overt attitudes about drama teaching (re-negotiation of the dramatic elements), matched my behaviour. However, as I started dealing with the unexpected challenges arising from the drama, it became clear that this was not the case.

CS1: ‘Addicted’ to Plot

In describing drama as process, O’Neill and Lambert (1990) advocate the non-linearity of the form, highlighting that, in process drama, structure should override plot. As I illustrate below, when confronted with unexpected challenges posed by the participants’ reactions to the drama in Case Study One, I was not able to maintain a ‘structure-based’ approach, clinging instead to a ‘plot-bound narrative’. In the cross-case analysis, my adherence to the plot appeared as a tacit belief I was clinging to, and that I progressively let go. This pattern featured so strongly that, in the analysis of CS1, under the tree node Reflection-in-Action, I created a sub-branch called ‘blocking’, where I coded all data referring to what became an emerging theme: ‘addiction to plot’.

Aristotle defines ‘plot’ as “the arrangement of the incidents”; not the story itself, but the way the incidents are presented to the audience. In his conception, the plot must be a whole, with a beginning, middle, and end. It also has to be complete, having “unity of action”; it must be structurally self-contained, with the incidents bound together by “internal necessity”, each action leading to the next (330bc/1992, p. 12). In Reading for the Plot, Brooks (1984) challenges the Aristotelian conception of plot as the arrangement of the incidents. Instead, he focuses on plot and its relationship to meaning. In a Freudian aesthetics perspective, Brooks considers plot in terms of impulse, drives and desire. Drawing on Barthes (1966), he defines the ‘narrative impulse’ (la passion du sense) as both “the passion for meaning”, and “the passion of meaning”. While he frames this concept from the reader’s point of view, I endorse it from the writer’s point of view. For example, in my journal, I assert:

I have realised that what I really love is engaging with the creative process, especially writing the process drama. This is what I absolutely love… that motivates me and commits me to the work. This is my ultimate truth. (RJ, p. 11:4-7)
In this extract, I connect “my ultimate truth” to “writing” the drama. My ‘narrative impulse’ was deeply rooted in my identity as a creative writer - long before discovering process drama, I had been a fiction writer of short stories, screenplays and children’s narrative. In order to design the drama interventions, as for every drama I have ever designed, I naturally drew from my creative writer’s identity to devise narratives suitable for the educational experience. I assimilated the written genre of process drama (i.e., the learning sequence) and thrived on the creative process. My identity as a creative writer has been twofold: in a way, it has helped me to generate numerous process dramas; in another sense, it has bound me to tacitly submit to the traditional Aristotelian plot, with a beginning, a development and an end.

Discussing Brooks’ narrative theory, Stewart (1986) frames it as an interpretation of our modern “addiction to plot” (p. 107). For the rest of this section, I define my tacit beliefs and attitudes in the drama as ‘addicted to plot’: my ‘narrative impulse’ was dictating my expectations of the drama. As Fleming (1994) notes, the tendency to cling to narrative is a common pitfall of beginning drama teachers. Yet while Fleming (1994) frames his discussion as “placing emphasis on narrative rather than plot” (p. 54), here I employ the term ‘plot’ in a broader sense, identifying plot-based and structure-based attitudes.

At the beginning of the process drama in CS1, after launching the pre-text, and creating the roles, I discussed with the participants my intention of collaborating with them as co-artists:

I make a premise that the workshop we are about to begin needs to stem from mutual consent and trust. I also say that it is based on improvisation, and that we need to allow for everyone to have the same opportunity to improvise. (RJ, p. 11:17-19)

Here, my overt attitudes towards the drama seemed to reflect a collaborative nature. This view on improvisation was true, in relation to negotiating the elements within one episode of the drama, that is, at an intra-episode level of reflection-in-action. This type of improvisation came to me quite spontaneously; it was something I enjoyed. For example, below I describe how, in role as the Editor, I improvise handing out the (fake) tickets:

TEACHER-IN-ROLE: Because Mr Righello is an obsessive compulsive, disturbed Editor, any stuff up is easily justified (if I drop something, if I forget something etc.) and this gives me great freedom to stuff up in every way. I love it! I quickly approve their projects and inform them that the interviews have been arranged for the day after tomorrow, in Milan. […] I supply complimentary train tickets for the train trip from Rome to Milan. As I hand out the tickets, two things happen: 1. I began to shake, first slightly then more fiercely (to give a clue that something is wrong with the tickets); 2. I keep counting these tickets, many times, as I hand them out to the group leaders. This reinforces my obsession with counting things which was mentioned earlier. They play along with this and help me to count the tickets and re-assure me. (RJ, p. 23:14-25)
A number of aspects related to the artistry emerge from this passage: a) through my improvised non-verbal behaviour (shaking), I introduce something ‘suspicious’ about the tickets, injecting some tension; b) the obsessive counting, and the participants’ reassurance, lowers the Editor’s status, renegotiating their status as higher; and c) as I count the tickets over and over, my attitude of playful, mutual collaboration emerges as I frame their response as: “they play along with this”. In this example, my comment denotes an attitude towards improvisation, as I reflect-in-action negotiating the elements with the group.

However, in my covert attitudes, I was still clinging to a plot-bound approach, especially at an ‘inter-episode’ level of micro reflection-in-action, i.e., re-structuring episodes. For example, in workshop 3, I was confronted with an unexpected challenge that forced me to re-structure the learning sequence. Half the class was late, as they just had an exam. Because of this delay and an unexpected condition (post-exam euphoria) I facilitated a relaxation and a visualisation, and found myself lagging behind with the learning sequence. During that session, I was supposed to introduce the ‘impediment’: the journalists getting arrested (SM1). However, during the break I realised that in order to still do that, I would have had to rush; I decided to postpone the ‘train episode’ to the following workshop. The question then arose: what would I do in the second half of the current workshop?

Because of the uniqueness of the research context, I had the possibility to consult with the three teacher-participants, who were observing the class. During the break, I opened up my inner reflection-in-action process to them. This helped to ease my apprehension, and to externalise my inner speech, to generate some ideas.

BREAK: the dilemma now is: if we keep going with today’s plan, we will reach the episode when they get arrested at the very end of the workshop. This episode will elicit high tension, and needs to be harnessed at its maximum potential; but if they have to go home, all the tension will be lost... It’s wiser to postpone this episode at the beginning of the next session, so we can channel all of that tension, instead of wasting it. I discuss with the [teacher-participants] what other episodes we can create. (RJ, p.24:4-15)

This disclosure is insightful, as I am exposing my internal reflection-in-action process, shedding light on some attitudes that might have otherwise have remained covert. For example, in my reasoning, the arrest on the train is taken for granted, as I state “…we will reach the episode when they get arrested”. My stance thus suggests that there will be no negotiation with the students; the arrest will occur, it is just a matter of time, of how to structure the episodes to better channel the dramatic tension that will arise from it. In other words, I am clinging to my narrative. This also emerges in a comment I make during the pre-observation interview with Valeria, just before workshop 3:
Today we’ll start doing things more... a little bit more dramatic, let’s say. Because... they’ll go to Italy, they will be arrested... all of the commotion, you know. (Erika, in Valeria, p. 5:10-12)

This conversation extract reinforces that I had already pre-determined that the journalists would be arrested; I decided this on their behalf.

As I asked the TPs for ideas, Marisole suggested putting the SPs in direct competition, setting up an espionage theme, selecting some participants to be spies to infiltrate the other groups. I thought her idea had potential, and decided to introduce another element: only one of the three teams will be hired. This, I sensed, would inject tension of relationships between the teams. Thus, in role as the Editor, I announced the winning team would have a ‘secret strategy’ and thinking on my feet, I improvised guidelines to inform this strategy:

TEACHER-IN-ROLE: The winning team will be the team that displays:
- Determination
- Great intercultural sensitivity
- Good ideas
- Effective inter-personal relationships
- A secret strategy; something extra that captivates.

I made up this criteria on the spot but, in retrospect, I like how now they have to compete for intercultural sensitivity! It forces them to follow the brief for the interview (which was: write an article that can appeal to an Italian audience who lives in China). I also say that, once they get to Italy, they must speak Italian, and they must be representative of the Italian Chamber, so ‘behave impeccably’. (RJ, p. 25:48:40)

Unpacking the reflexivity-in-practice that occurred here, I engaged in dialogue with my co-researchers; I actively listened, and recognised potential in Marisole’s idea, in terms of tension of relationships. I bounced off her idea, re-incorporated it into the drama, and, reflecting-in-action, I injected further intercultural tension (appealing to an Italian audience, in China). In other words, I related to the teacher-participants as co-researchers, and re-interpreted their ideas through dual pedagogical content knowledge.

Stemming from Marisole’s idea, I created three unplanned episodes (in italics), connected to the ‘secret strategy’. As Sequence 6.2 shows, these are: a role-play, an improvisation and a gossip mill. In this way, dramatic place was manipulated, from the Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai, to the airport in Rome, and to the train station in Rome, waiting for the train to Milan. Those extra episodes are the result of a collaborative attitude with my teacher-participants, and a reflective attitude towards negotiating the elements.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE / EPISODE</th>
<th>CS1: WORKSHOP 3</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TIR Mr. Righello</td>
<td>The Editor returns and announces that, unfortunately, not all of them will be able to get hired after this project: he will only hire one team, the best team. They will need to have a ‘secret weapon’ (a secret strategy) to succeed.</td>
<td>Props TIR Righello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIR (Customs Officer) Airport</td>
<td>Role play: As they arrive at the Rome International airport, they line up and show their passport at Customs. The officer asks for some details before stamping the passport.</td>
<td>Props for Customs Officer: black bag, hat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvisation on the bus</td>
<td>On the bus from the airport to the train station: the 3 teams chat among themselves on what they are thinking in terms of their winning strategy to get the job. At the same time, they try to eavesdrop on the others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gossip mill</td>
<td>At the train station: the journalists mill around as they gossip on other teams ‘secret weapons’ as they wait for the train to Milan.</td>
<td>Linguistic reflection, Intercultural reflection, Engagement sheet / specific moment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As argued in Chapter Five, this manipulation of *focus* and *place* was ultimately beneficial for meaning-making and engagement in the intercultural domain. However, for the purposes of this section, the point I am making is that while reflecting-in-action, I was still clinging firmly to one certainty: the train arrest will happen. It will be the ‘impediment’, the conflict-bearing retardation of the drama. I never considered what might happen if the participants strongly opposed the arrests; yet, this is exactly what happened.

In the next episode, my ‘addiction to plot’ becomes evident. Sequence 6.3 shows a section of the learning sequence, relevant to the train arrest episode, which I had originally planned for workshop 3, but shifted to workshop 4.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE / EPISODE</th>
<th>CS1: WORKSHOP 4</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXPERIENTIAL</td>
<td>We are finally on the train from Rome to Milan. Position the chairs to recreate a train (two rows with a corridor in the middle). Project film with train POVs. The interview is tomorrow! How exciting. This is the perfect chance to discuss the [secret strategy]. You must be discreet so the other teams don’t hear… [improvise]</td>
<td>Train inspector hat and name tag with logo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impro on the train</td>
<td>Meanwhile, the ticket inspector arrives; he asks for tickets and they show the ones Mr. Righello has given them. The inspector pulls a strange face and then says that these tickets are not valid. He asks where the tickets are from; when he hears they are from the Chamber, he becomes even more suspicious. He gets them to stand and moves them to another area of the train for questioning. He says he will call the police and does so in front of them. He confirms that they will need to stop the train and hold these people for checks. When the journalists ask he says they could be detained for up to 48 hours but they shouldn’t worry… cut as the police are approaching.</td>
<td>Collect personal objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIR (train inspector)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Brown hat and vertical bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Discussion: how did you feel as you were being arrested?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic outburst</td>
<td>You’ve been arrested [collect personal objects]: what would you like to say to the Editor? Everyone talk to Righello (symbol) simultaneously (x3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narration</td>
<td>Narration: the journalists are temporarily arrested because those train tickets could be forged. They could be guilty of fraud against the Italian Railway System. They need to wait just a little bit—if they are really from the Chamber of Commerce, everything will be fine!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tableaux</td>
<td>Create 3 tableaux representing the wait in the cell: 1 minute after they’ve been locked in; 3 hours later and 12 hours later (they’ve now missed the interview) as they present, play music</td>
<td>Background music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Learning Sequence 6.3. CS1, Workshop 4: Train Episode.*
In a way, my “desire of (for) narrative” (Brooks, 1984) is already manifested in the writing style of the learning sequence: it is much more discursive than the sequences above (6.1, 6.2). In effect, in Sequence 6.3 I open the paragraph with: “We are finally on the train” and then, in the next paragraph, ‘meanwhile…’. Both adverbs are temporal connectors that evoke a linear narrative sequence, a sense of pre-existing plot driving the action.

A sense of ‘pre-determined plot’ also emerges from the structuring of the episode; it is explicit in what I name ‘discussion’, which features the question: “how did you feel as you were being arrested?” Having planned this question suggests that I was expecting the student-participants to comply with my ‘orders’, in role. However, something different happened: as I went in role as Ticket Inspector, and I accused the passengers of holding fake tickets, they refused to get arrested. They categorically objected, and requested to speak to a Police Officer, to clarify the situation. I quickly reacted, by changing roles, taking on the role of a policeman; they still refused to ‘collaborate’ with the police, rejecting the official orders to step off the train. Below are my comments, written straight after the workshop:

TEACHER-IN-ROLE [Ticket Inspector]: They were so determined to stick with their decision! They didn’t accept my power… they questioned my authority (in role). I had to negotiate my status, in role, with my participants. I felt I failed to portray this role and I was stunned at their determination to contrast me. I can’t believe they rebelled to my authority like that. (RJ, p. 34:39-45)

This journal entry is crucial to expose my problematic attitude. I perceived this episode as a failure (“I felt I failed to portray this role”), judging my performance as an actor, rather than by the amount of engagement it generated. These comments suggest that my competence as a process drama teacher was still under development, that I had not yet truly understood the function of teacher-in-role. As Kao and O’Neill (1998) maintain, the purpose of taking on a role is emphatically not to give a display of acting, but to invite students to actively engage in the fictional world (1998, p. 26, my italics). Indeed, the train arrest episode was very successful in engaging the participants in responding actively (see Chapter Five, discussion on SM1). However, during class, I failed to appreciate that what mattered were not my ‘persuasion skills’ as an actor, but my ability to structure moments of tension, leading to strong participant engagement.

In the train arrest episode, my preoccupation with having ‘failed’ to portray my role exposes an aspect of unconscious incompetence (Underhill, 1992) i.e., the teacher not being aware of what is wrong. Clearly, here, I was still forming my competence as a process drama practitioner, and I had not developed my understanding sufficiently to appreciate the value, in terms of either drama or language learning, of the students’ resistance. This is further reinforced by a comment I made during the teachers’ focus group, responding to the Video-Stimulated Recall. Upon watching the train arrest video, I confessed it was very painful,
analysing teacher artistry: making sense of the labyrinth

defining it “the worst moment of my entire career”: I wanted to persuade them to get off that train, but I failed. As I stated, a part of me acknowledges that “I am a terrible actress” (TP_FG, 1:07:43). This comment evokes a degree of ‘teacher melancholia’ (Gallagher et al., 2010), a theme that re-emerges more in depth, as I analyse the closing of the case study (See ‘Conclusions’, CS1). My unconscious incompetence is reinforced in the ‘narration’ episode that followed:

narration: Out of role, I recapped the situation: they were travelling with fake tickets, so they got in trouble with the law. They chose not to cooperate (acknowledging their creative choice) so they got in trouble even more and now they were in jail (imposing my directorial role). I had to revert to my power as teacher (out of role) to finally get them to surrender their personal objects – a ritual signifying they were dispossessed of their belonging and they had been arrested. As this happened, I encouraged them to keep talking to Dr. Righello (symbolised by the tie and the yellow post it). (RJ, p. 38:11-17)

from this reflection piece, unconscious incompetence transpires from my choice of words, like “imposing my directorial role”. In this entry, I am very protective of my choices; for example, my use of the adverb “finally” clearly suggests that I was determined that they surrender their objects, and that it was the correct thing to do. Here, it appears how I used the convention of ‘narration’, which was pre-planned in the sequence, to enforce my own plot. This also emerges from the teacher-participants’ perceptions. For example, Valeria frames this transition subtly:

erika continues with the story, making sure they go to prison (even though they have refused to get off the train in the earlier scene). (Valeria, OBS, p. 8: 31-32)

valeria’s use of ‘even though’, in brackets, discloses her realisation that I was opposing the flow of participants’ responses. My way of “continuing the story”, to borrow Valeria’s words, is using the dramatic convention of ‘narration’ to exercise power. Thus, at an inter-episode level of reflection-in-action, it appears I was unconsciously ‘addicted to plot’.

yet, the situation is multifaceted, as my behaviour also shows some conscious competence at intra-episode level: I am successful at manipulating the elements of drama, setting up a ritual (handing out possessions), to increase tension and to foster motivation to communicate. The way I managed the following episode illuminates this point:

the first time, they use Italian but don’t speak that much... so, thinking on my feet, I re-arrange the space. The second time, they manage to speak with less inhibition (1.4.2, 4:58) but use some Chinese, I have to interrupt them reminding them to speak in Italian. As soon as I do, they revert back to the target language. Then I tell them that they’ve been arrested and I get them to submit their personal object. While they do so, I get them to continue talking to Righello. […] By the 3rd time, they are really engaged. (RJ, p. 37-38:52-2)
This entry exposes a degree of conscious competence, at an intra-episode reflection-in-action level, in the way I am thinking on my feet to manipulate the elements to channel engagement. Yet, the entries above clearly indicate unconscious incompetence, at an inter-episode level (clinging to the plot). Mapping my competence using Underhill’s (1992) model, it appears that, in CS1, my reflection-in-action was at different stages, illustrated in Figure 6.5:

- My micro, inter-episode reflection-in-action was at unconscious incompetence level (represented by the black band in Figure 6.2);
- My intra-episode reflection-in-action was at conscious competence level (grey band);
- My macro reflection-in-action was at an unconscious competence level (white band).

