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JONATHAN SHARP

Drama Techniques in University English Language Teaching

An Action Research Exploration

Drama Techniques in University English Language Teaching

An Action Research Exploration

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Preface

This doctoral thesis truly was a labour of love: inspired by my enduring passion for and belief in the power of drama, both in and outside of language education; and written in an action-packed seven years, parallel to my duties as a full-time university instructor, husband and father. It is no empty cliché, nor misplaced modesty, to state that without the understanding and full support of my sons Alexander and Cailean, and most especially my wife Feli, completing this thesis would simply not have been feasible. This is as much their achievement as my own.

Mentioning everyone who played a part in inspiring the project would be impossible. That said, on the drama side I must thank the indomitable Marilyn Wallace, Jack Babb and Don Fenner for giving me an unforgettable eight years of practical theatre experience. Gill Woodman at Munich was the best boss imaginable, allowing me to develop my interests in drama-based language education and encouraging me in my research and teaching career. Stu, Shawn and the rest of the gang at Tübingen hired me based on my growing profile in drama-in-education, and have continued to be the most amazing colleagues. Professors Angelika Zirker and Matthias Bauer have been quite wonderful in their continued support of and interest in my work, offering invaluable opportunites for collaboration. Rob McColl has been a true brother-in-arms in the ongoing mission to keep practical approaches to the teaching of Shakespeare at the forefront. Fruitful and insightful discussions with Helga Tschurtschenthaler, Eva Göksel, Stefanie Giebert and John Crutchfield assured me that my furrow was not as lonely as I had imagined; Manfred Schewe gave us all a formal platform to exchange our ideas more widely. Deepest thanks also to Professor Petra Kirchhoff for being a supportive, encouraging and friendly second supervisor.

Finally my greatest thanks are due to Professor Friederike Klippel. I cannot possibly imagine a better doctoral supervisor. In the darkest moments, even when I had lost my belief in the project, she never did. Her support, both academic and practical, has been phenomenal; I'll never forget it.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father, Dr. John D. Sharp, who instilled in me a love of books, ideas, and the tangible value of philosophy – "the only game in town."

Cuimhnich air na daoine on tàinig thu.

Rottenburg, September 2024 Jonathan Sharp

1 Introduction

This study emerges as the culmination of many strands of my life, both private and professional. In the late 1990's, as a 22-year-old recent English Literature graduate, I boarded a plane for Vienna for an intended gap year, to be spent furthering my interest in classical music, and teaching English at a private language school. The informality and the logistical ease of the whole process seems to hark back to a different age in my memory, as I sit writing this some 24 years later. Living and working in Vienna, language difference aside, was as straightforward in terms of organization and bureaucracy as had I been in Edinburgh or London. The planned gap year was extended. A year's stay turned into 8 years. My life in Austria, then Germany, became more and more established, until it became clear that I would be settled here for at least my professional working life. Music, the original reason for moving in the first place, gradually became a hobby, replaced by a more enduring passion: theatre. Some two weeks after arriving in Vienna, I had auditioned successfully for a small repertory theatre that performed exclusively in English. What started as a single engagement for one production developed into a major, ongoing activity that kept me in the city.

The other occupation that sustained and developed was English language teaching. As I taught English during the day and performed in the theatre at night, the vague idea of somehow combining these two activities started to form. The main desire of most of the students at the private language school where I taught was to practice spoken English – for the majority of them, in order to improve their business communication skills in international contexts. My colleagues and I spent long hours developing exercises and methods to best simulate 'real life' oral communication situations to use in our classes. At the same time, the small theatre company where I worked was run off its feet by school matinées, to which English teachers would bring entire classes in order to offer them exposure to 'authentic', native-speaker-based, oral communication. Surely, I thought, there was potential to combine these worlds – the educational and the performative – to the benefit of students of English, whether younger or older, and for whatever the pedagogical purpose? After two years of theatre work, I began teaching classes at the English department of the University of Vienna, where I finally had the chance to experiment with some of the ideas I'd had about combining drama and ELT (English Language Teaching). The first class was literature based: a play-reading and discussion group, where we would cast each scene and read it aloud, working on pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition alongside the literary analysis. But soon I was using drama-in-education methods and techniques in the regular language classes (see section 1.1), not grounded in literary texts, but in role-play, improvisation, and student-devised work, for the purpose of oral communication practice.

I was happy with the fact that, as far as I could tell, the students enjoyed drama exercises, and seemed to be using their spoken English more than in the non-dramatic classes I taught. After moving to a post at the University of Munich, I continued to use drama activities in my classes, as well as starting to read into the slowly-emerging body of research on drama methods in language teaching. Simultaneously, I spent a lot of time thinking about my particular teaching context: *Sprachpraxis* (or Academic English); that is practical English classes, taught alongside academic courses, for university students of English. A range of abilities (especially at the lower semester levels), large classes, and a variety of degree types were issues faced by all of us *Lektoren* (teachers of Academic English), which we regularly discussed and tried to find solutions to.

When I successfully applied for my current post: a permanent ELT teaching post in the *Sprachpraxis* section of the English department at the University of Tübingen, my professional path had become clear: I was not, after all, going to continue to try to forge a career as an actor. I was committed to, and happy with, my job as a language teacher. But I remained passionately committed to using drama and theatre in my classroom practice. With the regularity and security of my permanent job, I made the decision to try to formally investigate just how effective these drama-based techniques were in my teaching context – thus it was that my doctoral research formally began.

1.1 Background and context of the study

This section briefly describes my teaching context at the University of Tübingen, and the pedagogical issues behind the project design.

At time of writing, the *Sprachpraxis* (Academic English) section of the English department at Tübingen comprises seven permanent-contract language teachers; six on a full-time, and one on a part-time basis. Further adjunct teachers are hired on a semester basis to cover extra classes according to particular numbers of incoming students (for a full discussion of the institutional context, see section 4.1.1). Academic English classes are divided into three main categories: written communication, oral communication, and translation; and into two levels – first level classes tend to be taken by students in their first to fourth semester, while second level classes are taken in the latter half of the degree programmes. There is no standardized curriculum content in the Academic English section – classes are taken alongside other academic seminars in the various areas of study, and aim to provide support for students to improve their practical English skills, for the purposes of their academic study of English. In this regard, the Academic English classes can be seen as the junction at which all other strands of the department meet – all students, regardless of degree programme and level (including even postgraduate) are required to take Academic English courses.
Classes in the written communication and translation categories have arguably the most clearly-defined objectives in terms of final output. Written communication classes, regardless of topic or material used, focus on the production of academic essays, with

increased standard expectations at the higher level (level 2 and postgraduate). Translation classes focus on the translation of texts from German into English (at level 1), with difficulty increasing at the second level (longer, more diverse text types and including limited additional translation from English into German). Oral communication classes, in contrast, do not have a consistent specific output aim. Oral communication classes at level 1 tend to be large (typically 20-30 students), and are normally taken by students in their second semester. These classes are mostly assessed on the basis of presentations held in groups of two or three; the issue remains however of involving the whole class in oral communication activities on a regular basis, while maintaining the obligation to conduct assessment. Topics at level 1 are kept general, but ideally focus on a recent issue pertaining to cultural/regional studies (*Landeskunde*) from an English-speaking country. "Oral Communication II" (i.e. level 2) classes are typically smaller (approx. 20 students), and offer a more diverse range of oral communication forms and topics, such as debates, impromptu speeches, film reviews, and poetry recitals among others, depending on the individual teacher. While 'Oral Communication I' classes give students a wider range of topic choice, 'Oral Communication II' classes are commonly focused on a pre-selected topic or theme. As mentioned above, drama has been a main feature of my teaching practice for many years. At Tübingen, I decided that 'Oral Communication II' classes were the best platform for drama-based work. Firstly, the oral nature of dramatic performance was felt to be appropriate to the context and aims of the class, as well as constituting a central theme, as required at level 2. Additionally, level 2 was felt to be more appropriate than level 1, as many drama-based exercises and techniques require a substantial level of language confidence and competence, tested by the pressures of public performance and the 'stepping outside yourself' demanded by role-play work, for example. It was decided that students in their second semester of study, as is the case in 'Oral Communication I' classes, would not necessarily have the required confidence or language level, and that in this case, drama might be more of a hindrance to progress than an aid. Since 2011, then, I offered 'Oral Communication II' classes involving drama. These classes focussed either on the exploration of drama-in-education techniques (particularly aimed at the teacher trainee students), on dramatic performance (culminating in a final, assessed theatre production) or on a piece of dramatic literature (e.g. Shakespeare's Macbeth)[1]. For the present study, these three modes of drama class are combined, in an attempt to ascertain the perceived effectiveness of drama methods in an 'Oral Communication II' class. Specifically, the study focuses on three problem issues of relevance to the context – the typically large class size; the need to offer regular and significant opportunities for all students to practice and improve their English (further impacted by the high numbers of students involved); and the diverse degree types represented in the class, explained further in section 1.3 below, which problematizes relevant topic choice in the level 2 classes.

1 See Sharp 2015 for a fuller discussion

1.2 Relevant literature and previous research

The study takes place at a theoretical and praxis-oriented intersection between many fields: applied drama (see section 3.1); drama-in-education (section 3.2); drama methods in teaching spoken language (section 3.3.1); in teacher education (section 3.3.2) and in the teaching of literature (section 3.3.3). Despite an increasing body of research into the application of drama-based methods in higher education (section 3.3), the vast majority of research has focused on compulsory educational contexts, and on working primarily with children (see introduction to section 3.3. for a fuller discussion); or else takes the form of practical 'how-to' handbooks of drama techniques applicable in general ELT contexts (see for example Holden 1981; Maley and Duff 1978). Of the research that does exist within the higher educational context, very little focuses on higher education ELT; and the specific context of the present study, that of German university English *Sprachpraxis* (Academic English), remains under-researched in general. A notable exception is the paper by Conor Geiselbrechtinger (2012) which explores issues of content and language integration in *Sprachpraxis* classes in Germany (see section 2.1 for further discussion of this important paper).

A limited amount of other research has investigated areas of direct relevance. Anderson et al (2008) published an important study of the inter-subject relationship between English and drama, with possible interfaces such as textual performance explored, albeit at secondary school level. Manfred Schewe's major study (1993) explored, and was borne out of, his own role as a university German language and literature teacher in Cork, Ireland. Schewe went on to become a founding figure in the then nascent field of drama in language teaching and learning, and in the context of performative educational culture (see section 3.3.1). Eucharia Donnery (2009), dicusses the utilization of drama-based methodology in the ELT curriculum at a university in Japan, arguing for its usefulness as a bridge between the teacher-centred approaches typical of a school context to the more independent learning expected at university. Morgan Koerner (2014) conducted an action research project with university undergraduate students of German, deploying postdramatic[2] theatre techniques in the teaching of the curriculum, which integrated language, literature and culture elements, similar to the context of the present study (see section 4.1.1). Beaven and Alvarez (2014) report on an initial investigation into non-formal drama training for in-service language teachers; this approach has been formalized in a German-speaking context with the increasing offer of *Theaterpädagogik* for in-training and in-service state teachers (see section 3.2.2). A book-length study by Lutzker (2007) also examines the training of in-service language teachers in drama techniques for use in the school classroom, and conceptualizes teach-

2 Postdramatic theatre is a contested term, but refers generally to avant garde forms of theatre and drama that somehow challenge the previously accepted, linear narrative movement of literary drama, itself based on Aristotelian norms (see Lehmann 2006)

ing itself as a performative, artistic process; this concept is also furthered in Manfred Schewe's (2013) concept of performative pedagogy.

Two initial studies by the present author laid the foundations for the present study. The first (Sharp 2014) problematized the institutional and pedagogical contexts, and identified the main pedagogical challenges dealt with in the present study (see section 4.2). The second (Sharp 2015) described a class on Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in which drama methods were applied to this specific text in order to bring performative elements to the fore throughout the semesester (see section 3.3.3).

1.3 Research questions and objectives

Based on previous experience of drama-based teaching methods, and on my specific teaching context (section 1.1 above), I wanted to investigate the application of a drama-based approach within the Academic English curriculum at the University of Tübingen. I set out to analyze the issue using an Action Research methodology (see section 4.3.1). As previously stated, the three main pedagogical challenges faced were:

i. Large class sizes (up to 30 students)
ii. Students from various different study programmes in the one class[3]
iii. The requirement (typical of Academic English classes) to help students develop individual practical language skills

These three areas were identified in the previously published study discussed in section 1.2 (Sharp 2014). This study suggested that the drama approach was indeed well received by the students and viewed as relevant in the Academic English context. This encouraged me to investigate the issue further.