I have chosen to represent the timeline as a spiral because, as Underhill (1992) argues, development is not linear, but cyclical (i.e., one could never finish learning).

![Figure 6.2. Reflection-in-action, CS1.](image-url)
The justification in mapping these stages has been embedded in the discussion so far. First, unconscious competence at macro level of planning can be inferred from my ability to source the pre-text, create it, design the drama structure, and decide how to launch it. Second, conscious competence at a micro, intra-episode level can be inferred from my ability to manipulate the elements of drama to create engagement, within an episode. Third, unconscious incompetence at a micro, inter-episode level can be inferred from my inability to re-structure episodes to validate participants’ choices, and by my perception of having “failed” at persuading them.

By the end of CS1, my awareness seems to shift towards conscious incompetence, that is, “I become aware of what I am not doing well” (Underhill, 1992, p. 76). At the end of the intervention, as I watch the videos, I take a very different perspective on the ‘train arrest’ episode:

This is the best I could do at the time, improvising with my role and situation. I blocked them. In hindsight, I could have given them more power, I could have accepted their offer and got them more involved: could they help me to identify Mr. Righello? Could they be on my side, helping me to arrest him? Oh well. I was stuck with an idea which I really wanted to carry off (arresting them) […] It was a dramatic context that I wanted to experience; I was following my drama, not theirs. (RJ, p. 37:12-17)

Here, I became aware that, during the crucial moment of retardation – ‘the impediment’ (train arrest) – I failed to follow the participants’ ideas, and ‘blocked’ them, clinging to the plot. By ‘blocking’ I refer to Johnstone’s (1999) concept of blocking in improvisation: not accepting an idea offered by another, in favour of one’s own. This was, at the time, a covert tendency in my decision-making; it became exposed only through the analysis of my improvised responses. This shift may have been initiated as I realised a dimension of the dramatic context that I had not previously acknowledged:

There’s a huge detail I overlooked: they have developed a conspiracy theory! […] Sadly though, I blocked their conspiracy theory, saying “yes, yes, but you are already in prison… you don't have to have witness for what’s already happened”… because "you are already in prison". I guess at this stage I felt threatened that they were not accepting the drama… but in doing so, I blocked them once again. (RJ, p. 39:12-26)

In this comment, I refer to how during the train improvisation, some journalists had taken photographs of both the Train Inspector and the Police Officer, accusing them of setting them up, and they wanted to document this discrimination. This led to a conspiracy theory, which they attempted to voice several times despite my lack of attention. The conspiracy theory was significant for the group; nevertheless, I chose not to acknowledge it; I blocked it. According to Johnstone, “you block when you want to stay in control” (1999, p. 101). By following their conspiracy theory I would have lost some control, venturing in a different direction for the
drama. Thus, by the end of CS1, I attained conscious incompetence. I recognised the existing mismatch between my overt and covert attitudes. This is evident in the reflection below:

In hindsight, it's not that 'I failed' with the role, it's that I empowered them to stand up to me and they cared so much about the task (carrying out the interview) that they had the courage to rebel. If anything, what I failed to do is to have a clear idea of my role as Ticket Inspector (I try to arrest them but in effect an Inspector cannot, so it was their right to request to speak to a policeman). Let's say that the whole 'I'll arrest you' affair was my ego trip and they stood up to it... It's funny, I felt really confident and prepared before this workshop: I had the arrogance to anticipate and predict how the students would react to my behaviour. [...] They didn't! [...] I had to cut the action and narrate -therefore, I had to wear my director's hat, supply a narration out of role. Only in this way I managed to stir the drama in the direction I wanted it to go. This whole negotiation has made me reflect on the negotiation of power and how difficult it is to truly let go of it for me as teacher and as process drama leader. (RJ, p. 34:47-52)

The entry above suggests that, between CS1 and CS2, I became conscious of my incompetence. By mapping this shift on Underhill's (1992) awareness cycle, it appears that my micro inter-episode reflection-in-action progressed, from unconscious incompetence, to conscious incompetence, as represented in Figure 6.3.

![Figure 6.3. Reflection-in-action, CS1/CS2.](image-url)
Thus, it appears that at the completion of the CS1 intervention, I reached a conscious incompetence level, in my inter-episode reflection-in-action. I became aware of a problematic set of attitudes: although I set up the drama as a non-linear, structure-based drama, I reverted to a plot-bound narrative. This contradiction showed a conflict between what I thought were my beliefs about process drama, and what I actually did in the drama classroom. In effect, when put under pressure, my behaviour clashed with my intention. Paraphrasing Shulman’s (2004) quote, my intentions were serious, but my improvisation was undisciplined.

**CS1 Conclusion**

In Case Study One, the closing of the intervention is arguably the weakest aspect of the drama. Sequence 6.4 features the conclusion of the learning sequence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE/ EPISODE</th>
<th>CS1: WORKSHOP 5 (Conclusion)</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TIR Editor</strong></td>
<td>The Editor doesn’t hire anyone and offends the journalists saying that they are not talented.</td>
<td>Props for the Editor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conscience alley</strong></td>
<td>The participants take on the role of the Conscience of the Editor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TIR Vice President</strong></td>
<td>The Vice President apologises (low status) and asks for advice on how to handle the Editor. She hires them as consultants/business experts. What advice do they have to improve the business?</td>
<td>Props Vice President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Animated tableaux</strong></td>
<td>Dream: what can be a dream of one of the journalists that night? Get others to guess their ideas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In role writing</strong></td>
<td>Write a letter to the Vice President to thank her (under the pressure of the parents who care about thanking her) and say what they’ve learnt</td>
<td>Props for Ticket Inspector, Editor, police man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Animated tableaux</strong></td>
<td>Dream: what can be a dream of one of the journalists that night? Get others to guess their ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Linguistic reflection**

**Intercultural reflection** embedded in the focus group

**Engagement sheet / specific moment**

**FOCUS GROUP (1hr) 30 mins**

*Learning Sequence 6.4. CS1, Workshop 5: Conclusion.*
In the closing of CS1, I made a series of changes, thinking on my feet: I added an extra episode (conscience alley), I swapped tableaux and in-role writing, I omitted the reflections, and shortened the focus group. Behind these choices is a mismanagement of time, and lack of understanding in the priorities of the drama.

The problem was that it was 12:30 and we only had half an hour left. I had initially allocated 1 hour for the focus group – had then decided to only do half hour and now we were there but I wasn’t happy to end it like that, I wanted to finish it on a different note. I told them that we had two possibilities: 1. End the story here and do the focus group; 2. Continue the story a little bit more and finish at 1pm as usual, but then stay an extra half hour for the focus group. They all agreed without second thought to stay an extra half hour and finish the story. I couldn’t believe it! I was so happy. I was truly the happiest teacher in the word for a minute. So we continued the story straight away. (RJ, p. 45:41-48)

This entry can be contemplated under several lenses: first, it summarises and confirms the overall argument of the chapter, in terms of CS1 being characterised by an ‘addiction to plot’. In effect, there is no mention of meaning-making or reflection, as a priority for the conclusion, but a fixation with a ‘story’ to be finished. I asked the participants if they wanted to “continue the story” and, as they accepted, I was “the happiest teacher in the world”. Such a way of framing the drama is further evidence of my covert tendency to honour my ‘desire of (for) narrative’ (Brooks, 1984).

As I ‘continued the story’, in role as Vice President, I hired the apprentices as ‘consultants’. My reflection in and on action was very much focussed on the engagement level, shared negotiation of the elements, and the target language produced. This indicates my attentiveness to the micro, intra-episode level of reflection-in-action. Subsequently, I facilitated an in-role writing activity, for the journalists to thank the Vice President. This was a reflective convention, pre-planned in the sequence. In this episode, I made an addition, thinking on my feet: writing the letter ‘on behalf of their parents’. Once again, this supports my awareness of reflection-in-action at a micro, intra-episode level. However, as Sequence 6.4 shows, I omitted to give the instruction of writing ‘what they had learnt’ (crossed out in the learning sequence). This was a missed opportunity to reflect on the learning.

Furthermore, in the in-role writing, I neglected to offer support in the scaffolding of the letters. In my analysis, after having completed the three case studies, I commented on this episode:

In hindsight, it would have been very useful to read those letters […]. This would have been a chance for them to get feedback on their written language and to link in a linguistic reflection, possibly introducing some grammar reflections. I am very disappointed at myself for not doing this and I can only note for next times to pay attention to feedback on written language. (RJ, p. 47:6-10)
Most importantly, I failed to use such feedback as a platform for a comprehensive language reflection, an essential part of AL/process drama (Kao & O’Neill, 1998; Liu, 2002). Instead, I rushed towards ‘the conclusion’ of CS1: reading aloud the letters, as a voiceover, while performing tableaux of ‘a dream that the journalist could have had that night’.

To conclude, I describe one of the three animated tableaux. Although I had asked for a still image (tableau), participants, who were not used to dramatic conventions, created short scenes. In this particular one, Alessia, Stella and Viola were passengers on a train, while Flora provided the voiceover. A police officer (played by Teodoro) arrived, destroyed their train tickets, and attempted to arrest them. In response, the passengers ran away to the ocean. Finally, as the officer caught up, they killed him. This sequence was performed with much exhilaration and occasional outbursts of laughter. Below is a transcript (translated into English) of Flora’s letter to the Vice President, narrated while the scene was unfolding:

Dear Sara, thank you very much for the help. We’ve encountered many problems; we don’t even have a solution because we are graduates, we are too young. However, You are pretty nice! You help us a lot, for the... especially for the problems with... tickets: we have fake tickets and therefore I want to run off at once but the police chase us; I saw the sea eh the police still chase me... but I a -I am very very very fast... and then it also makes... it makes me... I am very tired I... too too tired, and so eh... I am... I got angry! I got angry, so eh... (Flora, 1.5.4, 1:00)

Flora’s language reveals a lack of teacher’s scaffolding, in terms of formal register, vocabulary and grammar. Yet, it indicates identification with role in the train arrest episode (“we have fake tickets”), coupled with a strong affective response (“I got angry!”). Thus, overall, it reinforces evidence of strong engagement with Specific Moment One (refer to Chapter Five, SM1). However, at that time, I failed to acknowledge this aspect. Instead, below is how I described the tableaux in my journal:

**TABLEAUX VIVENT**: I had to push them to get finalised and the ultimate product was a disaster. These guys are not drama students! They didn’t have the commitment, the focus or the skill to pull it off!!! It was a pathetic pantomime which killed the aesthetic, killed my expectations and ended the workshop on a note of silliness and ‘cheap fun’. In hindsight, I cannot believe I preferred this on a proper, meaty linguistic and intercultural reflection: how is this possible? How? How? (RJ, p. 47:12-30)

This entry exudes frustration, and disappointment. Rather than focussing on the participants’ re-enactment of the train episode (SM1), and the significance in terms of their engagement, I focused on their acting performance, which I defined as a “pathetic pantomime”. This entry suggests that I had some ‘aesthetic ideal’ that was not met, evoking the notion of ‘teacher melancholia’ (Gallagher et al., 2010). As discussed in the literature review, ‘melancholia’ is a Freudian concept defined by two characteristics: 1) the ego turning on itself, unable to ‘let go’
of a lost ideal; and 2) the ego becoming hyper-judgemental (2010, p. 6). Here, the ‘lost ideal’ appears to be related to the aesthetic, as I write that their performance “killed the aesthetic”. However, in the next entry, the ‘lost ideal’ appears related to the educational dimension:

I feel really humiliated and upset at myself for not wrapping up the case study properly. Remorse is eating me up. [...] Why is it that often I am thinking on my feet and come up with some great idea in the classroom, it works brilliantly but this time I failed so miserably at something which I am so aware of? I was stubborn. I was feeding my own aesthetic needs, not the students’. (RJ, p. 49:35-43, original emphasis)

Here the hyper-judgement of the ego becomes explicit. The ‘failure’ I am referring to is related to the language learning aspect of the class. Although I thought the intercultural and linguistic reflections could be incorporated in the focus group (Sequence 6.4), in practice the focus group followed a different format, and the reflection opportunity was missed.

This comment is rich in points of discussion, in terms of reflection-in-action, and implicit/explicit attitudes and beliefs. First, I identify a mistake in the way I handled my structuring. Recognition of conscious incompetence (Underhill, 1992) is painful, leaving me “really humiliated and upset at myself”. In effect, Underhill notes that the most critical phase of teacher change is conscious incompetence, as acknowledging one’s incompetence can be anxiety-provoking for a teacher. Second, I ask myself why I failed to make the right decision, thinking on my feet, and reason that it was due to ‘my stubbornness’. Not surprisingly, I had mentioned my stubbornness earlier, as I described the train episode sequence: “my stubbornness prevented me from following their input” (RJ, p. 37:27-30). The concept of ‘stubbornness’ here can be connected to the idea of my ‘addiction to plot’. As Brooks (1984) maintains, “plot… is the product of our refusal to allow temporality to be meaningless, our stubborn insistence on making meaning” (p. 323, my emphasis). In the way I concluded CS1, I continued to be stubborn, absorbed by my ‘addiction to plot’.

At the end of CS1, a shift can be noted from unconscious incompetence, to conscious incompetence (Underhill, 1992). The germ of this shift actually occurred during writing. As I finished the last class, I stopped in the café across the university to have lunch. There, I scribbled some notes in Italian, to debrief from my experience. This note is significant, as it grants access to my thinking process at the time:
I finished the first case study!!!!!!!! It went really well, I guess: surely it’s the best process drama I’ve ever written […] The only thing that didn’t go well, I suppose, is the student focus group and the very last tableau (the dream) as opposed to the language and intercultural reflections. What was I thinking?!?!?!?!? The tableau was fun for them, but they didn’t turn their language from implicit to explicit. It was as if I was thinking: ah-ah. It’s all over (i.e. the story is complete), but actually the last workshop is the most important; the reflection must take much more time. We ended in silly mode, not in reflective mode. Ouch. (LG, 23/06/2010)

This entry strongly reinforces my reflective analysis in Case Study One: a covert tendency to cling to Aristotelian plot (“It’s all over… i.e., the story”), and an implicit stance as a writer, with the drama as a written product (“It’s the best process drama I’ve written”). Yet, in the act of writing itself, I questioned these plot-bound beliefs. The shift of awareness emerges particularly in the sentence: “but actually… the reflection …” Here, the emphasis falls on the conjunction ‘but’, which I chose to underline, before introducing the contrastive clause with my newly found insight. In other words, this entry encapsulates my shift from unconscious incompetence, to conscious incompetence (Underhill, 1992). Significantly, I wrote this note in Italian, my native language, allowing me to tap into my inner processing. This validates the use of translingual writing (Kellman, 2000), as a method of enquiry (see Chapter Three).

According to Gallagher et al. (2010), the failure to achieve some “unspoken ideal” can lead to the experience of ‘melancholia’ for teachers (p. 19). From the entries below, it appears that my ‘unspoken ideal’ was of a pedagogical and aesthetic nature. However, by the end of Case Study One, I was able to overcome my self-indulgence in ‘teacher melancholia’, and use it as a springboard for growth. This may have occurred as I chose to actually speak out my “unspoken ideal”. As it ceased to be ‘unspoken’, it could be seen for what it was; through the act of voicing it, I managed to unmask the tacit belief that was feeding it. In this way, I was able to leave my melancholia behind, moving on to a new phase of awareness.

**CS2 Pre-text: ‘Buongiorno’ Short Film**

I now discuss CS2, reflecting on the choices I had to face in the unique context of this case study. As in the previous section, I analyse the choices that informed how I 1) searched the pre-text; 2) created the learning sequence; and 3) launched the pre-text.

1) **Searching for a pre-text.** The search for a pre-text for CS2 was informed by a number of factors. Primarily, I need to acknowledge that using a film as pre-text was dictated by forces external to the research: I was working on a publication on film and drama aesthetics (Piazzoli, 2011), and I was interested to explore a potential synergy between film and drama. This
directed my choice of a filmic pre-text. To this end, I went to the Media Library archives in Milan, and watched hundreds of shorts, looking for one to inspire me. On the way back from the library, while travelling in the underground train, I scribbled in my log book:

I need to come across an idea; I am in a productive limbo, until I find the inspiration to get started I cannot let go. I cannot do anything at all […] I must accept this inhumane condition with humanity. […] I feel like a paralysed artist. (LG, 25/06/2010)

From the notes above, it appears that my state of mind, my attitude to the pre-text hunt is like that of an artist, incubating an idea. This suggests that in looking for a pre-text, I was setting up for an artistic process of creation.

Once again, the time constraint put pressure on me: between CS1 and CS2 there was a gap of only two days; this was not enough time to mentally debrief from the previous case study, and start afresh. This restless feeling of searching, the “inhumane condition” turns ironic as I chant the slogan: “no pre-text, no peace” (RJ, p. 51:36-37).

The inspiration for an effective pre-text finally came to me as I watched a silent short film entitled ‘Buongiorno’, directed by Prino (2006) and produced by BêkaFilms (refer to Chapter Four, 4.2; also included in the Visual Appendix DVD).

As I settled on this film as a pre-text, I wrote:

I feel it has potential, a strong aesthetic dimension (dramatic, cinematographic) and it suggests some implicit questions. Who is this man and why is he in this state? What will he do? (RJ, p. 52:3-4)

Figure 6.4. A frame from the Film ‘Buongiorno’ (2006), Pre-text for CS2 and CS3.
By unpacking the journal entry above, it is possible to expose my teacher’s attitudes towards pre-text selection. First, an imperative here seems to be the potential for dramatic and film aesthetics. Yet, compared to the CS1 pre-text, the intercultural dimension appears to be neglected. This ‘oversight’ was to result in the intercultural tension, role, situation, focus, mood, and place being less explicit in the CS2 drama, leading to intercultural meaning-making remaining *implicit*, and potentially impacting on intercultural engagement (see Chapter Five).

Yet, my choice of pre-text is not random, but informed by specific aesthetic imperatives. My primary requirement is related to its ability to generate a number of *questions*, related to my understanding of pre-text and dramatic tension. As I mention in my journal, this pre-text contains a degree of tension of the mystery. The three questions mentioned in the journal entry above are: Who is this man? Why is he in this state? What will he do? These questions not only offer possibilities to co-construct a dramatic world, but they do so across the three temporal dimensions (past, present future). This point is important because, in the discussion below, my introspective analysis will bring me to consider my understanding of the narrative, plot, pre-text and its relationship to the storyline in the process drama. These questions suggest, once again, that my understanding of the pre-text, and the possible dramatic encounters that it might generate, are situated in a flexible timeline: I am open to consequences about the past, the present and the future, implied in the dramatic world of the pre-text. This condition points to a tendency to consider a pre-text as giving rise to open possibilities, allowing the drama to unfold in a *non-linear, temporal* direction, rather than a linear dimension.

![Figure 6.5. Pre-text CS2: Non-linear vs. Linear Dimension.](image)

From the comments above, it appears that my first priority in identifying a suitable pre-text for CS2 was its aesthetic dimension, in terms of dramatic tension, and its possibilities for launching a dramatic world (O’Neill, 1995). This relates to my ‘pedagogical knowledge’ of process drama.
Furthermore, my choice of pre-text was interconnected to ideas for language learning activities that could be generated from it. For example, while corresponding with my supervisor, Dr. Dunn, I justify my choice of pre-text on these grounds:

[This pre-text] also has potential in terms of language: they could describe what happens, they could create dialogue, they could describe the different personalities which emerge... The process drama could be about this man, who has now disappeared: maybe he was a film-maker and this video is the only record he left...with a note saying it was his autobiography perhaps? Don't know, just brainstorming here. We could use the music to inspire an improvisation, and we could start from a mirroring exercise to explore his inner dialogue... I could enrol them as psychologists, or detectives, who have to find him or reconstruct his life based on this evidence. (Personal communication, 25/06/10)

By analysing this piece of correspondence, it emerges that, in my search for a pre-text, I am aware of not only dramatic potential, but also educational possibilities for language learning. I refer to “the potential for language” and I mention language activities to connect to this pre-text. The imperatives informing my choice of pre-text seem to be related to drama teaching, language teaching, and the film/drama aesthetic domain. Yet, again, no mention of the intercultural domain appears in my reasoning. Applying the same frame of analysis as for CS1, the CS2 pre-text was informed by slightly different priorities, unpacked in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2. Pre-text Selection Priorities, CS2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drama teaching</th>
<th>AL teaching</th>
<th>Aesthetic Learning domain</th>
<th>Intercultural domain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Focus</td>
<td>Visual pre-text</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Maybe he was a film-maker and this video is the only record he left...&quot;</td>
<td>Photos, short films, graphs, charts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role/status</td>
<td>Potential for TL production</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I could enrol them as psychologists, or detectives...&quot;</td>
<td>“…They could describe what happens, they could create dialogue...”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Tension</td>
<td>Dramatic</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Who is this man and why is he in this state? What will he do?&quot;</td>
<td>“I feel it has potential, a strong aesthetic dimension (dramatic)”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama Games</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The mirror game”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2) Designing the learning sequence. As far as designing the learning sequence is concerned, it appears that in CS2, I used my ‘pedagogical content knowledge’ relating to both drama and AL teaching, in a way that was more explicit than in CS1. Whereas in CS1 I relied on my drama pedagogical knowledge to create the job-offer pre-text (considering tension, role, situation, etc.), in CS2 I considered those aspects, but I was also aware of the language teaching strategies connected to the pre-text. To illustrate this point, I consider three conversations with CS2 teacher-participants. Here, I am engaging in dialogue with my co-researchers, openly exposing the choices that guided my thinking, in line with reflexivity-in-practice (Neelands, 2006). Each example relates to a different ‘strand’ of ‘pedagogical content knowledge’.

In the first example, I am discussing the pre-text with TP Alfonso, during the post-observation interview. My comment suggests that the choices I made, related to the pre-text, were informed by my AL teacher ‘pedagogical content knowledge’:

Alfonso: Creating a dialogue between all of the different personalities…
Erika: That’s right; you know, when I watched that film [pre-text], I already pictured this activity, I pictured the different talking faces and I went: that’s great, they can create the dialogue, right? (Erika, in Alfonso, p. 14:43-45)

Creating dialogues from visual input is a common technique used in AL teaching. Here, my film background informed my ‘pedagogical content knowledge’, in using film as pre-text. For example, in the extract above, I suggest to Alfonso that the short film ‘Buongiorno’ (2006) seemed appealing because, being a silent film it lent itself to a whole variety of a language activities. From my repertoire of pedagogical knowledge in AL activities, I recognised in the pre-text an educational potential (“I pictured this activity in my head”). Thus, to choose the pre-text I drew on my AL teaching ‘pedagogical knowledge’ and ‘pedagogical content knowledge’.

In the second example, I am talking about the pre-text with TP Simone. Here I am drawing upon my drama teacher ‘pedagogical content knowledge’, as I relate my choice of pre-text to a drama game:

Erika: Tomorrow I’d like to do [the mirror game] again, but asking the reflections to… disobey [laughs]
Simone: It goes with the story!
E: That’s right! You know, when I watched this film for the first time… it really struck me because… I watched so many films last week… too many actually… but I chose this one because the idea of the mirror struck me, you know… in drama workshops, you often do the mirror game…
(Erika, in Simone, p. 12:33-36)

43 Film Production, my undergraduate major, has influenced my AL teaching. For example, from 2007 to 2010, I ran a university course based on learning Italian through film.
In effect, the ‘mirror game’ became a major thread for the process drama; I used it as a warm up, in different variations (silent, vocal, mirrored, non-mirrored movements). These games actually influenced the student-participants’ dramatic creation, allowing them to become more playful with dramatic form. Arguably, the mirror game directly influenced two aesthetically charged episodes: the mirror interview (CS2), and the lift operation (CS3).

The third example supporting my analysis (using ‘dual pedagogical content knowledge’ in the CS2 pre-text selection) is taken from the Video-Stimulated Recall (VSR) data, in the teachers’ focus group. It exposes my cognitive processes related to drama teacher pedagogical knowledge, and process drama being built around ‘units of tension’ (O’Neill, 1995). After watching a video extract from workshop 5, a discussion arises, as Alfonso admits he was really taken by surprise when I announced that the patient had run away from the hospital. I reply that this was actually my very first idea, based on the drama: “the patient runs away… it was all pivoting on the escape”. (CS2, TP_FG, 39:09). Here I point out another imperative in designing the drama: the need to identify the potential for dramatic tension.

3) Launching the pre-text. In the first process drama session I played the Buongiorno film (pre-text) twice. After the first screening, I asked learners to comment and describe the film; after the second screening, I asked them to formulate open questions about it.

Watching the film twice served a twofold purpose. In the first screening, I used a visual sequence to bypass the language barrier, inviting the participants to verbally describe the chain of events. In this way, they developed a vocabulary been useful for the rest of the drama. Here I was focussing on the linguistic aspect, bringing their conscious attention to verbs, nouns and adjectives to describe the sequence of events. In doing so, I was attending to an important aspect of language learning, which laid the foundation for all the vocabulary used during the drama. In the second screening, by asking learners to formulate open questions, I evoked a past and a future temporal domain, in line with recommendations of O’Neill (1995) for launching a pre-text effectively. After screening the pre-text twice, I paused on one frame of the film and asked participants what the protagonist might be thinking about. I drew a speech bubble on the board, and invited them to ‘fill it’ with his thoughts. I then encouraged them to chant his thoughts out loud, simultaneously. I repeated this three times, until the chorus reached a certain level of non-narrative tension. In other words, in launching the pre-text, I relied on my dual pedagogical content knowledge (AL teaching and drama teaching).

Thus, so far the discussion reveals that my macro planning skills (creation of pre-text and learning sequence) and my micro, intra-episode skills (launching the pre-text) involved a degree of unconscious competence in the artistry of AL/process drama.
CS2: Feeling ‘Trapped’ by the Plot

The analysis of CS2 reveals that in my inter-episode reflection-in-action choices, I still tacitly adhered to a sense of Aristotelian plot. However, unlike in CS1, I was aware of this situation, and I attempted to overcome it. In workshop 2, the psychologists were invited to create an action plan, to retrieve ‘the subject’ from the lift. At the beginning of workshop 3, they represented the development of their action plans through tableaux. These revealed that the psychologists met the subject inside the lift and, using a combination of colour and music therapy, as well as a little dog, they persuaded him to come out of the lift. This development seems to run counter to what I was anticipating. In my journal, I comment:

TABLEAUX: It was hard for me to acknowledge that both groups had opted for a grotesque option: with a bunch of flowers and a dog (?) Fabrizio had emerged from his catatonic state and, as if for magic, he was smiling and walking like a clown. This was the opposite of what I had envisaged, and surely disrupted my plans for the next episodes (I needed Fabrizio to stay in a crisis to continue the drama; if the problem is resolved, the drama ends...). (RJ, p. 72:36-40)

Once again, my comment here echoes a covert need to follow a pre-defined plotted narrative. This emerges strongly in my choice of words; especially “I needed... him to stay in a crisis”. This journal entry again hints at my tendency to cling to Aristotelian plot. Indeed, as O’Neill and Lambert (1990) point out, when working with process drama, it is important not to let the linear development of the storyline take over (p. 47).

However, after the reflection-on-action following CS1’s train arrest episode, I was fully aware of my tendency to control the drama. It is therefore particularly interesting to map out the process that brought me to acknowledge and re-consider my reactions, culminating in accepting rather than blocking the participants’ offerings. Although reacting with disappointment to the participants’ solutions, I did not block them like I did in CS1. Rather, I struggled internally with my reaction, and managed to overcome it. I felt so overwhelmed by this dilemma that I needed to make sense of it through writing; below I report the comments that I jotted down in my log book during class, as the participants were practicing their tableau.

Once again, the outcome of students’ work doesn't line up with my desired outcome. If I follow their idea, the story is finished!! But if I block their idea, imposing my own version, I go against the nature of improvisation. (LB, 30/06/10)

This entry is crucial to access my inner cognitive reflection-in-action processes at the time. First, the entry was originally written in Italian, but the terms ‘outcome’ and ‘desired outcome’

44 Translation note: words in Italics here were in English in the original
were written in English. This choice of terminology is puzzling: I would consider myself an advocate of ‘process’, rather than ‘product’, favouring exploration, rather than ‘outcomes’. Nevertheless, in that particular moment, I used this term to express myself. I recognised that what the participants were doing was not what I expected (“doesn’t line up with my desired outcome”); however, I also acknowledged that this attitude is problematic (“If I block their ideas... I go against the nature of improvisation”). In other words, I validated my response, but realised that it was inappropriate. When that workshop finished, I framed my reaction as follows:

I was torn: I don’t want to ‘block’ their idea, but they’ve created a scenario which is unrealistic and kitsch. I tried coaching them throughout the tableaux. In the end it worked well: one group presented Fabrizio’s visit as unsuccessful (the psychologists didn’t succeed in dragging him out of the lift) the other group managed to unblock him. (RJ, p. 72:40-44)

I felt ‘trapped by the plot’. Here I appear to be stuck between conscious incompetence and conscious competence (Underhill, 1992), trying to validate my reactions, rationalise them, and coach myself into a more suitable response. The way I persuaded myself to follow the student-participants’ ideas, rather than imposing my own drama, is encapsulated in my next log book entry, which I scribbled down (in Italian) during the tableaux preparation. Note my use of block letters, visually screaming out, as I painfully struggle to balance my behaviour in the classroom with my beliefs about process drama:

I MUST follow their ideas, so we can take Fabrizio to the clinic. [I will use] narration: he SEEMED quite happy, but then, in the clinic, he had a violent reaction... (LB, 30/06/2010)

Here I accept the student-participants’ creation, but I still subtly control the drama; similarly to the train arrest incident, I use the convention of ‘narration’ to impose my own way.

TEACHER NARRATION: I provided a time gap which helped me to advance the narrative without blocking their ideas: Fabrizio had come out of the lift, but once he got to the clinic, he became violent and refused to talk. In this way, I haven’t blocked their idea and we now have access to ‘the subject’. (RJ, p. 72:49-52).

In my journal, written in English following this class, I frame ‘narration’ as a compromising strategy that “helped me to advance the narrative without blocking their ideas”. This entry suggests that I am attempting to balance my Quadripartite Thinking with participants’ Quadripartite Response (Bowell & Heap, 2005), towards a collaborative QT/QR partnership.

The difference between my reactions in CS1 and CS2 is that in the latter I was aware of my attitude being problematic, and I experienced it as an ethical dilemma during class.
Besides, in CS2, the TPs were also participating in the drama, making the power struggle even more obvious. In the post-observation interview with Simone (TP), I comment:

Erika: For example, when you did the tableaux vivent, the students… in your group decided… they had the idea… to get [the subject] to come out…
Simone: Yes
E: I was very torn, actually [laughs] I even did some writing to try to [laughs] externalise my… my concerns, because I didn’t want him to get out, he wasn’t supposed to get out! Because if he did, the story would have finished, but we have two more days… he’s got to… I mean, it [the story] has to keep going…
S: -Keep being sick!
E: otherwise it would have been… the happy ending… so… I thought to myself: what do I do now? Do I block… I mean, do I force him to stay in the lift? I can’t, because they have to create whatever they want to… and then I realised that I could… so, this idea of trying twice, the first time it didn’t work, and the second time around it worked, but then we carried him to the hospital and he had a relapse. This in-between step, was a compromise between… doing what I wanted to do, my drama, and the students’ drama, giving the students power to interpret… according to what they prefer. (Erika, in Simone, p. 8:12-34)

This interview extract is crucial to disclose the tacit knowledge that was guiding my reflection-in-action. Once again, it evokes the opposition of plot vs. structure, unveiling a covert idea of process drama as a linear, plot-based form, especially evident in my comment: “I didn’t want him to get out; he wasn’t supposed to get out! Because if he did, the story would have finished…” The comment also exposes my realisation that this attitude was problematic: “Do I block? I can’t, because they have to create whatever they want to”. This state of affairs is at odds with my overt knowledge of improvisation (“Do I force him to stay in the lift? I can’t”). The passage encapsulates my inner struggle as I try to reconcile two ideas of drama that are conflicting. It shows that I am aware of having to share the drama with the participants; however, it was neither spontaneous, nor obvious for me how to reconcile my ‘desire of narrative’ (Brooks, 1984) with the participants' creative choices.