In the 2014 study, the students had been given free choice of presentation topic, within the boundaries of the class focus on applied drama. This had led to an interestingly diverse range of topics, including drama therapy, theatre rehearsal techniques, voice development and intercultural communication. While this made for an interesting semester and did indeed confirm the generally positive acceptance by the students of the drama-based approach, it did not allow (nor was it intended to) a consistent comparison of the pedagogical aspects of the class within the Academic English section. As identified in section 1.1, Academic English classes are at the junction of all other sub-sections of the English department at Tübingen, and thus contain students with a range of interests and pedagogical focuses: literary, linguistic, and educational. And as also previously mentioned, the oral communication classes are those with arguably the least-defined output aims of all curriculum areas (the other areas being written communication and translation). For these reasons, I wanted to develop a design that

3 These are fully explained in section 4.1.1

focused on the originally identified pedagogical challenges faced in the classes, with a more defined content structure, to ascertain the effectiveness of the methods used to each of the relevant departmental areas (oral communication skills; literary analysis; teacher education). So from a teacher's perspective, the research questions posed were:

1. In which ways do drama-in-education classes at university level foster oral communication skills?
2. In which ways do drama-in-education classes at university level foster career relevant skills (specifically for teacher trainees)?
3. In which ways do drama-in-education classes at university level foster ESAP (English for specific academic purposes) – in the context, the exploration and analysis of literature in English?

Thus the study set out to explore the teaching context using the "self-reflective, critical and systematic approach" situated in an action research methodology (Burns 2010: 2). A final, and crucial, aspect of the study was the point of view of the students themselves (Cf Schön 1983; Fals Borda and Rahman 1991). The final question was thus:

4. In which ways do drama in education classes at university level foster oral communication skills, career-relevant skills (for *Lehramt*) and ESAP (an exploration of literature in English) in the view of the participants?

The data collection instruments were centred around these three pedagogical areas and encompassed both the students' and the teacher's views (see chapter 5).

1.4 Chapter overview

This study comprises eight chapters, which broadly cover four parts: an introduction; an exploration of the theoretical background; the action research project; and a conclusion.

Chapter 1, the introduction, describes the background of the study. This involves a short description of the pedagogical context at the University of Tübingen, a brief overview of the directly relevant literature and previous research, and finally the specific research questions and objectives of the study.

Chapter 2 introduces the aspects of ELT (English Language Teaching) relevant for the context. This includes an exploration of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) and EAP (English for Academic Purposes), and the question of language and content integration in the adult ELT classroom. Next, the area of oral communication skills in ELT is investigated, introducing concepts of communicative performance and competence, and communicative language teaching (CLT), contextualizing these in the higher education context relevant to the study.

Chapter 3 explores the area of educational drama, starting with a consideration of the terms drama and applied drama in a historical trajectory. Next, the fields of drama-in-education (DiE) and theatre-in education (TiE) are described, as well as the cognate German-language field of *Theaterpädagogik*. The history of the use of drama in education is briefly sketched, followed by a consideration of drama methods in higher educational contexts, focusing particularly on the areas under investigation: oral communication, teacher training, and literary study.

The action research project is described fully in chapter 4. Firstly the *Sprachpraxis* section of the University of Tübingen English department is introduced in detail, then the specific class under investigation. Next the research questions are elucidated, followed by a delineation of the action research methodology on which the study is grounded. The final section of chapter 4 is a session-by-session description of each of the nine classes held throughout the semester, with details of what the students did and my own impressions, as recorded in the teacher diary.

Chapter 5 describes in detail the various data collection instruments employed, together with the reasoning behind the design. These are: a pre-course questionnaire; a weekly feedback questionnaire based on Moodle; a teacher diary in which I recorded my impressions of each session; a post-course questionnaire; and a final informal class discussion which nevertheless was not offered as part of the data analysis.

The data analysis is presented in chapter 6. This is presented in order of completion by the participants, starting with the pre-course questionnaire and ending with the post-course questionnaire. The data was analysed qualitatively using the software programme MAXQDA. Emergent data codes were gathered under the three areas being explored, ready for further discussion in the next chapters.

Chapter 7 discusses the data findings identified and analysed in chapter 6. In chapter 7 the data is re-organized for discussion according to trends that emerged in the analysis. These are intentional and unintentional learning; emotional engagement; role playing; creativity; and group learning.

Chapter 8 concludes the thesis with a re-statement of the main research questions, and a brief discussion of possible implications for future practice and research.

2 The pedagogical context: ELT classes at a German university English department *(Sprachpraxis)*

This chapter offers a theoretical and contextual grounding for the research context of ELT in German university English departments. The introduction (chapter 1) provides details of the context specific to the present study, i.e. the University of Tübingen; this chapter will begin with a discussion of the more general context applicable to ELT sections in departments across Germany.

ELT provision at university English departments across Germany (known as *Sprachpraxis*) has long been a component of studying for an English degree in that country[4], and has traditionally been the preserve of native-speaking English teachers on short-term contracts responsible for offering students a supposedly authentic take on contemporary language and knowledge of at least one English-speaking country (see Geiselbrechtinger 2012: 13). This integrational aspect – not simply teaching the English language but teaching field-relevant material through the English language – is a key component of *Sprachpraxis* and one of the crucial problematising elements of the present study (see section 1.3). As Kayman et. al. remind us, there is a "fundamental asymmetry" between the university study of English in English-speaking countries, where the focus is on literature and culture; and outside those countries, where the same subject counts as "a foreign-language, not a domestic, discipline" (2006: 2-3). Immersion in the English language, both inside and outside the ELT classroom, is clearly beneficial to students who have committed to studying the language at university level, many of whom indeed plan on becoming English teachers themselves; and *Sprachpraxis* sections have also often functioned as a junction between academic, content-based classes and the need for more informal, immersive experience of the practical language in order to improve fluency (Erling and Bartlett 2006: 14-15).

This chapter will firstly consider *Sprachpraxis* as a form of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), within the specific field of English Studies. Secondly, given the combination of content and language that is often expected of *Sprachpraxis*, integrated pedagogical theories such as CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) and TBL (Task-Based Learning) will be discussed, with a view towards the drama-based models investigated in Chapter 3. Subsequently, as the present study is concerned with an oral communication class, theories of spoken competence will be looked at in a final section.

4 This provision is mostly catered for within the English departments themselves, but sometimes in intramural language centres (see section 2.2.3)

2.1 English for (Specific) Academic Purposes

2.1.1 EAP and ESAP

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) grew out of a "parent field" (Kostka and Olmstead-Wang 2014: 7), known as English for Specific Purposes (ESP). In the second half of the 20th century, in the aftermath of World War Two, English had grown exponentially as a lingua franca, and quickly established itself as the principal language of trade and business in the rapidly networked world (Charles and Pecorari 2016: 8). This led to the need for a corresponding pedagogical approach, with one of the main aspects of development being the creation, often from scratch, of field-specific instructional texts and materials (ibid.: 8). Despite this attempt at diversifying individual contextual aims of higher education ELT, Hyland and Shaw (2016) identify the persistent misconception of EAP as a "single literacy", the teaching of which counts merely as "a low-status service activity" at universities (Hyland and Shaw 2016: 2). This leads in turn to the increased marginalization of ELT classes and teachers to the fringes of academic departments rather than full to integration within them: a demotion to what Raimes (1991) has coined "the butler's stance" (quoted in Hyland and Shaw 2016: 4). While perhaps overstated, these complaints would seem to be in accordance with reports of language teachers in higher education already alluded to (see section 1.2). Discipline specificity is one of the key aspects of EAP identified by Hyland and Shaw in response to such dim views of the field (ibid.: 2); and this specificity is the basis of another of the main terminological and pedagogical distinctions in EAP: that between EGAP (English for General Academic Purposes) and ESAP (English for Specific Academic Purposes) (Blue 1988). While the former covers skills common to academic study in any field (e.g. note-taking, academic written register etc.), the latter includes field-specific terminology "together with its disciplinary culture" and "appropriate academic conventions" which may differ from subject to subject (Jordan 1997: 5), giving rise to a focus on "the specific language of a single discipline" (Ennis and Prior 2020: 3). In order to best fit the needs of a particular subject area, it became common to conduct a so-called needs analysis to identify the particular pedagogical requirements: in academic contexts, this was divided into a register analysis (involving verb frequencies etc.); discourse analysis (communicative blocks longer than a single sentence); and genre analysis (specific forms of communicative event, e.g. a research paper, see Swales 1981; 1985; 1990) (Jordan 1997: 228-231). These levels of analysis however tend to focus primarily on the production of written material, as the standard form of academic discourse; and this belies a general relative dearth of research on spoken academic discourse in the EAP field (Jordan 1997: 235).

One approach to oral work in EAP has been to focus on project-based formats, in which the tasks involved are conceived as a "realistic vehicle for fully integrated study skills and language practice" (Jordan 1997: 67). Ideally such a project becomes "all-engrossing" (ibid.: 67), and serves as motivation to learn *per se*, especially in response to

the perception that more prescriptive, piecemeal EAP-based study skills instruction has been viewed negatively by some higher education language learners (see Blue 1993, in Jordan 1997: 67). According to a scheme of project types posited by Bloor and St John (1988), the current study would correspond to the categories of group project, where individual contributions combine within an overall research aim; and a literature-based project, where the work is based on field-specific readings (see Jordan 1997: 67). Field specificity is obviously a key element of ESAP, indeed a defining one. In this regard, the current study involves the learning of English not for engineering or medicine, but for English itself, and later the teaching of English and teachers reflecting on their own learning trajectories – the academic field of English Studies. This field is institutionally split into several sub-strands, such as literature and linguistics (see section 4.1.1), with *Sprachpraxis* (Academic English) providing the practical classes being taken by all students, regardless of academic focus (see section 4.1.1). The design of the current study, combining literary, linguistic, and pedagogical elements was therefore intended to cover relevance to all participants in a symbiotic relationship: the language of instruction and pedagogical aim is English; while the content itself is English Studies (literature in English, with various foci dependent on the individual presentations). In this regard, the concept of "loop input" sheds an important light: this influential theory was developed by Tessa Woodward (1986 and 1988), later being distinguished as a significant form of experiential learning (Woodward 2003). "Loop input" is therefore defined openly as a type of experiential learning, with the advantage thereby of being "multi-sensory" (Woodward 2003: 303); it involves the added aspects however of "self-descriptivity and recursion" (ibid.:303), an effect of the inherent "reverberation between process and content" (ibid.: 303). Woodward herself defines content as "what a person is trying to learn" (ibid.: 301) and process as "how a person is trying to learn it" (ibid.: 301): an interestingly student-centred expression of the educative process generally (as opposed to, for example, 'how it is being taught'). "Loop input" crucially requires "an alignment of the process and content of learning" (ibid.: 301), and involves learners taking on roles (e.g. of student and teacher), in order to experience both sides of the learning process, thereby "living the congruence" between process and content, rather than remaining simply passive receivers (or active providers) of knowledge (ibid.: 302). As well as the overtly dramatic role-play aspects of the technique, a post-learning reflection period is regarded as vital to the procedure. The relevance to drama-based teaching is apparent: as well as the function of students stepping into other roles, "loop input" also involves the blurring of the line between process (how things are being taught) and content (what is actually being taught), an almost exact parallel of the key distinction in applied drama between process (the doing of drama) and product (the outcome of creative drama, including, but not exclusively, performance) (see section 3.2.2) . In the present study, the performance approach simultaneously involves linguistic production in order to improve oral language skills; and dealing with literature performatively in order to illuminate content aspects of that literature. In this case, the project can be seen as employing a sort of 'double loop input'.

2.1.2 Integrating language and content

The integration of language and content (in the present study, both literature and drama-in-education techniques as future professional tools) is key to the institutional background of the study (see section 1.3) and indeed a relevant outcome of the data analysis itself (see chapter 7). A number of theoretical considerations are salient here.

The term CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) refers to a framework supportive of multi-lingual educational policy in Europe, and was established in selected secondary schools in some European countries, whereby units of certain subjects within the curriculum were taught through an additional language (Hemmi and Banegas 2021: 1-2). It has been claimed that CLIL does not represent novel methodology in either language or subject pedagogy, but rather that its contribution lies in the "innovative fusion" of elements of both (Coyle et al 2010: 1). According to Tedick (in Bower et al 2020), the key to the success of this fusion, which she terms a "'two-for-one' approach", is an equally committed pedagogical focus on both aspects (content and language), in order to achieve an "authentic purpose" for using the language (ibid. xi-xii), which is aimed at the learning of "meaningful curricular content" (ibid.: xiv). In this regard, CLIL would seem to offer a possible antidote to the problematic nature of curriculum content in *Sprachpraxis* classes at university English departments (see Geiselbrechtinger 2012: 11). Others have conceptualized the balance between content and language slightly differently. Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010) view content as the main pedagogical focus; which then acts as a vehicle for the various language-communicative aspects which inevitably are involved. Four key CLIL elements are identified, which expand on the content-language binary emphasized in earlier definitions. In addition to content (what is being taught) and communication (the language used to express meaning about the content) is added cognition (the ability to reflect on what is learned) and culture (the wider social and pedagogical contexts in which the content and communication are relevant) (Coyle 2006: 9). In later work, Coyle (2007) further distils the nature of communication in a CLIL context. Language for learning is such that allows the student to function effectively in the educational context, while language of learning is such that occurs within the content being studied, is often new to students, and may often be field-specific (such as, for example, literary terms in English in the present study); to these are added language through learning, which closely mirrors the cognition stage referred to above, and represents higher order language that might emerge during a reflection or discussion phase of the lesson/s (Coyle 2007: 551). Coyle et al (2010) emphasize several other fundamental features of CLIL learning which are paramount to drama-based education, and indeed particularly apt for the present study: the importance of learners as co-creators of knowledge and skills; the importance of learners actively interpreting the content material in order to further their own positions on it; the importance of the linguistic interpretation of cognitive processes, as aspect of crucial importance to dramatic performance itself; and finally the importance of interaction in the learning context (Coyle et al 2010: 42). In the context of language

teaching, however, as opposed to the teaching of a separate subject through English (as in the early development of CLIL), the question of content is rather more complex: what can or should constitute appropriate content in a CLIL setting within ELT? Ana Halbach (2022) confronts this issue by first distinguishing the dichotomy between learning-to-communicate approaches to language teaching and communicating-to-learn methods, of which Halbach identifies CLIL as one (see Waters 2015: 141-147). Halbach's criteria for appropriate content in an ELT context are that it is "particular to language teaching" and "naturally integrates a certain degree of focus on form" (Halbach 2022: 3). Against this background, Halbach argues for an emphasis on literacy – not in the narrower sense of ability to read and write, but in the sense of a wider communicative and interactional dimension to using the language (Halbach 2022: 3-4). As regards the planning of lessons, there is much in Halbach's theory that is useful for the present study. Crucially, the literacy approach is based around text-based content, involving different text types and in different modes (e.g. spoken and written) (for the parallels with the present study see section 4.1.2). This allows what Halbach terms "a natural integration of skills work" (2022: 6), where all modes of language communication are combined and integrated through engagement with the textual material. Therefore, practice of individual skills in isolation is eschewed in favour of the skills being "integrated purposefully in a natural way" in order to achieve a "meaningful contextualization of language work" (ibid.: 7) (see chapter 13 for a discussion of the integrated skills effect in the present study). And this in turn would appear to reduce, if not in fact nullify, the need for micro-task and exercise design, in favour of the main communicative tasks involved (in the present case, the performative drama work itself). As Dalton-Puffer (2007) has it:

> In this sense CLIL is the ultimate dream of Communicative Language Teaching (e.g. Brumfit & Johnson 1979) and Task Based Learning (e.g. Willis 1996) rolled into one: there is no need to design individual tasks in order to foster goal-directed linguistic activity with a focus on meaning above form, since CLIL itself is one huge task which ensures the use of the foreign language for 'authentic communication' (3).

Halbach's (2022) emphasis on the interactional benefits of the CLIL methodology to learning has resonances elsewhere. The sociocultural theory of Vygotsky (1978) (see section 3.3.1) underpins CLIL, especially "the notion that learning occurs through collaboration" (Hemmi and Banegas 2021: 2); ideally, a balance is achieved "between the individual and the social learning environment" (Coyle et al 2010: 3). Several other studies have investigated and confirmed the positive impact of CLIL on learner communities, interaction, and collaboration (see Coyle, Holmes and King 2009; Coyle 2013; Coyle 2018; Bower 2019). Urmeneta and Walsh (2017) draw on earlier work on CIC (Classroom Interactional Competence) (Walsh 2011; Walsh 2012; Young 2011) to conceptualize interactional learning in a CLIL setting. CIC refers to learners' (and teachers') ability to interact with each other in an educational context, and the benefits

this can have for learning itself (Walsh 2012: 1). Interaction becomes paramount to the success of the lesson/s; CIC "puts interaction firmly at the centre of teaching and learning", with the aim to "improve learning and opportunities for learning" (ibid.: 1). In clear parallels with drama-based approaches, Walsh stresses the importance in CIC of "involvement, engagement and participation"; learning is "regarded as doing rather than having" (emphasis in original) (ibid.: 1)[5]. It also involves more awareness of and sensitivity towards the position of the interactional partner: as Kramsch (1986) has it, interaction involves "anticipating the listener's response and possible misunderstandings, clarifying one's own and the other's intentions and arriving at the closest possible match between intended, perceived and anticipated meanings" (367). Interactional competence is also regarded as context-specific: ordering something in a café clearly does not require a high level of competence, whereas participation in a multi-speaker conversational situation, regardless of the level of language required, does (Walsh 2012: 3). As such, interactional competence would appear to include not only formal linguistic knowledge and skill (e.g. correct grammar), but also, and in fact often more importantly, paralinguistic features such as facial expression and body language, as well as conversational strategies like turn-taking (see Markee 2008; Young 2008). As well as posing problems of how to assess such interactional work, task choice and design is arguably harder when planning interactional work than work that focuses instead on individual linguistic performance (Walsh 2012: 2). In this vein, dramatic texts, and other literary texts used dramatically, constitute a form of ready-made material, given that the very nature of dramatic text is interactional already. And rather than focusing on language fluency (as in individual performance tasks), interactional work can be viewed in terms of what McCarthy (2005) has coined as "confluence" (26). Here communicative effectiveness is judged on the basis of the interactions themselves, rather than the individual contributions: arguably a more naturally correlative reflection of true communication, which is very much a team effort. It also emphasizes the importance of listening, of "speakers attend[ing] to each other's contributions" (Walsh 2012: 3), a point that has its parallel in the value of students watching each other's dramatic work, itself a valuable language learning aspect (see chapter 7). A final aspect of CLIL methodology that is fruitful for the present study is the notion of the physical space in which learning takes place. In CLIL terms, this amounts to a safe space in which free, open communication can take place between participants, freeing them from the usual fears of making mistakes, being wrong, or feeling inadequate. This has clear parallels in the work of the drama rehearsal room, in which a safe, secure environment of mutual respect is vital to encourage the creative freedom necessary for productive work to take place. In the context of the present study, both the CLIL (language learning) and drama (creative exploration) contexts are engaged. Brown and Levinson (1987) identify "freedom of action and freedom from imposition" (61) as a kind of double, almost paradox-

5 For a discussion of drama-as-doing in the classroom, see section 3.2.2

ical requirement of the successful classroom: the freedom needed to experiment, make mistakes, and thus push learning boundaries, but at the same time the protection from the judgement or scorn of others. In a classroom, as indeed in the rehearsal room, this amounts to "everyone's face depend[ing] on everyone else's being maintained" (Brown and Levinson 1987: 61). In this, of course, the teacher's importance in co-creating and maintaining such a safe space is paramount (see section 3.1 for a discussion of the Joker in the educational work of Augusto Boal).

From an ESAP perspective (see section 2.1.1), the purposes of the *Sprachpraxis* classes at Tübingen are to teach language skills relevant to the field of English studies, a field which covers literature, cultural studies, linguistics and field-relevant education studies (see section 4.1.1 for a discussion of the specific institutional context). And from the CLIL perspective discussed above, literature in English, and professional skills for the teaching of English, constitute important field-relevant content in the present study, representing study-relevant and career-relevant thematic content taught through the medium of English itself. As previously discussed, dramatic texts have a long history of use in the classroom as performative pretexts for spoken communication, whether within a specific ELT context or not (see section 3.2.2). But other text genres have also been extensively utilized as material in the language classroom. Section 3.3.3 deals extensively with this aspect.

2.2 Practical English language skills in higher education in Germany

As detailed further in sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2, the Academic English curriculum at Tübngen is divided into written communication, oral communication and translation seminars, all offered at level 1 and level 2. The first level speaking class ('Oral Communication I') is normally taken by students in the second semester, after having taken the introductory class (Language and Use) in the first semester. 'Oral Communication II' classes, within which the present study was based, are typically taken later in the study programme. The average semester level among the class was 6.5 (see section 4.1.2 for more details). The 'Oral Communication II' classes are generally focused around "academic debates, discussions and presentations", with the overall goal being the improvement of "proficiency, accuracy and vocabulary in [spoken] English"[6]. However, in practice teachers have a wide scope within these guidelines in terms of materials and content focus, including material from English language media, literature and film; and in terms of class format (debates, group discussions, task-based work etc.). The intention is to give students as wide a range of choices as possible, while still staying true to the over-

6 https://uni-tuebingen.de/fakultaeten/philosophische-fakultaet/fachbereiche/neuphilologie/englisches-seminar/sections/academic-english/courses/ (last accessed 05/09/2022)

all aims of the class. Since the overall aim of the oral communication classes is (oral) communication skills, to be utilized both in the study context and outside it, the foundations underpinning the pedagogical setting should be considered.

2.2.1 Communication, competence and performance

Noam Chomsky (1965) famously made the distinction between linguistic competence (knowledge of grammar, syntactical structures etc.) and performance, meaning the application of the knowledge of a language in real-life communicative situations. In reaction to this distinction, Dell Hymes (1966; 1972) developed his concept of communicative competence, which allowed not only for knowledge of the structure of a language, and ability to produce meaningful utterances, but also considered social competences such as awareness "as to when to speak, when not and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner" (Hymes 1972: 277). This social dimension was categorized further under possibility, feasibility, appropriateness, and whether anything is actually achieved (ibid.: 284-286). To this social aspect was added, of obvious importance for the present study, an interactional competence, whereby speakers possess the ability "to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events and to evaluate their accomplishment by others" (Hymes 1972: 277). Here we have language as a "repertoire" of "acts", in the sense of known phrases and structures, to be performed in open communication situations, which are conceptualized as "events". Elsewhere Hymes explicitly acknowledges the interactional, and collaborative, nature of such events: "A [speech] performance, as an event, may have properties (patterns and dynamics) not reducible to terms of individual or standardized competence. Sometimes, indeed, these properties are the point (a concert, play, party)" (Hymes 1972: 283). It is noteworthy that the three latter examples consist of cultural performances as well as a social interactional setting. Hymes terms the combination of cultural forms such as drama and dance with everyday speech performance "the ethnography of symbolic forms", competence in any of which can be seen as extendable to the others in a system of "general interactional competence" (1972: 284). For Hymes, then, speech acts are performative, performance (e.g. dance and drama) is communicative, and all such forms are to be understood within the same conceptual framework. Crucially also, this account involves speakers' attention to, and even evaluation of, the speech performance of others: these are all elements of vital importance to drama-based teaching. The performative, indeed, is further highly suggested by Hymes (1972), when he paraphrases Erving Goffman's (1967) allusions to aspects of linguistic competence: "capacities in interaction such as courage, gameness, gallantry, composure, presence of mind, dignity, stage confidence […]" (Hymes 1972: 283). From a sociological background, Goffman (1956) developed a system of communication analysis based on an extended metaphorical comparison of human social interaction as theatre. This analysis, in which humans were said to be taking on various roles, both personal (e.g. parent, child, sibling etc.)

and professional (e.g. doctor, teacher, religious minister etc), became known as social dramaturgy (Goffman 1956: Chapters 2 and 4). Goffman's analysis owed a significant debt to the earlier work of literary and communications theorist Kenneth Burke, and in particular his concept of "dramatism" (Burke 1969: xv). Similar to the work of Goffman, Burke's gave an account of the world as theatre, and of human interactions as essentially dramatic. Together with other influential scholars in sociology and anthropology (see for example Geertz 1973; Turner 1986) his work was part of the so-called performative turn, which impacted the social sciences and humanities from the second half of the 20th century, and gave rise to a new disciplinary area known as performance studies (see Schechner 2002). In linguistics, this movement was taken forward in the work of John Austin (1962) on performative language: aptly, while his work focused on everyday language, in both spontaneous and more formalized settings, the performative concepts he proposed were taken up in actor training theory, and applied to language in a truly performative setting (see discussion in section 3.3.1). John Searle (1969) developed the concept further, resisting the Saussurian distinction between langue (the formal system of a language) and parole (how a language is actually used in communication) (see Saussure 1916). Searle maintained that the study of the performative nature of communication was not at odds with the study of the formal system of any given language itself, claiming that "an adequate study of speech acts is a study of langue" (Searle 1969: 17). Despite any given formal restrictions within a language, Searle argued that "whatever can be meant can be said" (ibid.: 17), in the sense that a speaker can expand over and above what certain words might mean to make her meaning clear (improvise), and by extension that "the study of the meanings of sentences and the study of speech acts are not two independent studies but one study from two different points of view" (ibid.: 18). The point of view represented by the performative turn, indeed, was to have far-reaching consequences for language teaching.