Once again, when put under pressure, at a micro level of inter-episode reflection-in-action, I tended towards a plot-bound attitude. This was the same pattern as identified in CS1; the difference in CS2 was that, as it happened, I was aware of it. This pattern suggests a progression, from being unaware, to being aware of my incompetence at inter-episode, micro reflection-in-action. Following Underhill (1992), in CS2 I tentatively leapt up to conscious competence, in terms of letting go of a plot-bound approach, when re-structuring episodes thinking on my feet. Figure 6.10 maps out this progression.
According to Underhill (1992), the hardest phase for a teacher’s development is their recognition of conscious incompetence. Fear of self-criticism is, in his opinion, one of the biggest obstacles for teachers acquiring new competences. However, for me, experiencing the conscious competence stage (Figure 6.10) was even more challenging; in truth, I experienced it as a paradoxical state of affairs. I had attained a degree of conscious competence; however, the aesthetic mode of my teaching area (AL/process drama) highlights the need to operate in an intuitive, spontaneous mode. Thus, being consciously competent in process drama involves functioning spontaneously, forgetting about one’s competence, improvising. This implies the paradox of ‘consciously operating intuitively’ in one’s competence. To paraphrase Shulman’s (2004) quotation, these challenges echo my struggle in balancing a ‘playful intention’ with a ‘disciplinary improvisation’.

The Focus Question: Plot vs. Structure

So far, I have pictured a mismatch in beliefs: why did I set out to create a structure-oriented drama, but manifest a plot-bound attitude? After analysing the data, I believe the answer lies in the way I conceived the focus question of the process dramas.
When designing a process drama, O'Toole and Dunn (2002) suggest that a ‘focus question’ needs to be generated. They argue that the focus question underpins the process drama, steering the dramatic exploration for both the teacher and the participants. In their view, an effective focus question “leads straight into dramatic action” (p. 12). Others have also noted the importance of having a clear ‘focus’ when designing and/or facilitating a process drama, although they do not necessarily translate this focus into a ‘question’ (O'Toole, 1992; O'Neill, 1995). At the beginning of the intervention, I was aware of the necessity of a focus question, although this was not crucial to initiating my planning process. I created a focus question for the process dramas, but did not consider it essential. Indeed, there is no mention of a focus question in my journal entries related to the pre-text/design of the drama. The focus question was ‘a box to be ticked’, rather than a primary concern that fuelled the drama.

On the other hand, my approach to designing a process drama was based on another set of questions, the so-called ‘five Ws’ questions. Influenced by the model of Heathcote (1984), later reiterated by O'Toole and Dunn (2002), the ‘five Ws’ consists of a series of questions designed to help a drama practitioner frame the dramatic world. These are:

- What’s happening?
- Who is it happening to?
- Where is it happening?
- When is it happening?
- What’s at stake?

Stemming from this model, I conceived a dramatic world based on the pre-text; informed by the pedagogical aspects discussed above. As I wrote the process drama learning sequences, I outlined the phase/episode, the conventions and the resources. At the top of each sequence, I included the answers to the 5Ws. Table 6.3 considers the five questions (5Ws), and respective answers I created for the process dramas, worded as reported in the learning sequences (Appendices X, Y, Z).
Table 6.3. 
*The '5Ws' (Heathcote, 1984) Underpinning the Case Study Design.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CS1</th>
<th>CS2 and CS3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What's happening?</strong></td>
<td>The Italian Chamber of Commerce in China is trialling some graduates to work for their bulletin</td>
<td>A teacher has been found in a catatonic state squatting on the floor inside the lift of his own apartment block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who is it happening to?</strong></td>
<td>Young graduates who have studied in Italy and want to become journalists</td>
<td>A team of psychologists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Where is it happening?</strong></td>
<td>In the publishing department of the Italian Chamber of Commerce in China (Shanghai branch)</td>
<td>In Milan, Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>When is it happening?</strong></td>
<td>In the future</td>
<td>Today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What's at stake?</strong></td>
<td>The graduates' parents pride in seeing their sons and daughters obtain a prestigious position</td>
<td>The mental health of the teacher / the professional reputation of the psychologists</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 5Ws are useful to gain an idea of roles, situation, dramatic tension and how to frame the dramatic action. As Table 6.3 reveals, the answers to the 5Ws for my case studies are very meticulous, suggesting an attention to detail in my conception of the narrative. This tendency is inextricably linked to my identity as a creative writer and a storyteller. In a reflective memo created in the NVIVO analysis for CS2, entitled “The Storyteller” (Appendix J.2), I argue that my storytelling nature, as a creative writer, has influenced me to write the whole process drama, including the end, as a means to “honour a narrative structure in the text”. That is because, at the time of writing the drama and facilitating it, I felt bound to the narrative I had devised; in other words, I was the author of a story, and I was offering it to my participants so they could explore it, bring it to life. But not alter it.

In my learning sequences, I also included a *focus question* for the process drama. In Table 6.4, I report a translation of the focus questions for CS1, CS2 and CS3. Note how the nature of the focus question changes, from a closed question in CS1, to an open-ended question beginning with ‘how’ in CS2, and finally in CS3 an open-ended question beginning with ‘why’. Yet these focus questions seem to imply a *plot-bound*, rather than a *meaning-based* approach.
Table 6.4.
Focus Questions for the Case Studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS QUESTION</th>
<th>CASE STUDY 1</th>
<th>CASE STUDY 2</th>
<th>CASE STUDY 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are the graduates skilled enough to be hired as journalists?</td>
<td>How can we help this teacher to speak?</td>
<td>Why did this man lock himself in the lift and why does he now refuse to talk?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can we solve Fabrizio’s crisis?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Arguably, it would have more useful to adopt a more universal theme, following Heathcote’s planning model, going ‘from the particular to the universals’, as “the universals bring the thematic experience into the conscious use of concepts” (Johnson & O’Neill, 1991, p. 35). This might have generated a type of drama concerned with universal feelings, in terms of Heathcote’s ‘brotherhoods’ (Wagner, 1976): for example, the brotherhood of the victims of fraud (train arrest), the brotherhood of apprentices on a trial, etc. However, this was not clear to me at the time of the drama intervention; I realised it only after the data collection, as I reflected on action. Conceiving a plot-bound focus question, rather than a meaning-oriented question, was at the root of my clash in overt/covert attitudes. Thus, in spite of my understanding of process drama as a structure-based form informing my planning skills at a macro level, shaping the focus question as plot-bound, rather than meaning-based, ‘trapped’ me in a plot-based drama.

A ‘Glimpse of the Artistry’

By the end of Case Study Two, I realised that my ‘addiction to plot’ was a constraint and I tried to consciously overcome it. I was not yet aware of this mismatch being rooted in the focus question; however, I recognised the limitations of this plot-bound attitude and felt ‘trapped by the plot’. Once I became aware of my covert attitudes and let go of the plot-bound control mechanism, I experienced more playfulness in the way I dealt with micro, inter-episode reflection-in-action. As a result, in the last session of CS2, I found myself re-structuring some episodes, thinking on my feet, in a way that I had not experienced before.

In other words, after struggling to attain conscious competence in AL/process drama reflection-in-action, I could practice it more naturally, more often, in my moment-to-moment decision-making. As a consequence, during workshop 5, the QT/QR exchange with the participants became intensified, and a new dynamic emerged. As indicated by my NVIVO analysis of the ‘Reflection-in-action/MICRO’ tree node for CS2, during workshop 5, a shift occurred. For the first time, I was able to attain what I defined as: ‘a glimpse of the artistry’.
This refers to letting go of my plot-based attitudes, reflecting in action at micro, *inter*-episode level to re-structure the drama, based on the responses of the student-participants.

Sequence 6.5 features a part of workshop 5. The string of episodes I am analysing revolves around one of the highest moments of tension for CS2: ‘the subject’s escape (Specific Moment Two).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE/EPISODE</th>
<th>CS2: WORKSHOP 5</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXPERIENTIAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-in-role (SM2)</td>
<td>We are about to interview Fabrizio: let’s go over the questions we are going to ask him. Remember that the outcome of this interview will be presented at the conference. <em>Recap/refine interview questions &amp; procedure. Prepare toothbrush toothpaste.</em> Dr. TIR leaves to get Fabrizio. She returns in an alarmed state, holding his pyjamas. Fabrizio has escaped from the ward! Improvise.</td>
<td>Toothbrush/ paste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gossip mill</td>
<td>After their lunch break the psychologists gossip on the Fabrizio case. Where could he be gone? Use the soundtrack from the film to start/stop the interactions.</td>
<td>Striped male pyjamas, soundtrack from the film</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tableaux</td>
<td>Decide where Fabrizio could be and represent what happens next through a tableau vivant. <em>The group explores finding the subject in the bath tub.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvisation</td>
<td>The psychologists take the subject into a room full of mirrors and interview him in front of his reflection.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role circle</td>
<td>3 different participants in turn take on the role of Fabrizio (who has been found hidden in a bathroom). All the others stay in role as the psychologists and carry out an in-depth interview.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing the report</td>
<td>Draft a comprehensive report of the case: first the facts that have emerged, then their own professional opinion as doctors.</td>
<td>Assist students with language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Learning Sequence 6.5. CS2, Workshop 5: The Escape.*

The escape of ‘the subject’ (Mr Fabrizio Ferro) was announced during a teacher-in-role, whole class improvisation (SM2). Straight after announcing the escape, I had planned to facilitate a gossip mill. However, on the spur of the moment, I asked the participants to create a tableau,
temporarily forgetting about the gossip mill. I realised this too late, and I was forced to change
the structure as a consequence. In my journal, I note:

By the time I remembered about the gossip mill, I thought it was too late and it
wouldn’t have worked. It was a hard choice: I really wanted the teachers to see
gossip mill, but I knew that I had missed the timing. So I ditched it. (RJ, p. 82-18-24)

From here on, the episodes that follow are the fruit of my inter-episode reflection-in-action,
rather than addiction to plot:

TABLEAUX [IMPROVISATION]: The students are completely independent […]. First
they brainstormed possible ideas; then they experimented some of them in a tableau
vivent. I realised they wanted to carry on, they weren’t satisfied with a freeze frame,
so I gave them the possibility to continue, adding dialogue. (RJ, p. 82:36-40)

As this happened, student-participants gradually took ownership of the drama. Consequently,
the next episode is the only episode from the whole learning sequence for CS2 where I am
working completely ‘off plan’ (as the gossip mill was discarded), using my reflection-in-action at
a micro, inter-episode level. After the workshop, I write in my journal:

IMPROVISATION: When they finished, I asked them to continue exploring what
would happen if they brought ‘the subject’ in a room full of mirrors (this was their
original suggestion). I stressed the fact that they were free to explore different
options and that we (the teachers) wouldn’t be watching them. (RJ, p. 85:16-19)

I structured this episode thinking on my feet, as natural follow up to the previous one.
Commenting on this episode months later, I acknowledge its potency:

This is what Cecily O’Neill calls process drama: not having the episodes pre-
planned, but structuring them according to the situation. She argues that a process
drama teacher should only have the first three episodes pre-planned… the others
should spontaneously emerge. This is what happens here! Finally, this is a glimpse
of process drama artistry. (RJ, p. 85:26-30)

This sequence of episodes, what I have called ‘a glimpse of the artistry’, stands out from the
other episodes in many ways. It is important for me, as reflective practitioner, because it
represents my first attempt at letting go of my addiction to a plot-bound drama. As I bounced
off an idea that was the participants’ original suggestion, this stands as an example of the
teacher-artist and co-artists collaboration, at the heart of process drama. These strategies had
an empowering effect on the group’s ability to negotiate the dramatic elements. Thus,
eventually, in the final half of the final workshop of Case Study Two, I felt I had developed a
‘glimpse of the artistry’ at a micro, inter-episode level of reflection-in-action.
CS2 Conclusion

I now turn to the conclusion of CS2. Below is the learning sequence for the final part of the workshop.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE/ EPISODE</th>
<th>CS2: WORKSHOP 5 (Conclusion)</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>REFLECTION</strong></td>
<td>Discuss what happened in the interviews (out of role)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IN ROLE WRITING</strong></td>
<td>Draft a comprehensive report of the case (facts &amp; personal opinion)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONFERENCE</strong></td>
<td>Presentation of the case to the 10th AIP conference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENTATION</strong></td>
<td>Linguistic reflection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intercultural reflection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engagement sheet / specific moment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>FOCUS GROUP</strong>  (1 hr 20 min)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Learning Sequence 6.6. CS2, Workshop 5: Conclusion.*

As Sequence 6.6 shows, in the conclusion of CS2 I introduced a short reflection on the drama, thinking on my feet. Unlike in CS1, I encouraged a discussion for participants to make *meaning* of what happened in the dramatic world:

**REFLECTION**: I ask them to comment on it all [...] This phase was in effect a reflection on what had happened. I could have stopped the drama here. Instead, my obsession with plot continues. I want to finish the narrative and carry out the AIP conference. (RJ, p. 89:52-58)

Next, I facilitated the in-role writing activity; here I was more attentive to assisting learners with the language, both from a *macro* and *micro* perspective: I ensured that I sat down with each student to assist with the language. In doing so, the report was a strategy to provide a scaffold for the improvisation that would follow.

Finally, I facilitated the last episode: the ‘Association of Italian Psychologists’ Conference. Thinking on my feet, I arranged the chairs in rows, to simulate an audience, and asked the participants to sit in a row in front of ‘the audience’ as a conference panel. This, I noted in my journal, helped to focus the drama. Once again, I was very attentive to the *micro*,
In role as the director, I chaired the panel, where each participant presented their view of ‘the subject’. In my journal, I frame this as:

WHOLE CLASS DRAMA/TIR: it was time for the end, that is, the 10th AIP Conference which I had introduced from the very start. (RJ, p. 89:9-11)

This sentence (“time for the end”) encapsulates my implicit view of a linear structure and a sense of continuity in the plot (“which I had introduced from the very start”). In my reflection-on-action, I comment:

The narrative I am following is extremely linear here. I think the main weakness of this process drama is that it is too linear, whereas process drama, I now understand, doesn’t need to be following the plot in such a linear way […] I need to get away from plot - I am obsessed with plot. (RJ, p. 90:27-32)

This view of process drama as a linear narrative was reinforced by the TPs’ observations: for example, Alfonso’s (TP) opening comment for the final workshop is: “The case has been solved” (Alfonso, OBS, p. 7:15). This view is also reinforced by the SPs’ written compositions.

Below is a transcript of Yoriko’s report, which she read aloud during the Conference episode:

Erika/coordinator: Thanks Doctor. I’d like to also hear the professional opinion of Dr. Rossi.
Yoriko/psychologist: Good Morning Mr Mario Bianchi. I also have a dog called Mario. OK. Our subject, Fabrizio Ferro, has been alone in the lift. He was very depressed when -when we found he, he was very depressed and nervous. Then we are managed to… get him to exit from there, and we took him to our hospital. On the first day he was still depressed and he said that he was a strong and confident man; the second day he escaped from his room and we have found he in the bathroom of our hospital… in the… and he… in that moment, he was in the bath tub. In this moment in which we found him he was brushing his teeth and he was saying that he didn’t want to go anywhere dirty… but finally we managed to have… interview he. The things that we have noticed for his interview are that he is an obsessive-compulsive type… [pause] because always he… brush -brushed his teeth… must to clean everything… then, he has a problem with his brother: this we have proved from the interview. At the end, he told us that… he will call Fabiano, his… brother… we will call Fabiano. At the end, that’s what he said. We hope that our subject would have found a (inaudible).
(Yoriko, 2.5.4:16:30-18:18)

This piece of writing seems to suggest that the scaffolding I offered throughout the drama had an impact on the register, vocabulary and grammar. Despite the verbal and pronoun confusion, Yoriko’s text denotes strong dramatic focus (“in this moment in which we found him he was brushing his teeth…”), and use of specialised vocabulary, which she may have acquired through the drama (depressed; nervous; obsessive-compulsive). However, in terms of the narrative structure of the report, this appears to be a linear reconstruction of the plot in
chronological order, in line with my plot-bound attitudes towards the drama in CS2. My final reflections of how I handled this conclusion are self-doubting:

Everyone claps as a final ritual to conclude the speeches. After we stand and clap, I walk away taking off my glasses and come out of role. This is done in a very shallow manner, there is no opportunity for further meaning to be explored and/or discussed. Texts are not even looked at from a grammatical perspective: I wonder then, what was the purpose of this episode? Why did I bother? Was it just to give a proper ending to the story? (RJ, p. 93:5-9)

As a point of difference from CS1, here I have become aware of my problematic attitude, feeling ‘trapped by the plot’. My comments convey the painstaking awareness of conscious incompetence. I also mention not having checked the SPs’ written compositions, which they presented aloud in role. This issue was articulated in the rationale (below, Figure 6.13, points 5,6) and received more attention in CS3. Yet, in light of the CS1 experience, in the conclusion of CS2 I did allocate enough time for a linguistic revision. Student-participants brainstormed all relevant language items they could recall, related to the ‘psychology’ semantic field. I wrote each suggestion on the board, highlighting grammar explanations as necessary. Thus, in the conclusion of CS2, a stronger focus on the linguistic revision is evident.