2.2.2 Communicative Language Teaching

Canale and Swain (1980) further developed the concept of communicative competence, as outlined by Hymes (1972). This was to have significant impact on the field of ELT. Canale and Swain split their concept into three subdivisions: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence (1980: 28-31). Grammatical competence is understood to cover the speaker's knowledge of the structures and rules of the language, and their ability to put them into practice (a combination of langue and parole similar to Searle 1969); sociolinguistic competence is further split into "sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse" (Canale and Swain 1980: 28), which cover the appropriateness of language structures and forms of communication within given social circumstances; strategic competence deals with strategies employed by speakers to negotiate communication breakdowns, both social and grammatical (ibid.: 28-31). Previous to the 1970's, language teaching had centred around situational methods,

which focused on "practicing basic structures in meaningful situation-based activities" (Richards and Rodgers 2014: 83). The aim was to present new material in carefully controlled situational contexts, as a means of both controlling accuracy and ensuring a contextual authenticity to the language production "in situations in which the meaning is quite clear" (Pittman 1963: 156). While the aim of such pedagogy was well-intended enough, critics bemoaned the artificiality of the methodology, complaining that "controlled practice does not prepare [students] adequately for freer production" (Richards and Rodgers 2014: 54). With the dawning of the 1970's, "dissatisfaction with structuralism and the situational methods of the 1960's" (Nunan 1988: 24) led to a massive paradigm shift. Leading on from the philosophical work of Hymes, Austin, Searle among others, discussed above, scholars of language began to become intensely interested in what these developments might mean for ELT (see for example Candlin 1976; Halliday 1973; 1975; Widdowson 1972; 1978; 1979; 1990; Wilkins 1972; 1976). The emphasis turned gradually away from the primacy of grammatical correctness in the classroom, and towards the development of students' abilities to actually get on with the language in contexts outside the classroom: to "develop the ability to use language to get things done", according to Nunan (1988: 25), or to "do things with language", according to Widdowson (1990: 159), in obvious references to the 'doing things with words' concept developed by Austin (1962). Richards (2006) distinguishes two phases of the subsequent development of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (see Legutke and Thomas 1991): "classic" (1970's to 1990's) and "current" (post 1990's) (Richards 2006: 8). The first phase involved a thorough consideration of how, why and for what purpose/s students were attempting to learn the language, including professional purposes; social setting and role within the setting; specific communicative forms and events and associated language functions; subject matter likely to be met; varieties of English likely to be met; and finally the grammatical and lexical knowledge required (van Ek and Alexander 1980). The four skills were to be taught, but wherever possible as "integrated skills" (Richards 2006: 11), again to best mirror the fact that often skills appear in combinations outside the classroom rather than in isolation. Given the ongoing dominance of CLT within ELT, current approaches are necessarily diverse, based on several traditions and paradigms, and lacking a singular, authoritative definition; Richards instead argues for "a set of generally agreed upon principles" based on "core assumptions" (2006: 22). Key aspects of these assumptions are social: language learning is a "holistic process" involving "interaction and meaningful communication" and "creative use of language, and trial and error" (ibid.: 22). The classroom becomes a "community [of] collaboration" in which the teacher becomes a "facilitator" (ibid.: 23). Emphasis is placed on students' individual identities as learners and producers of language, with varying needs, motivations, and learning rates, as well as the need for "language analysis and reflection" on the process (ibid.: 23). These fundamental assumptions are identical to those found in the principles of drama-based teaching discussed in section 3.2.1.

Howatt (1984) proposed the existence of a 'weak' and a 'strong' version of CLT (279). Under the weak version, which he claimed had become "more or less standard practice" at the time of his writing (1984: 279), was a methodology whereby communicative exercises would be integrated into the curriculum alongside more traditional structural and grammatical exercises, where such communicative exercises would "relate to the purposes of the course as specified in the syllabus" (Howatt 1894: 279). The strong version sets communicative exercises at centre stage, based on the underlying assumption that communication should be both the aim and the vehicle of language teaching. In this version, therefore, the pedagogical process "is not merely a question of activating an existing but inert knowledge of the language, but of stimulating the development of the language system itself" (Howatt 1984: 279). Since Howatt was writing, the strong version he proposes, with its prioritizing of the act of communication itself, has become dominant, and the principles he describes are clearly noticeable in the fundamental assumptions laid out by Richards (2006), discussed above.

Of particular relevance to the present study, of course, is to what extent these developments in CLT had an impact on classroom practices and methods used. The influence was significant and continues to be felt today. Thornbury (2016) cites Harmer's (1982) proposals that CLT activities should ideally trigger students' desire to communicate, within a specific communicative purpose; be focused on content rather than form; involve a natural variety of linguistic forms, as opposed to the rather prescriptive methods of the situational approaches of the pre-1970's; and, crucially, the non-intervention (as far as possible) of the teacher (Thornbury 2016: 229). By extension, according to Thornbury, "role plays and simulations became standard practice" (emphasis in original) (ibid.: 229-230). This play-like aspect of CLT, a fundamental pillar of drama-based teaching, has been significantly explored (see Klippel 1980a; 1982; 1984; 1998). More generally, the emphasis on free, improvised communication and minimal teacher intervention in communication has been emphasized by several scholars (see Stevick 1976; Littlewood 1981; Dörnyei 2009). Since its inception however, some criticism of CLT has questioned the very practicability of authentic communicative interaction in the classroom (see Brumfit 1984; Leung 2005); others have questioned the pedagogical connection between communicative practice in a CLT context and grammatical improvement (see Harley and Swain 1984; Porter 1986; Higgs and Clifford 1982). In response to this, scholars have begun to re-frame the classroom as not being an artificially constructed version of real life, but rather as an authentic space for practicing real-life communication. In this regard, drama, both as direct method and as metaphor, comes once again to the fore. The classroom, in the view of Graves (2016) "becomes a rehearsal space – to rehearse types of language use in the classroom that could later be 'performed' outside the classroom" (84).

2.2.3 Oral communication skills in higher education ELT

Practical language teaching provision in higher education is underpinned by the long-established status of English as the international language of research and scientific exchange, itself an effect of what has been termed English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). This concept of international English has been motivated by the "considerable demographic shift" by which non-native speakers using the language to communicate, often with native speakers of languages other than their own, outnumber native English speakers (Cogo and Dewey 2006: 59). Research was focused at the beginning of the 21st century on defining and outlining the concept of ELF (see Seidlhofer 2001). An obvious challenge that subsequently emerged was the issue of standardization, given that by its very nature, ELF is a form of the language whose interlocutors speak a variety of local 'Englishes' with different lexical, phonetic and even grammatical features (Crystal 2011: 70-71). To this end, further explorations considered whether, and to what extent, ELF could or should be defined lexically, phonetically and grammatically (see House 1999; Jenkins 2000, 2005; Seidlhofer 2004). As such, research in ELF centred around the concept of English as a medium of communication between non-native speakers for various purposes – crucially in business and other professional contexts, including academic research (Gundermann 2014: 2-4). Inevitably, questions regarding the teaching and dissemination of ELF were raised, leading to the cognate field of EMI: English as a Medium of Instruction. EMI has been defined as "the use of English to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English" (Macaro 2018: 37). With the growth of ELF in scientific and research contexts, the parallel expansion of EMI, especially in Europe, is an inevitability (Gundermann 2014: 2-3). In Germany, the EU country with the highest population, EMI in higher education has expanded significantly, concentrated mostly at Masters level and particularly in the fields of engineering, economics, and natural sciences (Gundermann 2014: 6). The closely intertwined relationship between German research culture and economic dominance, particularly in the fields mentioned, has presumeably been a driving force in the increased use of international English, as well as the attractiveness of Germany as a study destination for many foreign students. In such cases, EMI classes are mostly delivered by regular teaching staff, regardless of L1 background, in the relevant departments. Given the huge diversity of student bodies, also in terms of English language level, many universities with an EMI provision also provide ELT support in order to improve competence levels among the student body. In Germany, this normally happens in dedicated intramural language centres, where the teaching staff, in contrast to the non-native instructors using EMI in individual departments, are in fact usually native speakers of English, sometimes even to the point of bias (Gundermann 2014: 48).

To return to the quote by Macaro above, however: EMI is regarded as a teaching medium for subjects other than English itself, where communicative effectiveness in the subject-specific discourse and an acceptable level of fluency are the goals, rather

than sophisticated knowledge of English as a language. When we turn to the study of English as a subject, however, the picture is inevitably different. In this context we have EMI with the important addition of English as a subject of study – including the English language, literature in English, and the cultures and histories of English-speaking countries and regions. It is this combination of content and medium that forms the background of the present study (see sections 1.1 and 1.3). Practical English classes have traditionally been given within English departments in Germany by *Sprachlektoren*, or language lecturers. These posts have been, and continue to be, largely filled by native speakers (see Geiselbrechtinger 2012: 7) whose role is "to teach 'authentic' grammatically and idiomatically correct written and spoken NS English in grammar and translation courses" as well as "imparting 'authentic' cultural knowledge from the Anglophone world" (Geiselbrechtinger 2012: 8). Geiselbrechtinger also alludes to the former justification of short-term contracts for native speaking language lecturers based on the intention to represent recently authentic linguistic and cultural knowledge (ibid). As he questions the assumptions upon which such justification lies, Geiselbrechtinger also queries how *Sprachpraxis* provision could distinguish itself from the more generic, multi-disciplinary ELF instruction that happens at intramural university language centres, for example. But his solutions focus inevitably on both academic writing conventions as well as cultural content – oral communication is typically omitted (2012: 10-13) (see section 2.1.1).

This can be seen within the boundaries of a more general situation: as Basturkmen and Wette (2016) have it, "speaking and oral interaction skills tend to be less emphasized than written literacies in EAP instruction" (167). Erling (2004) also discusses *Sprachpraxis* provision, at the Freie Universität in Berlin, where all practical language classes, irrelevant of degree focus, and including students of the English Department, take place in a dedicated language centre, external to and separate from the academic departments themselves (86). As part of their degree programme, majors in English are required to take a course entitled "Oral Production Practice" alongside classes in translation and academic writing (Erling 2004: 87). Students who take classes in English as a minor (with a major in business, for example), have separate language classes, including the oral production class, with a specialized focus on the content of their main subject (ibid.: 87). This is in contrast to the situation at Tübingen, and indeed many other German university English departments, where Academic English classes are composed of mixed degree majors (see section 4.2). Such instruction as there is in EAP oral communication focuses more on formal academic discourse situations such as tutorials, conferences and workshops, with their attendant communicative functions such as raising points, debating, and asking for clarification (Basturkmen and Wette 2016: 167). The more widely communicative aims of the oral communication classes at Tübingen (see section 2.2 above) would appear to demand a more inclusive approach to oral proficiency however, especially given the rather academically diverse nature of the students in the classes, one of the main problematizing aspects of the present study (see section 4.2).

Jordan (1997: Ch 13) confirms the emphasis on specific forms (e.g. asking questions) in EAP oral instruction (193), confirming a "shortage of data" (ibid.: 193), and excludes student-student discussion in his own study, citing the problem of the likely informality of the language level and the various communicative situations encountered (ibid.: 193). However, since in-class discussion is ideally focussed on the material relevant to the class, it seems to be an important language sample to be investigated. This would appear to have been pertinent for a longer time, as elsewhere in his study Jordan cites previous research (Jordan and Mackay 1973) which suggested that the two biggest language problems for students visiting the UK to study were understanding and expressing themselves in spoken English. This was reported as being due to a lack of practice of spoken English at their home universities (Jordan 1997: 45), with 56% reporting dissatisfaction with not having sufficient contact at home with native speakers of English (ibid.: 45). These trends have been supported by several similar and subsequent studies (see Johns 1981; Zughoul and Hussein 1985; Christison and Krahnke 1986; Blue 1991). Johns and Johns (1977) conducted a questionnaire on spoken English in EAP which elicited many of the specific issues that emerged in the present study, for example general shyness, fear of error, and fear of being heard publicly. To this end, the emphasis on communicative effectiveness espoused in the principles of CLT have indeed been reiterated in EAP contexts. Philips (1981) underlines the importance of meaningful, field-specific content, natural and spontaneous spoken language production and "tolerance of error" (in Jordan 1997: 109). Collaborative learning, acceptance of mistakes and active student participation are also cited by Morrow (1981) as of utmost importance. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) add the significance of allowing time to prepare tasks, and students' enjoyment of the exercises. Littlewood (1981) and Johnson (1982) argue for the use of task-oriented teaching in ELT contexts in which communication is the goal. Jordan (1997) makes the distinction between role-play, in which students play roles other than themselves in a task-based exercise; and simulations, in which the students put themselves in an otherwise real-life situation simulated in class (115). Clearly drama exercises belong to the former category. Much has also been written about the desirability of using 'authentic' materials for communicative exercises in class. Although a theoretical discussion of authenticity lies outside the parameters of the present study, several studies have explored this in detail: see for example McDonough (1984); Clarke (1989); Kramsch (1993); and, more recently, Will (2018). Shumin (2002) touches on the difficulty that adult learners have "to speak the target language fluently and appropriately", also citing the importance of paralinguistic features to successful oral interaction (204). Factors identified as particularly appropriate to oral communication practice among adult learners include the importance of listening; sociocultural and nonverbal communication; and affective factors such as "emotions, self-esteem, empathy, anxiety, attitude, and motivation" (Shumin 2002: 206). This would appear to support the use of drama in ELT for specifically adult leaners.

Ultimately, the term *Sprachpraxis* carries the key to this issue. Writing about language skills, Jonathan Newton argues that "skills are not innate; they are learned through practice (Proctor and Dutta 1995), typically in the form of focused rehearsal of the sub-skills which make up skilled performance" (Newton 2016: 429). Especially in the context of oral communication skills in EAP contexts, drama-based methods would appear to mirror these requirements very closely. Newton argues that while curriculum content is mostly pre-planned and established in ELT classes, opportunities for practice are often lacking, citing restricted instruction time and simple overlooking of the need for practice to develop fluency (Newton 2016: 434). Despite this, practice, "an often overlooked component of teaching" in Newton's view, is vital: "to develop fluency requires extensive and often repetitive practice" (ibid.: 434). Interaction, a vital component of dramatic communication, has also been identified as crucial in an ELT context (see Mackey in DeKeyser 2010). However, measuring opportunities for developing spoken fluency is harder to achieve. Nation and Newton (2009) describe three conditions under which fluency should ideally be worked towards: that students use meaningful, message-oriented language; that they are using language within their active stock of knowledge; and that they are encouraged and helped to use language at a higher level, for example through the allocation of preparation time (Newton 2016: 434). The organisation of the drama lessons in the present study do in fact adhere to these conditions, and took place in a supportive, creative environment (see section 4.1.2).

3 Drama in university-level English Language Teaching (EAP)

This chapter sets the theoretical and historical foundations in drama and drama-based teaching methods against which the research was conducted. Firstly an exploration of the terms drama and applied drama will be offered (3.1). This is felt to be important, as the instrumental, functional aspects of applied drama crucial to its incarnation in educational drama are not necessarily separable from the roots of drama generally. This has implications for the performative nature of drama used in educational contexts, especially in the context of the present study with its use of literary texts. Next, drama in educational settings will be introduced, from its early iterations in school contexts through to the present-day, and the higher-education settings of relevance to the present study (3.2). Finally, drama methods specific to English Language Teaching will be presented, focusing further on university level contexts, as well as drama used for the teaching of literature and in teacher training contexts (3.3). Although both drama for language teaching and drama applied to higher educational contexts are still relatively underresearched, recent developments in both fields have yielded important ideas for the present study.

3.1 Setting the scene: drama and applied drama

Although the term 'applied drama' only took hold in the last decade or so of the 20th century (see Nicholson 2014: 3), its roots are much older, and arguably as old as drama itself. From obscure, and necessarily unknown ultimate origins, the western dramatic tradition is typically grounded in ancient Greece, where dramatic events were embedded in the great Athenian religious festivals (see Nicoll 1976). Religious theatre was to continue in its own separate tradition, being applied for example in medieval Europe as useful church propaganda for a largely illiterate population (see for example Balme 2008: 183). Religious drama indeed fulfilled one of the foremost requirements of present-day applied drama: drama intended to achieve a certain instrumental aim (separate from pure entertainment) (see Prendergast and Saxton 2013; Nicholson 2014). The roots of the modern term 'applied drama' however are determinedly 20th century, and fixed in the "energetically reconfigured" (Nicholson 2014: 11) relationship between theatre and politics in that century. Such a relationship had perhaps always existed, but political trends in the 20th century forged links between the doing of theatre and drama and the enactment of political change: where before political theatre had been expositional, applied drama offered a tool to "rally political activism" (ibid.).

Arguably though, the modern distinction between applied and non-applied (performance-based) drama is based on a false dichotomy. In ancient Greece, participation in and experience of drama was seen as beneficial to the (mental) health of both

performers and spectators – evidence of this belief is found in the Aristotelean concept of catharsis as well as in contemporary medical tracts (Balme 2008: 183). It is also important to acknowledge that this period included early traces of 'drama in education' (see 3.2 below), evidenced in Platonic references to playfulness/play in education (cf. Coggin 1956: 6-16). The inclusion of dramatic elements in education, mostly in the form of the recital or performance of classic texts, continued, added to by a religious element as we reach the medieval period. Educational use of drama in the Jesuit order, for example, may count as pedagogically applied theatre (Balme 2008: 183), while the large-scale deployment of theatre as a medium of religious communication to a mostly illiterate community was extensively evidenced throughout Europe in the days before mass media (see Bullough 1974: 97-122; Nicoll 1976). Indeed, one might identify the medieval mystery plays (together with their close dramatic cognates, the morality and miracle plays), performed as part of 'holy day' piety, as the direct forerunners of theatre-as-entertainment, connected with the gradual semantic and pragmatic change of 'holy day' to 'holiday'. Thus religious dramas combined the pedagogical, morally instructive elements of ancient classical drama with an emerging entertainment effect – an effect that was to reach its full fruition in the early modern period, particularly in 16th century London, and the emergence of the theatre as a burgeoning industry. Here, with the work of William Shakespeare and his contemporaries, we see the start of theatre as a mass entertainment; the rise of the star performer; the making of financial fortunes; and the establishment of acting as a professional pursuit (see Bentley 1984). Arguably, it is to this establishment of the professional theatre industry, and the natural distinction established therewith between the performers and audiences of theatre, that the dichotomy between applied and non-applied drama, alluded to above, can be effectively traced.

Modern definitions of applied drama are diverse and various: a more tightly defined description might be drama done for specific social, educational or health benefits; while more inclusively, applied drama might be taken to include any form of drama with the exception of professional performance. By this more general definition, even amateur drama would be included as applied drama, due to the social, mental, and even physical benefits of playing theatre.

Prendergast and Saxton (2013) refer to the model of Nancy King (1981) iterating applied drama as a form practised for the benefit of the participants themselves. King identifies four modes of presentation: private, semi-private, semi-public, and public, ranging from individual role-play work all the way to a full public performance (King 1981). Crucially, though, the presence of an audience, vital for 'non-applied', performance drama, is not a deciding factor for applied drama work. Prendergast and Saxton (2013) extend this concept to drama done "for a variety of purposes that would be inhibited by the presence of an audience" (Prendergast and Saxton 2013: 1); applied drama, they argue, "is not concerned with making meaning for someone who is outside [the] process (as in a public audience)", an approach which avoids the "pressure

of performance" (ibid.). Further aspects of their definition include drama work done for "exploring issues" of relevance to the participants in a "facilitated process" (see role of teacher in section 3.1.1 below) (ibid.). The facilitator is expected to bring her own expertise in the field to bear on this process, while no such experience is expected of the participants – another key difference when compared with performative drama, where performer skills are indeed highly desired. Finally they point to work done "by and through the senses" (Prendergast and Saxton 2013: 2), highlighting a natural alliance between applied drama and certain theories of education (see section 3.1.1).

Helen Nicholson (2014) concurs with the participant-centred conceptualization above in her definition of applied drama as "specifically intended to benefit individuals, communities and societies" (3). Nicholson claims that the term 'applied drama' developed "haphazardly" out of practices that had been happening for a long time already; and that the term represents more a "renewed interest in the professionalisation" of the work (Nicholson 2014: 3-4). This again supports the notion that what we now understand as 'applied drama' has in fact been happening, albeit 'haphazardly', for years, decades, and indeed centuries before its coinage as a term. Nicholson also identifies "intentionality" as a further characteristic of applied work, citing Ackroyd's (2000) early conceptualization of applied drama as a more general category under which several fields of application fall (Nicholson 2014: 4; see also Balme 2008: 182). Ackroyd herself identifies as crucial to the work "a belief in the power of the theatre form to address something beyond the form itself" (Ackroyd 2000). Among these various applied fields, drama-in-education (see next section) may be identified as an area in which drama techniques are used for a specific intended aim (educational), and for the primary benefit of those participating in it (the pupils/students).

One of the foremost figures in the link between the early social and political engagement of applied drama, and its sub-type of drama-in-education (to be dealt with in section 3.2), must surely be Augusto Boal. Boal began as a theatre director in Brazil in the 1950's, and his work took increasingly political and social directions as a response to the situation in his home country. Under the influence of pedagogue Paolo Freire, he developed his ideas of theatre and drama as potentially socially liberating, and politically awareness-raising, culminating in his major theoretical work *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1979) (a title consciously reflective of Freire's own *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968)). Heavily influenced by Marxist theory, Boal's reading of the history of drama emphasizes the "oppression" (Boal 1979: 119) practiced through the audience/spectator dichotomy from ancient times: those in power controlling the practice of drama by rigidly maintaining the passivity of the audience while preserving the active participation of the actors (ibid.). His interest in breaking down this forced dichotomy stemmed from his socio-political commitment, but became a key feature of the development of applied drama generally, whatever the end goal. "Yes, this is without a doubt the conclusion", declared Boal: "'Spectator' is a bad word! The spectator is less than a man, and it is necessary to humanize him, to restore him his capacity of action in all its fullness" (Boal

1979: 154-155). Within what he described as a "poetics of the oppressed", Boal set out one of his key intentions: "to change the people – 'spectators', passive beings in the theatrical phenomenon – into subjects, into actors, transformers of the dramatic action" (Boal 1979: 122). Boal's creation of the "spect-actor" (Boal 1992: 274) – a portmanteau of spectator and actor – informed much of his later work: an active dramatic subject who, while not a professional actor, "changes the dramatic action, tries out solutions, discusses plans for change – in short, trains himself for real action" (Boal 1979: 122).

While bearing in mind the determinedly political heritage of Boal's oeuvre (he announced the aim of this active form of audience participation as "rehearsal for the revolution" (Boal 1979: 122)), the inherent concepts of inclusivity, activeness and participant agency were quickly taken up for other (applied dramatic) aims. Typical of Boal's aim of citizen empowerment, he followed up on *Theatre of the Oppressed,* as a largely theoretical work, with *Games for Actors and Non-Actors:* essentially a do-it-yourself handbook guide to his techniques and exercises (Boal 1992). As the name suggests, the book presupposes little to no previous experience of drama or theatre, and begins with exercises intended to engage the senses of the participants (touch, hearing, sight, sense memory). In this, the importance of physicality to applied drama work is underlined, in keeping with (other) forms of experiential learning. The exercises are playful rather than prescriptive, and Boal created imaginative names for each game, often emphasizing his commitment to internationalism, e.g. The wooden sword of Paris (Boal 1992: 81); Three Irish duels (Boal 1992: 82); Carnival in Rio (Boal 1992: 104). What follows is a detailed guide to his main dramatic forms: image theatre, forum theatre, and invisible theatre.

Image theatre, as the name suggests, is a category of forms that do not use spoken or written language, but rather the actors' bodies, and physical props, to establish images. The images can be still or moving, depending on the exercise, and often involve several stages (for example a situation of oppression followed by its resolution). Participants work together in groups and can even alter other groups' images by 'sculpting' the actors. In all this work, participants are encouraged to avoid spoken communication – the aim is to stimulate the communicative power of physical representation, regardless of linguistic barriers or competence levels (Boal 1992: 174-217).

Forum theatre is a dramatic form which is more recognizably 'theatrical', in that it involves a set of actors (in Boal's case spectactors) who play out a scene in front of an audience (who are also spectactors). Typically, the scene presents a situation of oppression, in some examples a situation from the real-life experience of one of the participants. The scene is played out, but the spectactors in the audience can stop the action when they wish, calling out instructions for the continuing action; calling for the action to be played again, but differently; coming into the scene themselves to take part and enact a possible solution; or replacing one of the existing (spect)actors, and enacting their own potential solution to the conflict being played. In all cases the aim is to overcome the oppression of the situation (Boal 1992: 241-276).

Finally, invisible theatre formalizes Boal's early street theatre experiments in Brazil, by categorizing all forms of theatre that happen without the public's knowledge. In this case there are no 'spectactors' – scenes are planned in advance and to an extent pre-rehearsed (although actors improvise according to spontaneous conditions and reactions), and present another situation of oppression (e.g. sexual harassment on public transport (Boal 1992: 277)). The aim of the presentation is to gauge and ideally stimulate public reaction – does anyone step in and come to the aid of the 'victim'? Whatever the outcome, an important final stage of this work is the debriefing in which the actors announce to the public what has just happened, and what issues the group were aiming to draw attention to. The aim of invisible theatre is thus not to involve the public in playing the scene, but to encourage self-reflection on their (non) action in the crisis situation played out, ideally leading them to take a more helpful approach in potential real-life situations of oppression they may subsequently encounter (Boal 1992: 277-288).

The potential in Boal's work, particularly the forms of image theatre and forum theatre outlined above, to drama for educational purposes, is obvious, and was taken up almost immediately once Boal became known outside his native Brazil. The collective, collaborative, and democratic nature of the work, alongside its impermanence (e.g. the fluid, alterable aspects of forum theatre) rendered it perfect for many learning and teaching environments, and many subsequent educational forms of drama are overtly indebted to Boal's influence. Even the role of the teacher in classroom drama work owes much to the Boalian drama facilitator, a role Boal named "the Joker" (Boal 1992: 261). In Games for Actors and Non-Actors (Boal 1992) he identifies four rules of conduct for the Joker, which emphasize background facilitation of the work, while guarding against over-interference. The Joker, he declared, "must avoid all actions which could manipulate or influence […] they must not draw conclusions to debate, stating them in an interrogative rather than an affirmative form […] [they] must constantly be relaying doubts back to the audience so that it is they who make the decisions" (Boal 1992: 261). The Joker is thus instrumental in setting the framework for the exercise, but must refrain from prescriptive solutions to the problems presented, instead eliciting and guiding the participants in their own creative process. The overlap here with the aims of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), as well as the desired conduct of the language teacher, especially in the higher education context of the present study, where existing language competence is already advanced, is highly apparent (see further discussion in section 2.2.2).