Finally, to close CS2, I conducted the SPs’ focus group, with its final moment being quite symbolic. As a last question, I asked whether they were scared, or amused, by improvising in an additional language. Yoriko replied that, ultimately, she enjoyed it, although in the first session, she was a bit agitated. In her own words: “I feel blocked in front of many people”. I praised her use of the verb bloccarsi (‘to feel or get blocked, stuck or paralysed’) adding it to a list of reflexive verbs on the board. While I was writing it, the bell rang: it was the end of the class. I swiftly added that I did not want to finish our time together on this note (learning the verb ‘to feel blocked’), so why not end by learning its opposite: sbloccarsi (‘to unblock oneself’). Everyone laughed, as I emphatically wrote the prefix ‘s’ (which has a similar function to ‘un’ in English), to the stem ‘bloccarsi’, in big characters. Thinking on my feet, I wrapped up stating that, I wished them the best in un-blocking their communication skills in Italian. This snapshot offers a classic example of AL teaching: listening to a learner’s utterance in the target language, extrapolating a verbal structure, pointing it out, and re-incorporating it as an example in a meaningful context. Yet, in light of the CS2 analysis, this instance acquires further significance, as it actually marks the point when I, as a reflective practitioner, unblocked the tacit beliefs informing my practice.

45 The reflexive verb ‘bloccarsi’ (‘mi blocco’ – “I become blocked/paralysed”), is a sophisticated idiomatic expression for an intermediate language learner.
6.2. HARNESSING THE ARTISTRY

Introduction

In this second part of the chapter, I continue my journey, mapping my way through Case Study Three. In the cross-case data analysis, I noticed that at this stage I consciously let go of my plot-bound tendency. As a result, I managed to adopt a ‘playful intention’, balancing it with a ‘disciplined improvisation’. From here onwards, then, I cautiously began to operate with *unconscious competence*. This culminated in an attitude which, quoting O’Neill, I describe as “structuring for spontaneity” (in Taylor and Warner, 2006, p. 17).

Between CS2 and CS3, there was a gap of one month, when I was able to reflect on what I had learned up to that point, in terms of developing the artistry of AL/process drama. In an effort to crystallise my newly found insight, I compiled a rationale, reported in Figure 6.7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things to remember for when I plan an AL/process drama:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Pre-text needs to hold <em>intercultural tension</em> (this needs to be defined);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Teacher in role: I need to research the specific register of the role I am playing, with some key words specific to the semantic area otherwise it’s useless;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Needs to balance speaking &amp; listening with writing &amp; reading;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Need to introduce the concept of blocking/accepting ideas at the beginning to make sure the improvisation can flow otherwise they will block and sabotage!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) When they write something (in/out of role) they need to get feedback on language either; as they write, as they read out or collect papers and correct at home;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) When they write something to be presented, teacher needs to assist them <em>prior</em> to presentation with language feedback to give them confidence to speak up;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Mid-episode language reflections are essential to scaffold improvisations;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Linguistic reflection at the end is vital for the student’s perception: without it, they won’t think they have learnt anything. The teacher is responsible to observe and write down new terms emerging from the workshop and to revise them at the end;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Intercultural reflection is essential: it is more difficult to bring up the intercultural dimension if the pre-text originally lacked in <em>intercultural tension</em>. Students respond positively when the teacher shows interest in their own culture;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Cultural synergy goes both ways and needs to be created gradually from the beginning. Otherwise too easy to fall into cliché.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 6.7. Rationale, RJ, pp. 95-96:38-9.*
The purpose of the rationale was to focus on the way I needed to conceive both drama and language learning together, as an integrated whole, before embarking on my final case study. I felt this was necessary, as I was gaining more practical knowledge and I needed to make this explicit in a document I could refer to on my feet. As an introduction to the rationale, I wrote:

It occurred to me that doing process drama for teaching languages borrows from process drama tradition but incorporates the laws of language teaching, so in effect it is a whole new discipline that needs to be structured, needs to have a rationale, a framework. I am kind of using this framework intuitively and I feel like it needs to be made explicit so that when I plan for next case study I can follow it. Let’s see, things to remember for when I plan an AL process drama… (RJ, p. 95:34-38)

In this entry, my choice of words clearly suggests that this rationale is the fruit of an intuitive knowledge. The use of ‘kind of’, ‘intuitively’ and ‘feel’ indicate a kind of tacit knowledge which I am trying to bring to my awareness.

CS3 Pre-text: ‘Buongiorno’ Short Film (with variations)

In CS3, I decided to use the same pre-text as CS2 (Buongiorno short film). This is because I realised that, facilitating a process drama that I was familiar with, would have given me more freedom to reflect-in-action, both at an intra and inter-episode level. However, although the pre-text was the same, inevitably changes occurred throughout the learning sequence. These were informed by both the unique context and my growing ‘dual pedagogical content knowledge’, as related to the rationale above. I have discussed above how this pre-text was sourced; therefore, in this section I discuss only how it was launched.

1) Launching the pre-text. In the first process drama session, I introduced the short film, showing it to the group twice. After the first screening, I posed a series of questions:

- Can you think of an adjective that represents your sensations?
- What’s the film like?
- What does it remind you of?
- How does this make us feel?

In my journal, I commented:

This interaction reveals that the very first task related to the pre-text is an acknowledgement of their sensations, memories and feelings. I am making them aware of their sensory and affective perceptions. Here I am paving the way to a
possible aesthetic connection to the pre-text and to the work that will follow. After a short conversation in pairs, I ask them as a group. Jun says that it was like an unexpected shock; Carme adds that she felt a bit scared. I ask them to identify what elements of the film created the sensation of shock and fear: the music (Jun), the repetition (Carme), the expression of the face (Jun), minimalist style (Marika). I recap on all of these elements, and then ask again a sensory question: “How does this make us feel?” (RJ, p. 104-105:46-10)

This passage shows that I am encouraging student-participants to focus on their sensations and emotions related to the pre-text. This is a point of departure from the launch of the pre-text in CS2, where I first asked them to describe the film, and then to elaborate on it. In CS3, I invert this process: I begin with their emotional response.

For the second screening, I asked them to watch the film again, to “describe the structure and the actions” of the film. I provide an example, suggesting two options: 1) using the present tense; and 2) using the ‘passato prossimo’ (present perfect) tense. In this way, I am helping them to focus on linguistic form, encouraging a cognitive response. Subsequently, I asked them to focus on the protagonist, as I asked: “What is he like?” In my journal I reflect on this question, observing:

My question here moves from their perceptions, to the world of the pre-text itself. I tell them that now we’ll build a dramatic world and we therefore have to create the character. We have only little information based from the film, but “most importantly, we don’t know WHY this happened… and we don’t know WHAT will happen later”. Here I am pinpointing a possible cause of dramatic tension (of the mystery), as a lever for the work that follows. I am evoking both past and future possibilities. I ask them to formulate three open questions (I provide an explanation of ‘open’ and ‘closed’ questions) that begin with ‘why’. (RJ, p. 105:22-28)

Here, I encouraged participants to become aware of the elements of drama, and to negotiate them as a group. I am harnessing the artistry, with a specific focus on additional language learning, by combining sensory, affective and cognitive/linguistic domains; I am linking these with the aesthetic dimension of the short film (related to cinematography) and, in the last step above, also encouraging participants to use their imagination, to actively create a dramatic world stemming from the pre-text. As such, the pre-text launch for CS3 incorporated a wide variety of operations: affective, sensory, cognitive, mnemonic (memory-related) and aesthetic.

During the sessions that followed, I re-launched the pre-text in slightly different ways, to continue unravelling the dramatic tension it held. For example, in workshop 3, I facilitated a vocal interpretation of possible lines that the mirror reflections (in the film) might speak out.

PRE-TEXT: we watched the film again. I asked them to watch it focusing on the man’s emotional state (“how might he feel?”). Once again, I place an emphasis on emotions; all of this might really help them to become aware of their affective condition. After the first screening, I ask them to discuss, in pairs, new details that
they had not noticed yesterday. [...] A long phase follows where I guide them to interpret the man’s lines using different intonation. This continues to help to create empathy towards ‘the subject’, as well as helping them to play around with their voices. (RJ, p. 112:23-30)

This strategy served multiple functions: it operated as a scaffold to introduce and reinforce new language, and it focused the dramatic frame. As I stated in the journal entry, the activity created a degree of empathy, reducing the distance between the participants and ‘the subject’. Subsequently, still thinking on my feet, I expanded on the activity:

I selected a few freeze frames (see picture below) and asked them to improvise with the thoughts of the man. [...] Note that, in this phase, I travel from group to group assisting them in the written form; in other words I have taken on board my recommendations from the rationale compiled at the end of CS2. (RJ, p. 112:32-38)

![Figure 6.8. The Frame from ‘Buongiorno’ Used for the Exercise in Workshop 3, CS3.](image)

The next step is significant, as I decided what to do while I gave out the instruction:

I asked each pair to figure out each personality’s voice and to write it down. There were 7 people, divided in 3 groups, and 5 characters in total. How was I going to orchestrate this? I didn’t know and I didn’t seem to stress me out. I was very relaxed and as I instructed them to read out, it seemed more than natural to ask everyone to select one voice, the one they felt more close to, and to read it out. Then I repeated the exercise a few times, rotating the roles so everyone had a go at a different voice. I was able to rely purely on my reflection-in-action for this. (RJ, p.113:3-12)

In workshop 4, I re-launched the pre-text focussing on the music. I asked learners to watch the film again, focusing on the role of the soundtrack and the meaning of the music stopping and starting. In the final session (workshop 5), I had the idea of working with the pre-text, substituting the one word uttered by the man in the film (Buongiorno) with an alternative word.
In this way, I actively invited them to modify the original pre-text using their ‘expertise’ as psychologists.

To reiterate, by considering the different ways that I launched the pre-text in CS3, I have illustrated the ways in which I started to operate from a level of unconscious competence in terms of structuring, and re-structuring. This pattern occurred gradually, as I let go of my need to follow a plot-bound narrative.

**CS3: Letting Go of the Plot**

The main theme emerging from the analysis of CS3 is that, after unmasking my tendency to cling to plot, I let go of my need to control it. In CS3, workshop 3, I acknowledge this new-found confidence:

> After I heard from all [the participants], I asked them what they wanted to do afterwards: go to meet the man in the lift, or contact the family? This was fully their choice, I had no fear. Whichever way I felt confident that I could handle the drama. I think it’s because it’s a structure I’ve used before, so I know its dramatic potential. It’s a good feeling, to have no fear. (RJ, p. 115:10-13)

In this entry, my choice of words is significant; especially “I had no fear”. This disclosure strongly points to a previous (implicit) anxiety, regarding structuring on my feet, at an inter-episode level. Using a process drama I was already familiar with, helped me to create the confidence. In the reflection-on-action that followed this episode, I observed:

> This comment obviously shows that, once I absorbed the dramatic structure of the process drama, I feel confident to let the students choose the course of the events. My obsession with plot is diminishing; I am starting to relax into the drama; my pedagogical content knowledge is becoming tacit and I feel more comfortable with the students taking more power. (RJ, p. 115:15-19)

This entry denotes a level of awareness substantially higher than my awareness during CS1. As I put it, I am “relaxing into the drama”. As O’Mara (1999) argues, examining one’s processes of reflection-in-action can enable teachers to understand “the relationship between the instantaneous aspects of the form, and their thinking as they teach” (p. 318).

Thus, in CS3, I appear to have developed a degree of unconscious competence (Underhill, 1992) in structuring at an inter-episode level. Mapping this process, in CS3 I arrived at a new phase, as illustrated in Figure 6.9.
This pattern is further demonstrated by the way I managed one of the most crucial episodes of CS3, the removal of the subject from the lift (Specific Moment Three):

**GROUP IMPRO:** this was another episode which I hadn’t fully resolved in my mind. I didn’t know how to handle it, should I do 2 tableaux that picture the same situation? How can this be if we’ve decided that only 2 psychologists go to visit the subject? With seven people in total, I decided to run one group. (RJ, p. 115:34-37)

These comments may suggest that I was learning to cope with the uncertainties of classroom decision-making. In the interview with TPs Renato and Linda, I disclose my inner decision-making process leading up to the management of this episode.

Erika: The drama teacher cannot plan certain things in advance; first she needs to see how the group is going. After the break, I thought: well, we’ll do something, but I don’t know what; it will define itself; and actually... the last time that... I did this activity [in Case Study Two] it came out very different, not as good. And I didn’t know -I mean, until the last moment I didn’t even know that... I was going to ask someone to play ‘Paolo’ and then actually the other day I thought: oh well, let’s bring the pyjamas, why not... but actually we had to use it today. And then I went: uh, gosh, I actually have the pyjamas here... why don’t we change [the learning sequence]? Let’s change it! (Erika, in Renato & Linda, p. 6-7:43-3)
In this interview extract, I am explaining to Renato and Linda the essence of reflection-in-action, and my internal cognitive processes leading up to the whole class improvisation featuring the removal of ‘Paolo’ from the lift. My attitude in describing my inner stream of thoughts hints at a degree of light-heartedness (“Why don’t we change it? Let’s change it!”), which is entirely missing in the previous case studies.

Further evidence of my emerging unconscious competence related to ‘letting go of the plot’ is found in the Video-Stimulated Recall (VSR) data, in the CS3 teachers’ focus group. Upon watching the video of SM3 (removing Paolo from the lift), I stated that, often I am not sure of exactly how to go about a drama strategy. I then added: “I wasn’t sure... in that moment, I tended to rely on how the students responded, to get an idea” (TP FG, 41:25). Indeed, expressions like “I am not sure” and “I don’t know why” become ever more frequent in my journal towards the end of CS3. This excerpt is one of several examples:

I don’t know why, but I let them start without me and then I entered the improvisation after a minute or so. I felt they had the ability to sustain the drama even if I wasn’t there as chair and I didn’t want to monopolise the discussion. (RJ, p. 114:14-17)

The way I articulate my choices seems to indicate that my competence was becoming unconscious. This is reflected in both my language and my behaviour when re-structuring episodes on my feet.

To recapitulate, through the data presented above I have argued that, from CS1 to CS3, I made a journey through which I was able to let go of my clinging attitudes towards plot. As this happened, I managed to tap into a new phase of my pedagogical practice, experiencing what Shulman (2004) describes as ‘playful intention and disciplined improvisation’.

**Playful Intention**

Only when I let go of the plot could my intentions towards the drama truly become ‘playful’. O’Mara (1999) connects reflection-in-action with a sense of wonder, exploration and play; this attitude, she argues, can enable the teacher to approach each moment with openness. Bruner’s (1983) implications of play, discussed in the literature review (Table 2.3), can illuminate this notion. For Bruner, play implies “a reduction in the seriousness of the consequences of errors” (p. 61). Here I argue that my own attitude towards process drama was characterised by a gradual shift towards playfulness.

To elucidate this point, I describe an incident that occurred in workshop 4 (CS3), during the gossip mill, following the subject’s escape. While in CS1, I directed the gossip mill from
outside the drama (out of role), in CS3, I participated in the dramatic action (in role). In the VSR of the teachers’ focus group, as I re-played the video, Linda (TP) noted that the gossip generated was “hilarious”; for example “Paolo escaping on a bicycle” (TP FG, 49:29). While watching the gossiping on video, I recalled a rumour holding that the subject “had run away, with the drip still in”. To that, I replied: “Oh, so what was in the drip? Morphine, wasn’t it?” In retrospect, this comment is insightful: it grants access to a spontaneous exchange, in role, between me and a student-participant, which I could not otherwise have remembered. In this instance, rather than blocking a grotesque suggestion (running away with the drip in), I accepted it, with a sense of playfulness (“Morphine, wasn’t it?”). My response to such a trivial suggestion is very different from CS2, when, in a similar scenario (rescuing the subject with flowers and Yoriko’s dog), I reacted with frustration. What’s more, in my reflections on this episode, I noted that we all seemed “truly amused” as we gossiped along (RJ, p. 129:20).

In line with Bruner’s (1983) discussion, play is “a superb medium for exploration”, as it provides “a courage all of its own” (pp. 61-62). Beyond exploration, Bruner continues, play also provides a means for ‘invention’, and is characterised by not being attached to results, and by minimising of frustration. In effect, in CS3 I experienced the drama with a marked sense of ease, invention and exploration.

Disciplined Improvisation

The concept of ‘disciplined improvisation’ was initially introduced by Sawyer (2004) to advocate for teaching as a creative art. As he argued, in ‘disciplined improvisation’, teachers “locally improvise within an overall global structure” (p. 16). He suggests that “creative teaching is disciplined improvisation, because it always occurs within broad structures and frameworks” (p. 13, original italics). An example of my practice as ‘disciplined improvisation’ can be found in the final workshop of CS3:

**WARM UP:** I wasn’t sure until the very last minute, but I wasn’t too worried either. I put something on paper so that I could trick myself into feeling relaxed and then, as usual, when it was time to do it, a better idea came. Since yesterday’s last hint was that Paolo had escaped to a Luna Park, in a mirror maze, I asked them to say how they related to Luna Parks and to select a word that symbolised their relationship. Everyone was keen to share and identify a memory and a keyword, which I wrote on the board in a spidergram form. I was very happy with this exercise as it created mood. (RJ, p. 131:36-42)

This entry is crucial to pinpoint my struggle, in terms of letting go of the ‘safety’ of a lesson plan, in favour of an improvised attitude towards structuring. Far from having attained mastery in such skill, I recognise my need to pre-plan, acknowledging it as a necessary ‘safety net’.
Thus, with a sense of humour towards my insecurities, I ‘trick myself’ into feeling safe and, at the same time, I validate my confidence in thinking on my feet (“as usual, a better idea came”). Sequence 6.7 shows the relevant part of the workshop.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE/ EPISODE</th>
<th>CS3: WORKSHOP 5</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm up</td>
<td>Breathing and visualisation (Paolo has escaped) to re-focus the dramatic frame. &lt;br&gt;Free association: a word you associate with Luna Parks</td>
<td>Photocopies (simplified – present perfect verbs matched to the present tense)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narration</td>
<td>Reading extract from Steppenwolf by H. Hesse (read aloud while they listen with eyes closed)</td>
<td>White body suit (chemical hazard paper suit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvisation</td>
<td>Where can Paolo be? [Mirror maze] Decide together and position Paolo in the space.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughts in the head</td>
<td>All the participants in role as Paolo speak simultaneously as his psyche; TIR embodies Paolo reacting to thoughts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role as symbol</td>
<td>All the participants in role as psychologists speak simultaneously to Paolo (white suit)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3d postcard</td>
<td>Reconstruct Paolo’s position and create a situation around him. Animate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role plays (x3)</td>
<td>Interview Paolo (collective, TIR or alternate) with rehab for speaking. Under hypnosis. Fabrizio Ferro?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning Sequence 6.7. CS3, Workshop 5: In the Mirror Maze.

My growing orientation towards non-linear structuring is also evident in the written style of the learning sequence: succinct, concise instructions, some implying multiple options (the role-plays: “collective, TIR or alternate”). Compared to earlier Sequences (see 6.3) this one is schematic, rather than discursive. Moreover, this session reveals a degree of confidence in both micro and macro reflection-in-action skills. As an example, I refer to the reading narration:

NARRATION: last night as I was reading Herman Hesse’s book “Steppenwolf” (1927) I came across a beautiful passage which, I thought, could be read aloud after a relaxation. So I led a very short relaxation (breathing and shaking) and then I asked them to close their eyes and read out the text. I put a lot of expression in the passage and I took care to change every verb from the perfect past to the present tense (for 2 reasons: 1. Immediacy, 2. Simplicity). After I read the passage, I asked them to comment on it and said that it could help us to get into Paolo’s frame of mind. By now we had created a strong mood which was necessary to start the new episode. (RJ, p.132:19-26)
This entry suggests that I am becoming more aware of resources available around me, which were not planned in the learning sequence, but can be incorporated in the workshop. Furthermore, the entry denotes an attention to detail as far as the dramatic elements are concerned, as well as the linguistic needs of the learners, their proficiency and comprehension of the written text. This example addresses the second research question, in terms of how I developed my artistry across the three case studies.

As Craft (2005) argues, recognising teaching as ‘disciplined improvisation’ means recognising the teacher as a creative professional; being able to teach through disciplined improvisation therefore requires “the capacity to facilitate group improvisation effectively” (p. 136). In light of this argument, it appears that, by the end of CS3, I attained a degree of ‘disciplined improvisation’ in my reflection-in-action choices. From the narration episode onwards, all episodes in workshop 5 denote a degree of ‘playful intention’ and ‘disciplined improvisation’. This, in turn, generated an attitude in my reflection-in-action which, borrowing from O’Neill (1995), I defined as ‘structuring for spontaneity’.

‘Structuring for Spontaneity’

The core theme emerging from the analysis of CS3 is an increased ability to reflect-in-action, both at an intra and at an inter-episode level, to harness process drama artistry for language learning. In a Vygotskyan perspective, I internalised this aspect of the art form of process drama. Drawing on O’Neill (2006), I defined this increased ability to reflect-in-action as ‘structuring for spontaneity’:

If the group is going to be empowered in the process, if their own readings of the material are to be privileged and if they are going to be released out of passive states and become active and reflective artists, then leaders have to structure for spontaneity. (pp. 117-118, my emphasis)

O’Neill suggests that, in structuring for spontaneity, teachers need to find a delicate balance between their intentions and those of their participants. Above, I have framed this ‘balance’ as the ongoing exchange between the teacher’s Quadripartite Thinking and participants’ Quadripartite Response (Bowell & Heap, 2005). Below I illustrate my ‘structuring for spontaneity’ at two levels: 1) micro, intra-episode level; and 2) at a micro, inter-episode level.

1) I begin by illustrating my micro, intra-episode ‘structuring for spontaneity’. To do so, I consider one specific episode: the 3D postcard convention (workshop 5). Here all of the participants in role as psychologists re-created a scene where the subject, who had escaped...
from the clinic, was found in a Luna Park, inside a mirror maze. The idea of the mirror maze had been offered on the previous day by Marika (see Marika’s section in Chapter Five, 5.3). The dramatic focus of this episode was therefore the fruit of a participant’s spontaneous ‘offer’, which I attended to and re-structured into a new strategy. Although I set up the structure, I let the group resolve it:

3D POSTCARD: I asked them how they wanted to arrange the space. In effect, I asked them to focus the drama, using a series of questions like: Where are we? Are we inside or outside the mirror house? Is it a big space? Is it long or open? They said it was a long and narrow space, to which I was very relieved (more confining and easier to recreate than a huge space). We created a long and narrow space with chairs and, once again, I placed the white suit, symbolising Paolo, inside the space. I modelled the way 3D postcard works (stating your name and what you are doing, then physically assuming that position in the space) and one by one they placed themselves into it. […] When we were all inside the space I animated the action. (RJ, p.134:16-24)

Here, they were recreating the moment when they found the subject, symbolised by a white body suit. Analysing this entry, some tacit assumptions can be fleshed out, in terms of negotiating the dramatic elements. First, I empower the group by letting them organise the space: through questioning, I make the group aware of the elements of place and space (“Where are we? Are we inside or outside the mirror house? Is it a big space?”). I encourage them to attend to these elements, which, in turn, help to create focus, to frame the action.

*Figure 6.10. Creating the Mirror Maze. CS3, Workshop 5.*
While they set up the space (Figure 6.10), I made the active choice to place a symbol, representing the subject in the space. Then, each participant stepped into the space, stating their name, attitude and motivation, thus attending to dramatic role. A certain tension was already present, in terms of the relationship between the psychologists and the subject, as well as the subject, obsessed by mirrors, being in a mirror maze. During the improvisation, I noticed Yelena was kneeling towards the subject. Reflecting in action, I asked her what she was doing: she said she was about to hypnotise him. Thinking on my feet, I capitalised on her answer and asked everyone to count backwards, to initiate the ritual of hypnosis. Manipulating language, paralanguage, and body language, Yelena moved closer to the subject, and gently whispered:

> We are here alone; you only hear your soul, and my voice... nothing bothers you; you and my voice. When I talk, you listen my voice, and you feel what you have inside. When I silence, you try to understand what more important for... your life. (Yelena, 3.5.2, 52:36)

After these words, we all started a slow count-down, from 15 to zero. This moment was charged with tension: in her written notes, Linda (TP) noticed that all the student-participants were absorbed by the counting and stared intensely at ‘the subject’. In Linda’s words: “Fixed gaze, nobody ever raises their eyes” (Linda, OBS, p. 8:50-51). In this instance, I reflected-in-action to respond to Yelena’s improvisation, and create a ritual: counting to hypnotise a patient. Through this choral count-down, a strong mood was created. Moreover, focussing on the counting, and manipulating the pitch and rhythm of the numbers being called out, increased the dramatic tension. It also represented a shift in status: the psychologists reclaimed higher status as ‘doctors’ over the subject, who had rebelled against their power, by running away. As the counting ended, Yelena closed the episode, by whispering softly:

> Open your eyes: it’s new life that has arrived. (3.5.2, 54:29)

These words reverberated through the silence; they were charged with tension and meaning. Here my point is that by asking the participants to become actively involved in decisions about the space, in role, I responded to their improvisation, setting up a structure that allowed for spontaneity. Here language, paralanguage and body language were all facets of the dramatic element of language, which, together with movement, role and situation, focus, tension, place and space, time, symbol and mood, created dramatic meaning.

The example above crystallises a shift in the way I balanced the QT/QR exchange (Bowell & Heap, 2005), improvising at an intra-episode reflection-in-action level. Thinking on my feet, I was able to bounce off Yelena’s idea, creating an opportunity for the whole group to take part in a ritual. In this way I responded to the creative QT/QR exchange, empowering the
group to create a strong, shared moment (the countdown for hypnosis). Significantly, while in CS1 and CS2 I tended to always initiate the QT/QR creative partnership, finally, by the end of the intervention, I began to respond to the QT/QR exchange. Thus, once I let go of my plot-bound attitudes, I could negotiate the elements by responding rather than always initiating the QT/QR creative partnership, structuring for spontaneity.

2) I now move on to discuss my ‘structuring for spontaneity’ at a micro, inter-episode level of reflection-in-action. Here a crucial aspect of the artistry is the notion of ‘aesthetic distance’ (Eriksson, 2007; 2011) and how this is achieved through reflective practice.

To elucidate this point, I use the episode described above (hypnotic count-down), and put it in context with the episode immediately preceding it. In the episode preceding the hypnotic count-down, the psychologists had just found the subject (Paolo), who had escaped from the clinic. However, here the roles were different: all participants were in role as Paolo himself, embodying his thoughts. They stood in a tight circle, while I squatted on the floor, wearing the white suit. As they spoke, I responded to what was said through movement. The participants were not talking to ‘Paolo’ as doctors; they were talking as facets of his mind. The aesthetic distance was therefore reduced; they temporarily ‘became’ the subject. Reflecting on action, I comment:

THOUGHTS IN THE HEAD: I explained the concept of ‘collective role’ and how it works, in terms of embodying the same character […] At the end of the activity I say: “now we understand how he feels”; in other words, the aesthetic distance between us and the subject is reduced. However, in the very next episode I manipulate that distance again, by asking them to go back to their role as psychologist. (RJ, 132-133: 28-43)

In the following episode, the distance was stretched out, as the participants took on the role of psychologists, detaching themselves from the subject:

ROLE AS SYMBOL: I asked them what they preferred: talk to Paolo as myself in role, as a symbol, or as someone else taking his role? They decided to talk to him as a symbol and so I had to quickly re-strategise […]. Having said that, without any embarrassment I proposed another activity and I placed the white suit as a symbol, inviting them to talk to Paolo. (RJ, p. 133:45-49)

These entries suggest that I was reflecting-in-action at a micro, inter-episode level, structuring for spontaneity, rather than following a pre-conceived plot. Thus, I appear to be harnessing process drama artistry to manipulate aesthetic distance.
Harnessing the Artistry for Engagement

At the end of CS3, by reflecting in action at an *intra* and *inter*-episode level, I was able to let an ‘impediment’ arise from the participants, harnessing it towards engagement. In a Vygotskyan perspective, I *internalised* this aspect of the art form of process drama.

An example happened during the final role-play. This was a role-play of a hypnosis session, the last opportunity for the psychologists to ‘intervene’ on the subject. The anticipation was high, as doctors had carefully planned the questions and strategies to implement during the hypnosis. However, Yelena, who played the role of ‘hypnotist expert’, unexpectedly took over and monopolised the entire interview, disregarding what they had previously agreed upon. The situation became very tense, as the others showed signs of extreme frustration. How would I manage such a delicate moment, in the very final episode of the intervention?

During the role-play, I recognised the group’s frustration. Rather than panicking, I realised that Yelena’s behaviour was generating an impediment, a “retardation” (O’Toole, 1992), to the accomplishment of their task, that is, carrying out a successful interview.

I realise how this “impediment” actually caused a lot of dramatic tension; it was tension of the task, and the task was: having to succeed in the interview in spite of Yelena. (RJ, p. 137:17-19)

Thinking on my feet, after the ‘unsuccessful’ interview, I called for an ‘emergency meeting’ to discuss the hypnosis session. Thus, I *responded* to this ‘impediment’, structuring an additional episode to harness the tension. In doing so, I was able to reflect-in-action, at an *inter*-episode level, to manipulate the elements of drama. I let the participants discuss this autonomously:

Yelena’s monopoly generates a lot of communication. Eduarda is straightforward in confronting the issue with her [3.5.3, 32:37]; in a way the discussion is much more heated in this phase […] than in the interview with the subject under hypnosis. They are all leaning towards the centre of the table and they are visibly engaged in the debriefing of the ‘unsuccessful’ interview. All of the students, including Ariel, are communicating and discussing with each other, in particular with Yelena, who is ‘under attack’ and says “well, perhaps I made a mistake” [3.5.3, 33:08]; as she says that, all burst into a supportive and releasing laughter; Herminia and Eduarda pretend shooting her, in a jokingly way. The atmosphere becomes much lighter. Agate says: “we had to talk about… a new life… what he would have like to do… but you talked about a past which… doesn’t exist!” (RJ, p. 137:7-17)

This episode appears to generate a high degree of learner engagement, understood as agency to self-regulate their involvement in the target language, and in the drama:
Ariel says [to Yelena] “we didn’t expect you to say those things...” and Yelena replies “why didn’t you stop me?” they all laugh loudly, Eduarda adds “we were... all confused!” Marika says: the important thing is that he (Paolo) wants to continue to be a teacher of Italian! They all say: yes!!” [...] Marika suggests that Paolo could become a teacher of Italian inside the hospital. Everyone laughs [3.5.3, 36:36]. In this last phase, they really own the drama! (RJ, p. 137:19-30)

Here the ‘impediment’ was the catalyst for enhanced engagement. The genesis of this impediment differs considerably from impediments in the previous case studies. While in CS1 I embedded the impediment (train arrest) in the structure, and imposed it on the group, in CS3, I let the impediment emerge from the group. I then responded to the tension generated, and manipulated the aesthetic distance to structure for spontaneity. In other words, in CS3, the ‘impediment’ was not woven into the plot, but emerged from a point of tension. Thus, it appears I reached a degree of unconscious competence, at an inter-episode micro level, harnessing process drama artistry towards engagement.

CS3 Conclusion

Finally, below I discuss the conclusion for CS3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE/ EPISODE</th>
<th>CS3: WORKSHOP 5 (Conclusion)</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improvisation</td>
<td>Final meeting to de-brief about the three interviews (in role)</td>
<td>Report sheets (A4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In role writing</td>
<td>Draft a report of the case / final interpretation following the latest revelations</td>
<td>Move the chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole class drama</td>
<td>Presentation of the case at the 10° AIP conference: each participant reads their written texts</td>
<td>Language game: A3 definition sheet + cards (2 sets)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(teacher-in-role)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Intercultural reflection (15 mins)</td>
<td>Handouts (film review; Hesse)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language reflection (15 mins)</td>
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<td>Grammar games in teams</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Engagement sheet / specific moment</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>FOCUS GROUP</strong> (following day)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Distribution of certificate of attendance</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Learning Sequence 6.8. CS3, Workshop 5: Conclusion.
Compared to CS2, in the conclusion of CS3 I made some adjustments on both a micro and macro level. On a macro level, I created a ‘report template’ (Appendix V) to facilitate the in-role writing. On a micro level, I assisted each participant in their written composition, following the rationale I had created (Figure 6.7).