3.2 Drama (and Theatre) in Education (DiE and TiE)

3.2.1 Theoretical foundations of DiE

Drama used for educational purposes is by no means a new practice, although the modern named concepts, with their attendant theorizing, can be traced back to the 20th century. As exemplified in section 3.1, techniques now identified as 'dramatic' were used for instructional (educational) purposes in the ancient world, although probably not recognized as such; rather being part of the arguably more inclusive idea of drama held in ancient Greece, which included elements we now categorize as 'therapeutic', 'educational', and so on. It could even be maintained that some form of 'dramatic learning' counts as a universal human phenomenon. Donald E. Brown, in his major work *Human Universals* (Brown 1991), identified several behaviours claimed as universal to all known human communities that would naturally contribute to some of those activities now identified under the concept of drama-based (language) learning: cooperation; narrative (in the sense of story); play; play to perfect skills; poetry/rhetoric; pretend play; and self as subject and object (Brown 1991). All of these elements are involved in the construction of embodied fictional representation, and its employment for exploration and learning new skills, such as a language.

In modern terms, educational drama is epistemologically rooted in the main tenet of empiricism: the belief that sense experience lies at the root of human knowledge. Although the importance of experience in knowledge development was recognized as early as Aristotle, it is in the 17th century that these ideas began to be more fully and systematically explored, particularly in Britain, and particularly in response to developments in rationalist epistemology in continental Europe. John Locke proposed his image of the mind as *tabula rasa* in 1690 in his work *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Experience, he claimed, was to be regarded as the root of all knowledge, and could be further divided into two sub-operations which he coined "sensation" (i.e. the actual sensory data received of the external world) and "reflection" (knowledge gained of abstract concepts through internal mental processing) (Locke 1690 in Cottingham 1996: 30-31). Although the latter may sound very similar to the rationalist concepts of innate knowledge he was attempting to refute, Locke attempted to avert the charge by claiming that the reflection undertaken was nevertheless still built on experience, and was thus a kind of "internal sense" (ibid.). These ideas were developed and famously synthesized by Immanuel Kant almost a century later; and the cooperation (and conflict) between rationalism and empiricism continues to feature even in the contemporary philosophical conversation (Kant 1781 in Cottingham 1996: 40-43). It is perhaps worth noting however that the two functions of Lockean empiricism – physical sensation and internal mental reflection, both built on actual experience – underpin much, if not all, drama-based educational work.

The primacy of experience in knowledge foundation was further developed under the modern philosophy of pragmatism in the 19th, and into the 20th, centuries[7]. Modern philosophical pragmatism was principally driven by Charles Sanders Peirce in the closing decades of the 19th century, and involved a closing of the mind-body gap propagated by rationalism; thus "having an idea, or knowing something, has results in the real world that are not actually distinct from what is apparently merely mental" (Crookes 2009: 81). Ozmon and Craver (1999) cite the example of William James as a key developer of Peirce's ideas, emphasizing James' views on the subjectivity of meaning making and truth as "not an absolute and immutable [but] made of actual, real-life events. […] it is found in acting on ideas, in the consequences of ideas […] in concrete individuality" (Ozmon and Craver 1999 quoted in Crookes 2009: 81).

American educationalist and philosopher John Dewey was to play a profound role in developing these ideas in the first half of the 20th century. Dewey's thinking was rooted in the ideals of democracy – political, educational, and philosophical – a position which fed into the contemporaneously-emerging Progressivism movement in education. This itself was ultimately rooted in the humanism of Rousseau, and attendant beliefs in humanity's essential moral goodness. In contrast to traditional forms of education which emphasized classical learning, and were prone to class inequalities, progressivists shifted the focus onto each individual child, stressing the importance of their subjective experiences (see Crookes 2009; see also Hornbrook 1998). Several key aspects of the progressivist approach are indeed perfectly attuned to the methods of drama-based teaching: an emphasis on 'learning by doing'; collaborative and group-based learning; and an emphasis on process and understanding rather than mere recitation of memorized information. Ozmon and Craver (1999) describe the approach as an "action-oriented education"; a "process as much as a distinct body of knowledge" (Ozmon and Craver 1999 quoted in Crookes 2009: 86). Progressivist tenets encouraged leaners to "act on" knowledge learned through "real-life situations" in order to "encourage problem-solving ability in a practical setting" (Crookes 2009: 86). Although educational drama is not explicitly mentioned, potential connections are abundantly clear.

In as early as 1897, John Dewey was stating an overt allegiance to empiricist and pragmatist doctrine: "What we term reason is primarily the law of orderly or effective action" (Dewey [1897] 2019: 46). Using this belief as his basis, Dewey set out four educational principles under 'The Nature of Method': i) That active, expressive learning must replace what he saw as the dominant "passive, receptive or absorbing attitude" expected of children in school; ii) That children be allowed to form their own "images" of the material being taught (informational input being allowed to combine with the children's creative imaginations); iii) That each child's individual interests be observed and utilized in the learning process; and iv) That actions take precedence over emo-

7 It is important to note that, although related, the area of linguistics known as pragmatics is a separate development.

tions (Dewey [1897] 2019: 45-47) . Interestingly the latter point especially corresponds to present-day approaches to actor training, which emphasize a focus on action, in the best cases leading to authentic emotion, rather than an artificial synthesisation of the desired emotional effect. Throughout this early work, Dewey's belief in the democracy of education was embodied in principles identical to the work of drama practitioners in the next century. "True education", he declares, involves "the demands of the social situations in which [the child] finds himself [sic]"; the child must ultimately "act as a member of a unity" in order to "conceive of himself [sic] from the standpoint of the welfare of the group" (Dewey [1897] 2019: 35). In *Democracy and Education* (1916), Dewey discusses the inclusion of physical activities such as woodwork and sewing, as well as play-based activities, into the scholastic curriculum. In this context he also explicitly includes dramatization alongside singing and storytelling as performative narrative pursuits; and, importantly for the development of educational drama, such pursuits were not included for their own intrinsic importance as content, but rather for their "fundamental worth" as "native tendencies" (i.e. activities that children would happily engage in outside the school environment) (Dewey 1916: 228). By "assigning play and active work a definite place in the curriculum", in Dewey's view "the whole pupil is engaged", and the "artificial gap" between life inside and outside school is diminished (Dewey 1916: 229). These impulses already point the way for the educational belief in drama-as-pedagogical-tool, which was to rise, not uncontroversially, throughout the emerging 20th century (see section 3.2). By the time he wrote his seminal *Education and Experience* (1938), Dewey was starting to attempt a synthesis between his educational philosophy, based largely on experiential forms of learning, with practical, institutional contextualization of these ideas. The artificial distinction between school and outside-school still troubled him; his solution was a reform of the institution of school away from a focus on strict discipline enforced from above onto pupils, and towards a community of pupils and teachers in which the children feel they have an equal stake (Dewey 1938). The role of the teacher is of course critical in this scenario – in Dewey's ideal school environment, the teacher "loses the position of external boss or dictator" to be transformed into "leader of group activities" (Dewey 1938: 40). This distinction is highly anticipative of Augusto Boal's creation of the drama facilitator (the 'Joker' – see section 3.1 above) as a rejection of the omnipresent, and omnipotent, theatre director. The teacher becomes a part of the classroom community – no more and no less – while, regarding the long-term educational effects on pupils, "[t]he most important attitude that can be formed is that of desire to go on learning" (Dewey 1938: 19). Pupils are empowered to become stakeholders in their own learning process, whose form moves away from a prescriptive, top-down knowledge transfer towards a personalized, child-centered, and ideally long-term attitude to knowledge gain. This includes not only direct informational knowledge, but also what Dewey termed "collateral learning"; "enduring attitudes", rather than specific content details (ibid.).

3.2.2 Drama and Theatre (in Education): dichotomous progess

Despite a collective heritage grounded in the educational developments discussed above, the progress of drama/theatre in educational contexts throughout the century was often far from singular and unified[8]. Two major dichotomies can be identified – firstly, the distinction between drama and theatre in education; and secondly, between drama/theatre-based methods being used either as ends in themselves (as a form of aesthetic content-based instruction), or as instrumental tools to teach other subjects (for example in language lessons).

Christopher Balme has explored the terms theatre and drama within a theatre studies context, which perhaps can shed light on the use of the words in education (Balme 2008). While acknowledging the etymology of theatre in the Greek *theatron* ('a place for looking', Balme 2008: 1), Balme identifies what he sees as the four main realms of use of the term in present-day English: a specific building/location for dramatic activity; the activity itself; an institution; and finally an art form (ibid.). While these largely delineate the areas of enquiry within theatre studies, the fact that drama is often used synonymously does not ease matters. The term drama has its roots in another Greek term, "meaning originally an action and then a play for the stage" (Balme 2008: 4). As Balme points out, the modern term in many languages has retained this meaning – in German, for example, *ein Drama* refers to a performative work of literature (in English 'a play'). Although the general genre-identifying meaning has been retained in English (alongside poetry and prose), the term has become more encompassing, including as a "synonym for theatre in general" (ibid.), as well as referring to an area of study. Arguably in the study-related meaning, however, a distinction can in fact be discerned: students of drama will generally be training for active involvement in the performing arts, as actors for example (the equivalent of the German *Schauspiel*); while students of theatre tend to be following more theoretical, academic courses of study at universities (the equivalent of the German *Theaterwissenschaft*). Continuing within the realm of theatre studies, a more recent definition has defined the terms drama and theatre as "dialectical binaries", which are entirely inter-reliant (Revermann 2017: 3). In this context (cultural history of theatre), it is apparent that the interrelationship involves what is happening (i.e. drama) and where it is happening (i.e. theatre): the action/location distinction discussed by Balme; although exactly how this relationship can be regarded as dialectical (i.e. opposing), as Revermann states, remains unclear: the terms are apparently closely related enough to be regarded in many contexts as synonymous (cf. Balme 2008: 4).

The simple distinction that drama is 'doing' while theatre is a finished product (to be watched) certainly does not seem to hold true in a consideration of educational forms, although there do seem to be other discrepancies. Helen Nicholson (2009) discusses the emergence of theatre-in-education (TiE) in the 1960's as a shared enterprise between educators and professional theatre makers, noting that "ideas and practices have fre-

8 For a further discussion of the following issues, see Sharp 2014.

quently been shared across the two sectors" (Nicholson 2009: 19). The new movement was born of mutual disenchantment: a "rejection of the values of both commercial theatre and traditional education" (ibid.). Indeed this rejection of establishment values and norms, and questioning of orthodoxy, seems to be a common theme running through much educational drama work. The nascent theatre-in-education "sought to encourage young people to participate in theatre as a learning medium and as a vehicle for social change" (ibid.), thereby combining one of the key motivators in the early applied drama work of Boal and others (social change) with an overtly educational aim. Although the word 'participate' appears in this context (see descriptions of applied drama in section 3.1 above), it seems that the activities categorized as theatre-in-education had a more performative focus: much of the work centred around specially-formed theatre-in-education companies involving professional actors, who would perform thematically relevant plays for young people in schools or elsewhere, often following this up with more participatory exploration of the issues with the pupils, spread across multiple sessions (Nicholson 2009: 26). Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assign too much importance to the performative aspect of TiE. As Nicholson observes:

> […] 'involvement', 'participation', 'process' and 'activity' are crucial words in TIE, and there was general agreement that TIE's primary objective was to use theatre as a tool to explore ideas, feelings and values rather than to teach children how to put on plays (Nicholson 2009: 24).

Especially the nouns listed at the start of this quote would seem entirely in keeping with generally accepted definitions of applied drama (see Nicholson 2014; Prendergast and Saxton 2013); and teaching children how to put on plays themselves would seem to be the purview of classes in drama as a performance art subject. But TiE, as opposed to drama-in-education, to be discussed below, does at least appear to be more concerned with an aesthetic output of some kind (i.e. performance). To this end, the field required more specialized practitioners than 'merely' professional actors or teachers. This gave rise to the 'actor/teacher', individuals of "hybrid skills and varied backgrounds" who were expected to "combine skills as researchers, devisers and performers with the ability to work constructively and collaboratively with children" (Nicholson 2009: 26). Although early endeavours in TiE lacked specialized training for practitioners, drawing recruits from either education or the professional theatre and training them up in the other area, the professionalization of specific training did follow. In the German-speaking world, the field of *Theaterpädagogik* can be seen in this training aspect, as well as some others, as the direct equivalent of theatre-in-education. The German term itself is notoriously difficult to convey in other languages and cultures (Vaßen 2017: 61). The area is wide-ranging, and as the word already suggests, straddles both theatre and education contexts, having established itself and further developed "in Theorie und Praxis, an den Hochschulen und Theatern, in der Schule und der außerschulischen Bildung sowie in

der Soziokultur" (Vaßen 2017: 60)[9]. Although many of the aims and contexts clearly overlap with theatre-in-education, and even drama-in-education, there are distinctions to be made. Firstly, the theatrical aspect of *Theaterpädagogik* is heavily emphasized: virtually all municipal and state theatres in Germany have a dedicated *Theaterpädagogik* department, responsible for engaging above all young people with the themes of the current productions in practical, performance-based workshops and training sessions (Vaßen 2017: 60). And secondly, the training of practitioners has become increasingly specific and professionalized, with training courses equally emphasizing performance skills (as in actor training) and teaching skills, under the guidance and authority of a federal association[10]. Although the term has been approximately translated into English as 'theatre pedagogy', this usage is not widespread; instead, the field is often discussed as a close cognate of the English applied theatre. As discussed above, however, applied theatre can be seen as more of an umbrella term for drama practice in a range of applied social and educational contexts, with an emphasis on the desired outcomes, and not principally on aesthetics, although the aesthetic aspect of applied drama work has attracted more research interest[11].

As we approach the term drama-in-education, we encounter the second dichotomy: between drama being the content of the lesson, and often the end result – mostly featuring a performance of some kind, and with more emphasis on the aesthetic dimension (the aesthetic approach); and drama rather being used as a pedagogical instrument in the teaching of something other than drama/theatre – (what we could term the instrumental approach). Manfred Schewe has made a distinction between "large-scale" and "small-scale" forms of drama-based education (Schewe 2013: 12). Under small-scale forms, Schewe includes "performative activities which can be realised within the framework of a single class or a shorter teaching unit (approx. 3-5 classes)" (ibid.). These activities mostly consist of shorter, self-contained exercises and games, such as still image work, mime exercises, and shorter roleplays, which can be seen as 'tools' in the teachers' pedagogical toolbox (Schewe 2013: 13). Such exercises are often included in school language learning resources (e.g. roleplays), do not require specialist training to either supervise or participate in, and indeed may not even necessarily be recognized as overtly dramatic. As such, it could be argued that the aim of such small-scale drama-based work fits mostly into the instrumental approach, as resources principally to be used in the teaching of (an)other subject(s) – and indeed many of these forms of educational drama have been extensively used in language teaching (see section 3.3 below). Contrastingly, under large-scale forms, Schewe understands work in which "the framework of the everyday classroom activity is expanded" (Schewe 2013: 12). Referring specifically to language learning contexts, he exemplifies "the staging of a

9 "in theory and practice, in higher education and theatres, in schools and extracurricular, as well as sociocultural contexts" (my translation)
10 https://www.butinfo.de
11 See for example https://www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/v/applied-theatre/index.html

production in a foreign language" (ibid.), citing the greatly increased time commitment, dedication and extra-curricular aspects involved in such an undertaking. In terms of pedagogical aims, Schewe mentions "long lasting learning experiences in relation to language, literature and culture" as well as "significant insights contributing to their personal development" (ibid.). These macro-level areas of learning stand in contrast to the aims of small-scale work, where a particular roleplay dialogue may target a specific grammar construction, for example. And in terms of aesthetics, a full production of a play, resulting naturally in a performance output, can be regarded as being more concerned with artistic elements than a typical in-class short drama exercise. Perhaps expectedly, Schewe also includes theatre-in-education projects under large-scale forms, which he understands as "mainly associated with the staging of a play especially created by semi-professional teacher-actors" (ibid.). Here again the artistic element is emphasized: "although primarily orientated towards learning", performances tend to involve "a quite high aesthetic standard" (Schewe 2013: 13), as evidenced by the more professionalized practitioners involved. A further distinction between the two forms could therefore be made between the focus on participation and process in the small-scale classroom drama work; and the focus on performance and product in large-scale theatre-based forms.

Thus some trends can be observed in the distinction between theatre and drama in their educational forms. Drama, in keeping with its etymology, appears to be concerned with the doing of the dramatic work: often in smaller, exercise-based forms containable within a class unit, and focused on the benefits of such work to the participants themselves. As such, the focus is on the process, and what can be achieved through this. Drama is being used instrumentally, whether the educational aim is itself dramatic or not (such as in the teaching of another subject like English). Theatre, a word whose meaning today has more institutional and aesthetic resonances, seems to be connected in educational contexts with work that leads to a particular aesthetic product (normally a final performance). Engagement in such work clearly involves a more sustained time commitment than that required by smaller classroom drama work, and the learning benefits themselves would appear to be less definable and foreseeable than the smaller-scale drama work. Regardless of whether theatre-in-education work is performed for the learners by (semi) professional practitioners or carried out by the learners themselves, there seems to be more concern with aesthetic outcome than seen in other forms of educational drama.

Of these dichotomies, perhaps the most persistent in the history of educational drama has been that concerning the aesthetic element. Very early drama work that could be termed instructional (e.g. religious drama) (see section 3.1 above) was indeed based on the performance of texts (rather than freely improvised), and did result in an aesthetic product (such as the performance of the Mystery Plays, or participation in performances of literary works in schools, for example). Drama used overtly in educational contexts include the above-mentioned rhetorical training in ancient times,

and this performative approach is discernible into the 19th and 20th centuries in the form of the performance of pieces of literature viewed as valuable from an educational point-of view (see Coggin 1956; Hornbrook 1998). This particular focus is also present in higher education contexts, although arguably not finding serious footing until the later decades of the 20th century. At the time of writing, however, performance approaches to the academic study of Shakespeare, for example, are widespread at both curricular and extra-curricular level (see Hartley 2015). Ironically, such performance approaches to Shakespeare (normally involving large-scale, product-based methods) have become so popular that entire editions of the plays have been produced with these approaches in mind (e.g. Gibson 2016), as well as handbooks that break down performance-based pedagogy into more manageable small-scale (in Schewe's terms) techniques and exercises (see Stredder 2009). Most importantly perhaps, the intentions of such performance-based pedagogy are entirely instrumental: in this case, the drama-based techniques are not intended to train performance skills for future careers, but rather to help illuminate aspects of the dramatic literature not otherwise highlighted. This is perhaps another of the few points of interface between product-based, more aesthetic approaches to drama-based education and approaches more commonly seen as instrumental: neither small-scale nor large-scale approaches, regardless also of aesthetic product (or lack thereof), are aimed at training or developing professional performance skills in the participants. In this point at least, both approaches would appear to fall under the applied drama banner.

A new take on the use of drama in education began to take root in the UK in the early decades of the 20th century, one that was to quickly achieve dominance. English schoolteacher Henry Caldwell Cook, heavily influenced by the educational progressivism espoused by Dewey and others, began to be interested in accessing the potential of drama to create an entire 'world of play' within which children could learn in a less pressurized environment, and according to their natural inclinations (See Caldwell Cook 1917). He had been exposed to these concepts by the work of another English teacher, Harriet Finlay-Johnson, whose ideas had been published half a decade earlier than Caldwell Cook's (see Finlay-Johnson 1911). Finlay-Johnson had departed from the standard contemporary practice of children putting on productions of pre-written plays, to having her pupils create their own plays, based on aspects of their classroom learning. The teacher had a more supportive, rather than directorial role (see Boal's ideas in section 3.1), and the work was done firmly for the benefit of the pupils themselves rather than an audience; in this element also, fulfilling a key criterion of applied drama in the 21st century (see section 3.1). Caldwell Cook took these ideas further: iterating his belief in the primacy of experience as the key to learning; the natural propensity of children to engage in play in order to learn (an example of the cultural universal identified by Donald Brown, discussed in section 3.2.1); and presented his final concept of the "play way" as an alternative to the traditional modes of education of the time – in his view passive, disciplinarian, and vocationally-orientated (see Dewey 1938; 2019).

For Caldwell Cook, this involved not only the performance of plays, largely restricted either to English class or to extra-curricular activities, but an entirely new means of framing the teaching of any, and potentially all, subjects in the curriculum. In this, he specifically draws "more formal subjects such as mathematics, science or language study" into his scheme (Caldwell Cook 1917: 26). It is perhaps important to note that for Caldwell Cook, play was understood not always as something overtly dramatic, but principally active, physical, and participatory:

> […] play as treated in this book includes always two meanings, one, the sheer enjoyable activity of a game, and the other, that active side, that bringing into play of what one knows, which in real life is always as large a part of any undertaking as is the learning side (Caldwell Cook 1917: 26).

Two aspects of importance for future developments can be discerned here: firstly, the importance, not to be underestimated, of fun and enjoyment as motivators in the learning process; and secondly the dichotomy inherent in the distinction made between 'play' and 'learning' – one 'learns' something, which is then 'brought into play' in 'real life'. Here 'play' seems to be being used synonymously for 'action' or 'process' – one could argue that the 'play' inferred is actually being used to consolidate pre-existing knowledge, rather than to generate new, original learning outcomes (see chapter 7).

It wasn't until a few decades later, however, that attempts began to embed such impulses more widely in the educational system. Peter Slade, in particular, made a distinction between drama, which he viewed as essentially the everyday practice of life; and theatre, as a rather artificial, and potentially exclusive, art form (Slade 1954). This distinction led to his concept of 'child drama', which he regarded not as an equivalent of, nor as a poor relation to, the adult world of the theatre, but as an artistic medium in its own right, with its own aesthetic standards. Thus he shared Dewey's, and Caldwell Cook's, beliefs in the natural propensity of children to engage in make belief play, and in the resultant educational potential of harnessing this. Brian Way, who helped to edit Slade's work, was to continue in the same vein. His *Development Through Drama* (1967) continued to focus on drama for young people, but with a less aesthetic approach than that taken by Slade, preferring instead to concentrate on the aspect of personal development through dramatic activity – another key feature of much work done under the banner of applied drama/theatre (see Hornbrook 1998: 11). Way's book was also a good example of a response to increased interest among teachers in using drama in the classroom, including a significant handbook-like element of practical exercises to be used (Way 1967). This trending interest in the mid-20th century and beyond in the instrumental use of drama for personal development and in teaching across a range of subjects brought along a corresponding decrease of interest in theatre as an art form in school, and a more sceptical attitude towards the thus-far automatic reverence of canonical dramatists such as Shakespeare. This trend can be traced against the political

landscape of the UK at the time, which after over a decade of conservative government, switched to a left-oriented (Labour) administration in 1964 which was to continue (with a four-year interruption) until 1979 and the advent of Thatcherism[12].

Into this scene step two of the most important figures in the development of drama in education in its more instrumental form: Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton. Heathcote was a teacher who became a teacher trainer in the early 1970's. The gradual development of her work in drama had its roots in the developments of the pioneers of the early decades of the century, but introduced some key differences. Firstly, Heathcote's drama work with children was largely focused not on drama as aesthetics, nor even on the personal development of the child, but on an external, social, 'real life' issue or problem. Secondly, the child practitioners were not necessarily expected to play themselves, or a version of themselves, but to take on a specific job or function, such as a police officer, nurse, prisoner etc. (this element is traceable to Boal's invisible theatre and its implicit social criticism as discussed in section 3.1). However, they were encouraged not to present a mere cliché of the stern police officer or caring nurse, for example, but to in a sense 'become' the role in all its contextual complexity – this technique came to be known as "mantle of the expert" in Heathcote's work (Burke 2013: 10). Finally, in an aspect coined 'teacher-in-role', the teacher was herself to participate in the evolving drama – not, as with Boal, as an outside facilitator, but as an active, role-taking member of the group. In this guise, however, the teacher could indeed guide the work and provide insights when required (Burke 2013: 9). In Heathcote's educational drama, the main form of dramatic expression was improvisation, based on the pupils' own imaginative engagement with the context, rather than given text. Gavin Bolton was an early collaborator of Heathcote's. While Heathcote focused more on developing the emerging field of drama-in-education through her own practice, as well as talks and workshops for teachers, Bolton embarked upon a prolific writing career in which he outlined his and Heathcote's approach to the work, and attempted to theorize what many were recognizing as a new direction in educational drama (see for example Bolton 1979; 1984; 1990). Although Heathcote's own shorter writings were collected and published in anthology form (Johnson and O'Neill 1984), her collaborations with Gavin Bolton produced book-length contributions to teaching practice (Bolton and Heathcote 1999) as well as a formal attempt to theorize her methods (Bolton and Heathcote 1995).