The actual structure of the report template (name; disorder; recommendations) avoided a linear approach to the psychologists’ presentation of the subject. In effect, during the conference presentation, the student-participants did not frame the reports in chronological order, like the CS2 cohort had done; rather, they offered alternative explanations, debated among each other, and hinted at a future for the dramatic world (Transcript cited on p. 162). In that concluding discussion, the nature of the participants report reveals a concern with dramatic meaning, rather than plot. In my reflection-on-action, I commented:

This is how the drama ends. In this way, the conference episode, and the whole drama ends looking at a future perspective; it doesn’t have ‘an ending’ in terms of a plot-based end. Rather, it ends with several open possibilities. This ending is not definite; rather, it is an open ending, in line with what O’Neill (1995) describes as ‘process drama’. (RJ, p. 142:5-8)

This conclusion is consistent with the discussion above, regarding ‘structuring for spontaneity’ in CS3. Finally, as far as the language revision is concerned, in CS3 this was planned at a macro level. I designed a task-based language activity, by identifying 25 linguistic items (nouns, adjectives and verbs) that emerged during the drama, and created cards with a definition of each item (Appendix W). Divided into teams, the SPs had to match cards and definitions, with the fastest team winning. This language game acquired significance through the drama, with each language item being meaningful for the learners. This strategy suggests a progression, from CS1 to CS3, in the way I managed this delicate phase of the drama. Thus, the conclusion of CS3 also seems to suggest that my ability to harness and develop the artistry of AL/process drama had evolved over time, resulting in more integrated dual pedagogical content knowledge.
6.3. CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have examined my overt and covert beliefs, in developing and harnessing the artistry of AL/process drama, to facilitate engagement. I have used Underhill’s (1992) model of teacher development to analyse my reflection-in-action. I endorsed Dunn and Stinson’s (2011) discourse on *macro* and *micro* levels of planning, and I realised that in my own practice, at a *micro* level, a difference existed between reflection-in-action skills within one episode (*intra-*episode), and across episodes (*inter-*episode). I mapped my development of these skills, identifying a progression (Figure 6.11) from *unconscious incompetence*, in Case Study One, to a degree of *unconscious competence* in Case Study Three.

![Progression Diagram](image)

*Figure 6.11. My Progression Across the Case Studies Using Underhill’s (1996) Model.*

In essence, this progression aligns with Barth’s (2004) view of the reflective practitioner also being a “learning practitioner” (p. 158). During CS1, in my covert beliefs, I was still clinging to a plot-bound attitude; I was ‘addicted to plot’, and traced the roots of this belief in my identity as a writer. During the drama, I was not aware of this attitude, and, when the participants resisted my actions, I perceived it as a ‘failure’ on my behalf. I wrote extensively, in English, analysing and documenting my practice. Yet, the unmasking of this belief occurred as I scribbled a note in Italian, immediately after the final workshop. Significantly, this realisation emerged *during the process of writing*. I suggested that, since this entry was written in my native language, it may have granted access to my inner processing.
The analysis of CS2 revealed that, although I was still tacitly adhering to a sense of Aristotelian plot, I was now aware of this condition, and I attempted to overcome it; I was ‘trapped by the plot. This condition was mostly evident in some notes that I scribbled during class, in Italian. It also emerges in my comments in the interviews with teacher-participants’ interviews. By the end of CS2, in the final workshop, I managed to attain ‘a glimpse of the artistry’, that is, I managed to re-structure episodes more spontaneously.

In CS3, once I let go of my plot-bound attitudes, I could negotiate the elements through a playful attitude and disciplined improvisation; I was ‘structuring for spontaneity’. What changed was my approach to structure, to creating tension: in CS3 the tension-generating ‘impediment’ was not woven into the plot, but emerged from points of tension. That is, I let the ‘impediment’ emerge from the group, and then responded to the tension generated, manipulating the aesthetic distance, to structure for spontaneity. In a Vygotskian perspective, I internalised this aspect of the art form of process drama.

As Neelands (2006) remarks, reflective practice is “a way of life”; the reflective practitioner “digs deep into self in order to bring into consciousness, the otherwise unconscious instincts, habits, values and learnt behaviours that shape their practice” (p. 17). In this chapter, I have attempted to interrogate the conscious and unconscious beliefs and attitudes that informed my practice. I considered the nature of my intention as a teacher, to understand how I developed and harnessed the artistry of process drama towards learner engagement. In doing so, I agree with O’Mara (1999) that reflective practice has challenged my conception of ‘self’, as a teacher and as an individual.
7. CONCLUSION: LEARNING FROM THE LABYRINTH

Having experienced the labyrinth and having attempted to make sense of its complexities, I now reflect on the insights emerging from it. In this chapter, I draw together the various findings outlined in the previous chapters, in order to address the core focus of the research: my developing understanding of AL/process drama aesthetics. I consider the two research questions together, paving the way towards an aesthetic framework of AL/process drama.

7.1. INTRODUCTION

Discussing research in drama education, Winston (2006) reflects that in considering the findings of research, we should ask ourselves: “So what?” For Winston, a research project “will be of little use unless it has some influence on future action” (p. 59). In this final chapter, I ask myself ‘so what?’ and reflect on the influence that this research may have on future action. I recapitulate the main features of this research, identify some of its limitations, and contemplate further research that could spring from the present study.

As noted in previous chapters, this research is situated within a reflective practitioner methodology (Schön, 1983), and using multiple case studies (Stake, 2005). The data was collected within three drama interventions, in three adult language schools. Each intervention featured 15 hours of process drama, with students of Italian (AL), at an intermediate level of proficiency. All workshops were observed by a number of language teachers, who took notes on learners’ engagement, and were interviewed before and after the observations. Workshops were video-recorded; some extracts of the videos were used as Video-Stimulated Recall (VSR) during focus groups with the teacher-participants (TPs) and student-participants (SPs). The research design also included ongoing engagement questionnaires where SPs evaluated their self-perception of engagement. All these strategies were aimed at exploring the nature of engagement, how it appears and manifests in an AL/process drama context.

The study also sought to investigate my tacit and overt beliefs, as an AL teacher embracing process drama. For this purpose, I recorded my reflections, using translingsual writing as method: I alternated writing in Italian, my first language, and in English, my acquired language. In this way, I attempted to harness both my spontaneous self, and my contemplative nature (Pavlenko, 2005). I also considered my conversations with the teacher-participants as
data to expose my tacit beliefs. This data consisted in my unprompted comments to the teachers, immediately after class. Such strategy was not planned for, but arose naturally from my need to debrief after the drama. It was the consequence of a reflective practitioner attitude (Schön, 1983), through which I related to the teachers as a co-researcher.

The data analysis process was multilayered and involved different phases. In the immersion phase, I designed and facilitated the drama, collected the data, and translated it from Italian into English. The process of translation, or “re-languaging” (Swain et al., 2011), was insightful to consider the data in its core meaning. In the categorisation phase, I coded the data using NVIVO, and created a system of tree nodes, composed of: Art Form & Aesthetics, Case Context, Engagement, Pedagogy, Reflection-in-action, Specific Moments and Target Language Communication. Each tree node had a series of branches and sub-branches, to which I coded and cross-referenced all data. As part of the interpretation phase, I printed the coded data, and mapped it using my own system of colours and symbols. Through this mapping process, I stripped the data of previous assumptions, allowing for new insights. A number of threads emerged, including 1) the presence of three Specific Moments; and 2) a progression in my reflection-in-action, related to a shift in my attitudes. Next, I compiled three case study reports, where I expanded some themes that emerged from the mapping phase. In the following steps, I analysed the Specific Moments, using a microgenesis-oriented approach (Chapter Five), and I mapped my reflection-in-action, using Underhill's (1992) teacher development model (Chapter Six). In the final phase of the analysis, I synthesised the emergent findings of the two research questions. In this chapter, I present the final synthesis, where I consider the two questions together and relate them to the overarching focus of the research.

Due to the small scope of the research, and the profoundly different nature of the three cohorts, it is not possible to make generalised statements on engagement, or to advocate any claims on a large scale. Rather, the research focussed on three particular case studies, and on my personal experience as the facilitator. Thus, the key findings that arise from the research are context-specific, and need to be understood in the microcosm of the case studies. Clearly, the three cohorts cannot be objectively compared, as they represented different contexts, with a different typology of learner, in terms of first language, motivation to learn, proficiency, learning culture, group dynamics, and so forth. However, what can be compared in synthesising the two research questions is my own journey as a reflective practitioner, across the three case studies, and how that impacted on the student-participants' agency.
7.2. TOWARDS AN AESTHETIC FRAMEWORK FOR AL/PROCESS DRAMA

In this section, first I offer a concise summary of the findings. Next, I synthesise these findings, connecting aspects of the questions that are relevant to the overarching focus of the research, my developing understanding of AL/process drama aesthetics. Finally, I elaborate on the key aspects related to the aesthetic experience in AL/process drama.

Summary of the Research Findings

In this research, I sought to explore my developing understanding of AL/process drama aesthetics. I considered two questions:

- **What is the nature of engagement in AL/process drama within Second Language Acquisition, Intercultural Education and Aesthetic Learning?**
- **How can an AL teacher develop and harness process drama artistry to facilitate engagement?**

Below I provide a summary of the findings related to each question. Overall, these are grounded in Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory of mind.

**Learner Engagement**

I examined the first research question in detail within Chapter Five. There I analysed the data relating to engagement under the three domains informing this research, represented metaphorically as the three heads of Greek mythical creature Hecate.

1) **Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Domain.** The nature of the student-participants’ engagement manifested as a perception-in-action process, represented in Figure 5.2. Throughout this process, the student-participants seemed to engage in meaningful, dialogic communication, creating ZPDs. This process entailed a felt-experience (perezhivanie) in the drama, beginning with dramatic action affording the exposure to ‘authentic’ language (Van
Lier, 1996). This kind of language was characterised by: an initiation, in role; a string of multiple responses, in the form of a dialogic collaboration of different speakers, in role; feedback, in role (without breaking the drama); and a response, in role. The collective essence of the form seemed crucial in magnifying student-participants’ receptivity – to the language, to the drama and to each other. These processes promoted and amplified ‘vigilance’, a state that Van Lier (1996) suggests is ‘rare’ in the AL classroom. Ultimately, this perception-in-action process created agency in the target language.

The analysis suggests that through the AL/process drama interventions, all student-participants revealed some degree of agency as self-regulation, in both verbal and non-verbal communication. Based on Van Lier’s (2008) scale, SPs’ agency seemed to manifest from level (3) onwards, intensifying from CS1 to CS3. This is a significant finding, which suggests that process drama has an agentic quality, what Van Lier (2007) calls “language learning-as-agency” (p. 53) Participants were able to engage in a kind of communication that was self-regulated, that is, they were able to express their own opinions, ideas and feelings, without being constrained by lack of grammar or vocabulary (object-regulated), or by the teacher’s attribution of turn-taking (other-regulated). Moreover, the kind of agency observed was characterised by a sense of playfulness with the language, and with the manipulation of dramatic form, in terms of role, situation and tension. In CS2 and CS3, this playfulness also seemed to be characterised by manipulation of form related to focus, place and space and by the use of dramatic irony. This is a significant finding, which reveals that through process drama, playfulness is not just limited to language, but is expanded to the manipulation of the other elements of drama.

2) Intercultural Education Domain. The analysis draws on engagement as an ‘intercultural experience’ (Alred et al, 2003) and on the notion of the ‘intercultural speaker’ (Byram, 1997). Here engagement seemed to manifest as a process of meaning-making, represented in Figure 5.4. This process, fuelled by dramatic tension, generated intercultural tension lived through the ‘felt-experience’ of perezhivanie, triggering a degree of intercultural awareness and intercultural meaning-making.

I defined ‘intercultural tension’ as a force that engages one at an intercultural level, and operates within the gap existing between two (or more) cultural systems. The degree of intercultural tension in the pre-text necessarily affects the intercultural dimension of the other dramatic elements, as well as opportunities for intercultural reflection. I referred to this framework as the ‘intercultural/dramatic structure’. I suggested that while CS1 contained explicit intercultural tension, the CS2 and CS3 pre-text did not. My analysis of intercultural engagement (5.2) revealed that a lack of explicit ‘intercultural tension’ in the pre-text of CS2
and CS3 resulted in a lack of clear intercultural focus and place in the drama. Specifically, while in CS1 there was an active manipulation of intercultural focus in the drama (and therefore place, mood, role, situation, and so forth) in CS2 and CS3 there was no active manipulation of these elements. In parallel, CS2 and CS3 participants appeared not to acknowledge any intercultural awareness arising from the drama. In the questionnaires some SPs indicated engagement with the intercultural dimension, but could not articulate this in the follow-up interview: their intercultural meaning-making remained implicit. I concluded that intercultural tension in the pre-text, the manipulation of intercultural focus, and intercultural reflection, enabled the CS1 SPs to acknowledge their intercultural awareness and intercultural meaning-making.

3) Aesthetic Learning Domain. The analysis draws on Vygotsky's (1971) theory of aesthetic engagement as the influence of form on content. It also draws on Bundy's (2003) view of aesthetic engagement as animation, connection and heightened awareness.

The analysis suggests that the nature of participants’ aesthetic engagement occurred within the felt experience of perezhivanie, entailing perception, interpretation and creation. This differed across the case studies. All participants acknowledged and reflected on dramatic form, particularly on dramatic role. However, while some CS1 participants appeared to have undergone the full process of aesthetic engagement as transformation, leading to heightened awareness, none of the CS2/CS3 participants seemed to acknowledge explicitly any heightened awareness. Whenever the participants experienced the influence of form on content, they gained a heightened self-awareness of their voice and identity as speakers and learners of another language (Van Lier, 2004). Moreover, whenever the participants experienced the influence of form on content, their comments revealed a shift towards being intercultural speakers (Byram, 1997). Thus, ultimately, the analysis of the SLA, Intercultural and Aesthetic Learning domains suggested that, in AL/process drama, these domains are inextricably interconnected in the nature of learner engagement.

Developing Teacher Artistry

I explored the second research question, relating to teacher artistry, in Chapter Six. There I considered the development of AL/process drama artistry, and concluded that, by the end of the third case study, I was able to respond to, rather than to just initiate, the artistic collaboration in the classroom. Specifically, I realised that, at the beginning of the drama intervention, I relied heavily on the concept of ‘impediment’ as a structuring narrative device to
design the drama. This attitude was evident in the way I framed some journal entries, the process drama sequences, and focus questions. In CS1, I was open to negotiate roles and situations but, when participants challenged me by rejecting the impediment I had set up, I responded by ‘blocking’. This is because I had woven the ‘impediment’ into the plot of the drama. The analysis suggested that, by the end of the intervention (CS3), I was able to let the impediment emerge from the group, and harness the dramatic tension that this created towards learner engagement.

With Dunn and Stinson (2011), I initially identified two levels of reflection-in-action: macro and micro. At the macro level, my analysis seems to suggest that, at the beginning of the drama intervention, I was operating with a degree of competence. At a micro level, I identified two further levels relevant to my own practice: intra-episode (reflecting-in-action within one episode) and inter-episode (reflecting-in-action across episodes). I observed that while my intra-episode skills seemed to be developed from the start of CS1, my inter-episode skills gradually grew across the drama intervention. I mapped these using Underhill's (1992) model of teacher awareness, from unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence. Through this process, it emerged that I was able to gradually develop competence, in restructuring episodes and manipulating aesthetic distance. In Vygotskian terms, I internalised this aspect of the art form.

Thus, I gradually became aware of, and overcame, my tacit attitude of clinging to Aristotelian plot. In the cross-case analysis, I described these steps in my evolution as ‘addicted to plot’, ‘trapped by the plot’, and ‘structuring for spontaneity’. In the initial stage, ‘addicted to plot’, my stance was characterised by a tacit belief in a linear, Aristotelic narrative. I responded to the participants’ challenge to my plot as a ‘failure’ on my part, with a degree of ‘teacher melancholia’ (Gallagher et al., 2010). A shift in awareness initially emerged as I was writing an informal, spontaneous note, in Italian. This shift was later reinforced in the communication with the teacher-participants in the focus group. Consequently, I was able to articulate this shift, reflecting-on-action in my journal, in English. As I acknowledged my ‘unspoken ideal’ related to melancholia, I let go of it, moving towards a new stage, where I felt ‘trapped by the plot’. This stage emerged clearly through my notes, scribbled during class, in Italian. It was also reinforced in my responses during the teacher-participants’ interviews and, later, in my reflection-on-action, in English. Later, through a more detached reflection, I identified the source of my belief/attitudes mismatch in the focus question. By employing translingual writing as method, I was able to access my spontaneous self and my reflective self (Pavlenko, 2005). Finally, as I unmasked this tacit adherence to linear plot, I managed to relinquish some control, attaining a ‘glimpse of the artistry’. This entailed a playful attitude, and disciplined improvisation, through which I was able to ‘structure for spontaneity’.
Synthesis of the Research Findings

I turn now to consider the overarching focus of the study. Here I bring together key aspects of the findings, and highlight connections that I see as significant to my developing understanding of AL/process drama aesthetics. These relate to: 1) learner engagement and teacher artistry; 2) a culture of playfulness; and 3) the intercultural/dramatic structure.

Learner Engagement and Teacher Artistry

The first key understanding to emerge is the relationship between ‘learner engagement’ and ‘teacher artistry’. Learner engagement manifested as a cycle of ‘perception-in-action’ (Figure 5.2) generating agency. Across the three case studies, the nature of student-participants’ agency manifested in different forms (Table 5.2), which seemed to become more diverse and to intensify (Chapter Five, section 5.1 ‘Conclusions’). My artistry developed through my growing ability to reflect-in-action, both at intra-episode and inter-episode level (Figure 6.11). This growing ability to reflect-in-action enhanced my capacity to spontaneously manage the elements of drama – to create experiences for participants that were more engaging.

This key understanding suggests that my growing artistry seemed to influence the learners’ perception-in-action, especially impacting on their agency. Indeed, the increase in agency across the case studies might be interpreted as the result of my changing attitude, which culminated in what I defined, drawing on O’Neill, as ‘structuring for spontaneity’. As O’Neill states, ‘leaders have to structure for spontaneity. But such structuring will always be informed by the teachers’ theoretical perspective, and by the aesthetic and pedagogical principles that they believe are truly transformative (in Taylor & Warner, 2006, p. 117).

Through the analysis, I discovered that I needed to revisit the aesthetic and pedagogical principles that guided my praxis, so that I could let the points of tension emerge from the group, rather than from a pre-determined plot. By doing so, I relinquished control and empowered the participants to experience the drama with a renewed sense of agency. Thus, it may be inferred that my ability to internalise the art form impacted significantly on learners’ ability to self-regulate, both in their language and dramatic choices.

How is this relevant for the language teacher who wants to embrace AL/process drama pedagogy? This key understanding may help the AL teacher to appreciate how important it is to reflect-in-action and to negotiate the elements of drama, rather than following a prescribed lesson plan. By doing this, the AL teacher interested in process drama may find that the learners become more autonomous, taking charge of their learning.
A ‘Culture of Playfulness’

The second key understanding is that a sense of playfulness, both mine and the participants’, was crucial for both engagement and artistry. Playfulness was crucial not only for the learners’ engagement, but also for mine; not only for the teacher’s artistry, but also for the learners’.

Playfulness was present from the onset of the drama in my choice of pre-texts. In CS1, the pre-text selection was playful, as it stemmed from my ironic response to the ‘bargaining deal’ with the journalism chapter (see Chapter 4.1). In CS2 and CS3, the dramatic situation I created was ironic, as it built on my frustration as an AL teacher at always struggling to find strategies to motivate students to speak in Italian in class (see Chapter 4.2). Then, as the drama progressed, and my artistry became more playful in response to my improved ability to reflect-in-action, the student-participants were empowered to become more playful in their offerings and responses.

This aligns with what Barth (2004) describes as a ‘culture of playfulness’. Barth advocates for playful learning by “infusing fun” into teaching, for “fun is engaging, and engaged learners can be very productive” (p. 223). Indeed, Barth states, “a culture of playfulness is closely related to the capacity to learn” (p. 152). In this research a culture of playfulness manifested as an increased willingness to play with the dramatic elements and, significantly, to weave dramatic irony into the drama. Thus, playfulness appears to be at the core of AL/process drama aesthetics. On a philosophical level, this key understanding resonates with Schiller’s (1775/1965) aesthetic principle of the ‘play instinct’ (Spieltrieb) as a fundamental instinct to realise the full potential of human development.

This key understanding may help the AL teacher interested in process drama to appreciate the key role of playfulness to facilitate learning a language through process drama. This may inform the choice of pre-text, the design of the drama structure, and most importantly, the attitude of the teacher towards the drama and the participants.

Intercultural/Dramatic Structure

The third key understanding is that an increase in agency, whilst important for language learning and indeed for opportunities to be playful with dramatic form, does not necessarily lead to enhanced intercultural awareness. In order to generate this awareness, the drama has to be constructed using an ‘intercultural/dramatic structure’.

The analysis suggested that an effective intercultural/dramatic structure entailed: explicit intercultural tension in the pre-text, active manipulation of intercultural elements, and
intercultural reflection. In other words, for student-participants to become aware of their intercultural engagement, the pre-text needed to contain intercultural tension, the intercultural elements needed to be actively manipulated, and there needed to be plenty of intercultural reflection. Only then, as in CS1, could the student-participants experience form, as the influence on the content of the drama. Whenever this happened – experiencing the influence of form on content – the participants were aesthetically engaged and thus gained a heightened self-awareness of their voice and identity as additional language learners (Van Lier, 2004) and as ‘intercultural speakers’ (Byram, 1997). Significantly, this evokes Marcuse’s (1978) theory of the aesthetic transformation as a reshaping of language, perception and interpretation, with content assuming a significance of its own through form. This complex dynamic between form and content reveals that in AL/process drama, the Second Language Acquisition, Intercultural and Aesthetic Learning domains are profoundly intertwined.

This key understanding may help the AL teacher interested in process drama to be aware of the intercultural/dramatic structure from a macro level of planning. By keeping in mind intercultural tension and how it affects the other elements, it may be easier to choose a pre-text that is more conducive to generate heightened awareness. Together, these key understandings feed into an aesthetic framework outlining the aspects of teacher artistry that impact positively on learner engagement across the three domains. I present this framework in the section below.

My Aesthetic Understanding of AL/Process drama

So what is my understanding of AL/process drama aesthetics? In this section, I attempt to identify those aspects of teacher artistry that impacted positively on learner engagement across the three domains of this study. I construe these within Vygotsky’s (1994) unit of experience, perezhivanie, in which cognitive, affective and social aspects are intertwined in the felt-experience of the drama, which is perceived, interpreted and re-created.

1. **Dramatic Tension.** Dramatic tension played a fundamental role within the symbolic mediation of process drama. Tension was vital to fuel the process of perception-in-action, generating agency in the target language. Tension was also vital to spark the intercultural meaning-making process, and to the creation of dramatic meaning.

2. **A Sense of Form.** All student-participants acknowledged and reflected on the effect of dramatic form, and the influence it had on their language learning process. In
particular, all participants seemed to resonate with *dramatic role*, as a medium to foster self-expression and in some cases self-awareness.

3. *Heightened Self-awareness.* When the student-participants could experience aesthetic engagement as the influence of *form on content* (Vygotsky, 1971), they developed a heightened awareness of their *voice* and *identity* as language learners (Van Lier, 2004) and as ‘intercultural speakers’ (Byram, 1997). In this way, they could ‘feel’ the language and the culture at a visceral level.

4. *Intercultural/dramatic Structure.* When the pre-text contained a degree of explicit *intercultural tension*, when intercultural *focus* and *place* were actively manipulated in the drama, and when frequent occasions for intercultural reflection were offered, students found it easier to acknowledge and articulate their intercultural awareness. Having a rich ‘intercultural/dramatic structure’ seemed critical to harness the potential of the aesthetic experience.

5. *Reflection-in-action.* By thinking on my feet, and in particular by letting the points of tension emerge from the group, I was able to empower participants to fully own their creative choices. This was a key feature of my aesthetic understanding. As an AL teacher, with limited experience in process drama facilitation, I needed to learn to reflect-in-action by ‘structuring for spontaneity’ (O’Neill, 2006), rather than devising a pre-arranged narrative.

6. *Agency.* Engagement in AL/process drama seemed to be characterised by a sense of agency. Participants were able to engage in a kind of communication that was self-regulated, that is, they were able to express their own opinions, ideas and feelings without being constrained by either lack of grammar or vocabulary (object-regulated) or the teacher’s attribution of turn-taking (other-regulated). This sense of agency enabled participants to engage in meaningful, dialogic communication.

7. *Playfulness.* Agency enabled participants to become playful with language and with the elements of dramatic form. As I developed my artistry through reflection-in-action, and reflection on action, the participants were empowered to harness the opportunities made possible by playfulness, enriching the dramatic experience.
Through this research, I have identified these points as crucial to inform my evolving understanding of AL/process drama aesthetics. Thus, this study extends the knowledge of what is meant by ‘engagement’ and ‘artistry’ in AL/process drama, with attention to the issues above.

7.3. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Limitations of the study

There are a number of limitations to this study. The first is that the research attempted to explore notions that are highly ephemeral, like ‘engagement’, ‘aesthetic experience’, and ‘intercultural meaning-making’. Dealing with such abstract, intangible and flexible concepts meant that each participant might have interpreted these ideas differently, according to their own cultural background, education, personal and social experiences. I attempted to address this challenge by breaking down the construct of engagement. However, a number of linguistic, cultural, semantic and translation gaps do exist, and need to be taken into account. For this reason, it is not possible to make generalised claims; rather, the findings are specific to the context of the individual participants.

Second, having to juggle the teacher and researcher roles proved to be a limitation at times, especially during the interviewing process. In particular, given that the student-participants' interviews were conducted in a language that was not their mother tongue, my role as language teacher (scaffolding language) was occasionally at odds with my role as interviewer (avoiding leading questions). Furthermore, in some instances, the complex nature of the notions embedded in the questions created a barrier in communication. This could have been overcome by knowing in advance the nationality of the interviewees, and organising an interpreter to attend the interviews. Certainly, using an interpreter would have created a different set of epistemological challenges (Wong & Poon, 2010). However, this would have avoided the thorny operation of 'interlanguage translation', i.e., having to translate grammatically poor utterances, which sometimes made little if any sense, from an additional language into another. In effect, on an epistemological level, by asking the student-participants to conduct the interviews in a non-native language, I unwillingly de-voiced them, by denying the use of their mother tongue. The context of the research as an AL class where the target language is used for all communication might explain, but certainly not validate, the use of
interlanguage interviewing. In hindsight, the use of an interpreter would have empowered the student-participants to better comprehend, and express their answers, resulting in a more accurate analysis.

Finally, a limitation of the study was the time frame allocated for each intervention. Participants were interviewed either during, or immediately after their experience in the drama. This might not have given them enough time to process their experience. In hindsight, conducting the interviews a few days after the drama, rather than during or immediately after it, might enable them to clarify their experience and offer more accurate insight into their engagement.

**Implications of the Study**

The implications of this research are directed at three main areas: AL/process drama pedagogy, cross-language research methodology and bilingual studies.

In relation to the first of these, implications for AL/process drama pedagogy, the findings outlined here support previous research that advocates the benefits of process drama for enhancing fluency, motivation to communicate and meaning-making (Bournot-Trites et al., 2007; Chan et al., 2011; Yaman Ntelioglou, 2011; Kao et al., 2011; Stinson, 2008, 2009; Winston, 2011). As such, this research contributes to a growing body of knowledge in the field, and helps to create momentum in the community of AL/process drama researchers and practitioners on an international scale. In particular, the implications of this relate to the constructs of perception-in-action, to the intercultural/dramatic structure of process drama, and to developing teacher artistry.

This research has implications in Australia where, currently there is an extremely low retention in Languages Other than English (LOTE), with only 3 per cent of undergraduate students majoring in Foreign Languages. These alarming conditions have resulted in the Australian ‘language crisis’ ([www.go8.edu.au](http://www.go8.edu.au)), with Clyne (2005) defining Australia as ‘a multicultural society, with a monolingual mindset’. Currently, no university degree in Foreign Language Education offers any substantial training in AL/process drama. Increasing the presence of AL/process drama in the LOTE academic community would offer language teachers a tool to help retain student attendance at tertiary level, as a step forward in addressing Australia’s current language crisis.

Based on the findings of this thesis, a program for pre-service AL/teachers would need to focus on the importance of knowing-in-action, with regard to macro and micro, intra-episode and inter-episode reflection-in-action. This would require comprehensive training, including:
the elements of drama and their manipulation, aesthetic distance, Quadripartite Thinking and Quadripartite Response. This training would need to allow teachers to contemplate the relationship between reflection-in-action and participants’ agency. Such training would enable teachers to grasp the importance of the dramatic/intercultural dimension of AL/process drama planning, a crucial finding emerging from the current research. This would imply understanding the notion of intercultural tension in the pre-text, as well as intercultural role, focus, mood, and so forth, and how to use them to facilitate intercultural engagement in the classroom.

Second, this study has implications for cross-language research, in terms of methods and methodology. Currently, there are no methodological guidelines for cross-language research in AL/process drama research. While there is an extensive body of literature on methodology for educational research, SLA research, and educational drama research, little has been written to date to guide researchers in creating suitable methods when researching through AL/process drama. As a result, in this study I experimented with different techniques, some of which were more effective than others. For example, I re-enacted a series of gestures and props (used by the teacher-in-role) as anchors to initiate the focus groups. I referred to this technique as kinaesthetic interviewing. I found that it was effective in triggering emotional recall, by enabling participants to bypass the language barrier and to reconnect with their engagement. However, as mentioned in the limitations of the study, this technique was paralleled by interlanguage interviewing, a technique I do not recommend. Thus, an implication of this study would be to create a set of methodological guidelines for cross-language research in AL/process drama.

Third, a methodological implication concerns those reflective practitioners who are translingual writers (Kellman, 2000), i.e., able to write fluently in both their native and acquired language. In the field of AL/process drama, practitioners are operating in a context where several languages are spoken, and they may be able to speak two (or more) languages. Often, though, they focus all of their writing efforts in one language only, thus missing an opportunity to exploit their translingual writing (Pavlenko, 2005). This may be for practical reasons, i.e., the research report being written in one language. However, it is also because of the current absence of methodological guidelines, bridging ‘AL/process drama reflective practice’, and ‘bilingual studies’. In effect, reflection-in-action, and on-action, are operations that require a spontaneous opening of the self, as well as reflective detachment; these are two dimensions that may be explored through translingual writing as method. Bilingual reflective practitioners interested in exploring their knowing-in-action processes could benefit from this implication of the research.
Further Research

This research suggests several key areas in need of further examination. Here I discuss three of particular interest to me: gesture studies, educational neuroscience and teacher education.

An area for further research, within gesture studies (McCafferty & Stam, 2008), is the relationship between engagement as perception-in-action, embodiment and Second Language Acquisition in AL/process drama. This may require a longitudinal study using mixed methods (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003), where learners are tested for their language proficiency in both oral and written forms, before, during, and after a drama intervention. These results could be cross-referenced with participants’ perception-in-action, employing microgenetic analysis to code each ‘gesture phrase’ (McNeill, 1992). Speech/gesture units could also be correlated to the students’ verbal and non-verbal improvisation in the drama, and the manipulation of dramatic elements. Such research would establish an empirical platform on which to argue for the symbolic mediation of process drama for Second Language Acquisition.

Another promising area for further research is AL/process drama engagement and educational neuroscience. Following Damasio’s (2010, 2005, 1999) ongoing theory and research on self, emotion and consciousness, the Vygotskyan unity of cognition and affect in development has been accepted widely in educational neuroscience. For example, Immordino-Yang’s research (2011; 2010; 2008) considers affective and social neuroscience for educational theory. Specifically, in the field of drama education, Johnson’s (2011) research focuses on mimetic hierarchy and neurosciences. In addition, as Greenwood (2011) suggests, a growing body of contemporary theorists is now focussing on ‘neuroaesthetics’, that is, mapping neurological pathways and aesthetic response (Ramachandran & Rogers-Ramachandran, 2006). Future research stemming from this project could focus on neuroscience and AL/process drama, comparing neurological pathways and aesthetic responses of AL/process drama participants.

Finally, a field for further research is teacher education. Is the ‘teacher resistance’ described by Araki-Metcalfe (2008) and Stinson (2009) related to a teacher’s avoidance to face unconscious incompetence? As Underhill (1992) argues, experiencing ‘resistance’ is a “natural and inevitable response” for teachers (p. 72). If so, what kind of training may empower (AL) teachers to feel confident in structuring for spontaneity? These questions remain unanswered. In a future, post-doctoral study, I am interested in working with a group of experienced (AL) teachers towards creating a programme that may enable them to confidently develop dual pedagogical content knowledge in AL/process drama.
7.4. CONCLUSION

In this research I have explored my evolving understanding of AL/process drama aesthetics through a sociocultural, Vygotskian perspective. I have considered the constructs of engagement and reflection-in-action, informed by a reflective practitioner stance (Shön, 1983). I have been inspired by O'Neill's (1996) metaphor of the researcher as Theseus, navigating the labyrinth of scholarship, following Ariadne’s thread. In O'Neill's metaphor, Theseus is ready to slay the Minotaur, that is, the research topic. In my appropriation of this metaphor, I pictured my 'monster' as Hecate, a Greek mythological figure. A tri-cephalous creature, she is the goddess of crossroads, fertility and witchcraft. Instead of slaying my Minotaur, I have attempted to decipher her voices, making sense of her three heads, and using her eyes to guide me through the maze. As a reflective practitioner, I did not avoid the dark spaces of the labyrinth, but sought to explore every nook and cranny, revelling in those dark spaces. Sometimes I encountered corners that were not terribly fruitful; at times I doubted my ability to understand Hecate’s voices; other times I lost confidence in Ariadne’s thread. Occasionally, I even went off track, looking for new Minotaurs. Often I lost my way in the labyrinth or hit dead ends. Paradoxically, in the act of getting lost, new insights were found, new routes were uncovered, and new pathways created. I now leave the labyrinth, carrying new ideas about future labyrinths to be explored.


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