The work of Heathcote and Bolton attracted attention throughout, and increasingly outside, the UK, where it was picked up and developed by a new generation of educators. One of the most significant for the development of their ideas was Cecily O'Neill. Her name has become closely connected with the form of educational drama known as process drama (O'Neill 1995). Process drama is largely an extension of the forms of in-class drama utilized by Dorothy Heathcote, and incorporates the novel aspects thereof of the improvisational nature of the work being taken to a large scale; the cre-

12 On the political dimensions of drama in education see Nicholson 2009

ation of an in-class dramatic world to which the participants – and only the participants – are party; and the dramatic involvement of the teacher in the imaginary world (Heathcote's 'teacher in role') (O'Neill 1995; Bowell and Heap 2017). The emphasis in process drama seems as the name would suggest to lie in the 'doing' of the drama, and therefore on the potential benefits for the participants, with the absence of an audience, as in the work of Heathcote, aligning the work firmly within established applied drama parameters. Cecily O'Neill herself prioritized process over product (e.g. a performance) in her early description of the approach, commenting that "the outcome of the journey is the journey itself" (O'Neill 1995: 67). More recent writers make rather more over-arching claims for the benefits of process drama, perhaps as the general trend of educational drama moves towards a re-appraisal of the aesthetic. Bowell and Heap (2017: 2) stated: "The nature of process drama provides the means by which students can learn about drama and also through drama about other things because it is both an art form and a pedagogic process." Here we read an overt claim that process drama can bridge the process/product divide represented by process/performance, drama/theatre, and small and large-scale work, discussed above. The claim that process drama is in itself an art form seems to hark back to the child drama of Peter Slade; and the 'learning about drama' refers in this case to the machinations of how participant interaction works, rather than drama in its literary guise. Process drama, and the other educational drama forms outlined above, seem to have attracted great popularity due to their potential for teaching across the school curriculum; for the relative ease with which non-expert teachers could utilize them, with few materials required; for their universality and accessibility, not requiring an engagement with complex dramatic texts such as Shakespeare; and for their tendency to be based on everyday situations of recognizable relevance to the participants. In these aspects the work chimed in with the mid-century political Zeitgeist.

In 1989 David Hornbrook wrote *Education and Dramatic Art,* a significant challenge to the drama-in-education developments delineated thus far. In a foreword to a later (1998) edition, Hornbrook refers to: "[…] the important question of what young people should be learning about drama and to worry rather less about techniques designed to help their students learn through it" (ix). Although at the present time of writing the aesthetic element in applied drama work has (re)gained importance (reflected for example in the Bowell and Heap quote above), Hornbrook was dealing with the process/product distinction at perhaps its highest point. In his book he traces both theatre and aesthetics to their ancient roots, constructing an argument for drama as a school subject in its own right – with practical performance at its heart. While at times his criticism of Heathcote and Bolton was seen as verging on the vituperative, the root of his attack was not so much the early pioneers of drama-in-education as the development of the techniques to be applied across the range of subjects, including those with no overt connection to the literary or dramatic:

> Although Peter Slade had little doubt that Child Drama was art of exactly this kind [i.e. creative and expressive], the subsequent promotion of drama as a cross-curricular learning utility meant some subordination of this aesthetic imperative. Art now ceased to be an end in itself and became instead 'art form', a vehicle for more generalised learning outcomes (Hornbrook 1998: 70-71).

The basis of Hornbrook's criticism, then, was what he saw as the demotion of educational drama to a mere tool for the teaching of other subjects, with an emphasis on more general social skills to applied across subject areas and indeed across pupils' everyday lives. Hornbrook even cites the discord that resulted from the introduction of a specific subject known as 'Life Skills' into the UK curriculum, which was felt to be close enough in aims to warrant a threat by school drama teachers (Hornbrook 1998: 34-35). By suggesting the "[restoration of] the general synonymy of drama and theatre", Hornbrook posits drama in the school context as "unambiguously a subject discipline" (Hornbrook 1998: 132). Such disciplinary rigour, he argues, might avoid the charges he raises against the largely improvisational, spontaneous nature of much drama-in-education work: "[…] the solipsistic freedoms of drama-in-education have often been an excuse for the inconsequential and banal" (Hornbrook 1998: 133). As a replacement of the improvisational nature of much drama work, Hornbrook is forced to suggest alternative subject material, which turns out to be, inevitably, works of dramatic literature. Alongside classic works such as those of Shakespeare, however, Hornbrook also cites plenty of examples of contemporary works, thereby at least partly dealing with the potential charge of cultural conservatism. In fact, such material is vital, in Hornbrook's view, to avoid the development of an orthodoxy emanating from the improvisation-based system/s imposed by charismatic practitioners (in the case of his criticism, Dorothy Heathcote).

A more inclusive conceptualization of educational drama has arguably continued to develop since, combining performance (both scripted and improvised) and writing skills (students writing their own scripts) with aesthetic appreciation (reading and watching drama) and pedagogical aspects (see Hornbrook 2002). This combination of different skills and approaches, all organized under the subject of drama, raises the potential of using drama methods in a classroom where multiple skills are being trained, such as in the present study (see discussion in chapter 7). Sita Brahmachari acknowledges, for example, the fact that "drama in schools has played an important role in confronting issues of racism, prejudice and social injustice", but as an alternative to the dominant form of improvisational drama, suggests that children learn about other world theatre forms (e.g. Noh theatre or Kathakali dance theatre) as a way of engaging dramatically with 'the other' (Brahmachari 2002: 19-21), while warning of the inherent dangers of tokenism and 'cultural tourism' unless such work is carried out with sufficient background research and rigour (Brahmachari 2002: 32). Following on from much of Hornbrook's work, Sharon Bailin (2002) deals with the particularly slippery notion of creativity, criticizing the previously-dominant improvisational/process approach with

having placed too much emphasis on the romantic notion of inherent individual creativity (i.e. one is or is not a 'creative person') and not enough on the importance of developing skills in order to improve creative outcomes – a notion of drama-in-education that is firmly in the 'product' camp, as Bailin acknowledges (Bailin 2002). Bailin also expands the remit of 'the creative' in drama to include aspects largely neglected by much 20th century educational drama, such as directing and playwrighting (Bailin 2002: 46). Helen Nicholson (2002) emphasizes the various educational benefits of having students write their own scripts, pointing out that certain forms of writing, such as devised, collaborative work, can have the same democratising effect as the breaking down of the audience/participant barrier in the work of Augusto Boal, for example (Nicholson 2002: 74). As Nicholson alludes to, although Heathcote and others overtly distanced themselves from the traditional western theatre and its practices as largely middle-class and establishment, subsequent impulses from within the theatre industry (such as an increase in collaborative work) have made such a critical view of the industry increasingly archaic and untenable (Nicholson 2002: 75).

As students write their own material, of course, channels open up for counter-engagement with the resultant texts: not only as performers, but as readers and audience members. Andy Kempe (2002) argues against the view that improvisation offers a more creative route to engaging with drama, making the case instead that a full engagement with a written dramatic text (after all, a pretext for performance), encourages and indeed necessitates creative reading from the students. Dramatic literature, he maintains, boasts the unique aspect of "the register of theatrical signs": elements in the text which lead one to consider potential performance choices, an aspect clearly missing from both standard prose fiction and poetry, and involving active decision-making on the reader's part (92-93). Dan Urian has suggested what he refers to as "guided spectatorship" (Urian 2002: 133) as a first step in bridging the social-class gap present in theatre attendance which formed the supposed basis of the democratising zeal of much mid-20th century classroom drama. So rather than create an alternative space for drama in opposition to the 'establishment' theatrical industry, such as in the work of Boal or Heathcote, for example, Urian's suggestion is increased engagement with standard theatre in order to equip students with the necessary tools for understanding it fully. To this end, he suggests a list of guiding questions to be considered before, during and after watching a production (Urian 2002: 140-148). This kind of preparatory work to ease younger people into watching a theatrical production not necessarily aimed at young people, such as in more educationally oriented forms of theatre-in-education, is very similar to the work of *Theaterpädagogik* in the German-speaking countries; especially that based in theatres themselves, under the auspices of audience outreach (see discussion in section 3.2.2). Arguably, however, such a detailed and complex questionnaire as Urian (2002: 140-148) suggests would demand a high level of intellectual maturity and engagement, regardless of dramatic experience or interest (see discussion of drama in higher education in section 3.2.3); for example familiarity with Classical Greek drama

(Urian 2002: 145). Urian also alludes to the particular issue of confronting children and young people with the rather old-fashioned medium that is (standard) theatrical practice, when their medial expectations have been so thoroughly shaped by film and television (Urian 2002: 135-136). Urian does not view such exposure as necessarily disadvantageous however, and points to several benefits that such experience may hold for engaging with theatre, such as a familiarity with foundational narrative structure, which need not differ dramatically between audio-visual and live presentational forms.

Jane M. Gangi charts the stages of communication technologies, arriving at audio-visual forms such as television as a natural next step (Gangi 2002: 152-153). "With this new technology", she claims, "came new biases, new ideologies; the image, naturalistic and immediate, rather than the word, took dominance" (Gangi 2002: 155). With the dominance of the visual over the oral, Gangi asserts, comes a reduction in face-to-face human interaction, a loss of the community interaction that surely underpins all drama work. Her solution to this paradox is a critical reappraisal of 'the dramatic' on the part of practitioners and students; a development of the theoretical and practical arsenal of educational drama to include and incorporate the new media so familiar to young people (Gangi 2002: 157). Of course, in the intervening years, new media has increased exponentially, and educational drama has indeed had to develop alongside, rather than contrary to, these changes. Indeed the interface between classroom drama and digital technology is one of the most virulent recent research strands in the field, running alongside digital developments in education more generally. Recent work has investigated educational drama combined with virtual reality spaces; blogging; interactive digital theatre and gaming (see Anderson, Carroll and Cameron 2009); digital drama forms for English Language Teaching (see Lombardi 2012; Van Halsema 2017); and most recently the digitalization of drama work enforced by the Covid-19 pandemic beginning in 2020 (see Best, Guhlemann and Guitart 2021).

3.3 Drama in Higher Education

Section 3.2 outlined developments in educational drama generally, and it is perhaps no coincidence that these developments have tended to centre on the education of children. Drama methods seem to connect to a human instinct for play, that can be utilized for learning (see Brown 1991 in section 3.2.1); an instinct most apparently valid for the education of children, and perhaps less so in post-compulsory, adult educational contexts, where the focus is either on specific vocational skill sets, or advanced academic instruction based on theory and intellectual exploration. The present section offers a consideration of drama methods in a higher education context, as the area most relevant to the present study. The three sub-areas in focus will be considered in turn: drama in language teaching; drama in teacher education; and drama in literature teaching. In each section, a brief overview will be followed by a consideration of research done in the field of relevant higher education didactics.

3.3.1 Drama methods in ELT

Drama in language teaching has a significant history, even if the earliest iterations would not have had the same aims and motivations as those of the modern classroom[13]. It is indeed unsurprising that drama has long fulfilled a role in language education, given the verbal foundations of most dramatic forms. This emphasis on language gives drama an important advantage over other art forms in the language classroom, especially the second or additional language classroom, where linguistic forms themselves are obviously in sharp focus. Another relevant aspect of drama that contributes to its use as a tool in the language classroom is its essentially social nature: drama generally happens through interaction. This aspect of drama-based pedagogy is underpinned by the social constructivism associated primarily with Lev Vygotsky, whose work on child development in particular repeatedly stressed the importance of peer interaction and social context on learning and psychological development (1978). Psychologist Albert Bandura, following on from the work of B.F. Skinner (1938), contributed fundamentally to the emerging social learning theory. Banduras' contribution focussed on the importance of observation and imitation in child learning, in close collaboration with others – further key elements in dramatic presentation (1977). Subsequently Banduras explored the importance of the reciprocal interaction between the human agent/s and her/their surroundings, including other humans (1986), another important theoretical foundation to the linguistic interaction, both verbal and non-verbal, that takes place in the drama-based language classroom. Finally, drama covers the range of skills required in the language classroom: reading (dramatic scripts); writing (whereby students produce their own scripts) and speaking (dramatic performance). These aspects of drama-based learning found their most fertile ground in the development of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (see section 2.2).

With an increased academic and pedagogical interest in communicative competence in the language classroom in the 1970's and 80's came an attendant rise in interest in drama-based methods, largely underpinned by the theoretical foundations outlined above. Early handbook-style publications (including practical exercises to be used by teachers) include those by Susan Holden (1981), John McRae (1985) and John Dougill (1987); however the greatest influence was to be had by Alan Maley and Alan Duff. Their seminal work *Drama Techniques* (1978; 2nd edn. 1982; 3rd edn. 2005; 6th printing 2011) is structured as a classic resource book, with numbered exercises featuring 'how-to' instructions and organized into categories ranging from the purely performative (e.g. physical and vocal warm-ups and working with objects) to the linguistic/pedagogical (working with words, phrases and sentences) (Maley and Duff 1978: v-ix). In this overt

13 Manfred Schewe points to uses of drama in (language) education in England and elsewhere as early as in mediaeval times, mostly aimed at improving students rhetorical and presentational skills, and pronunciation of the classical languages (Schewe 2013: 6-7). Rokison (2011) describes the use of drama recital in English schools in the Elizabethan period to practice and improve pronunciation (in Latin) and general rhetorical competence; a technique therefore presumably experienced by Shakespeare himself as a schoolboy (87-88).

combination of the dramatic with the pedagogical, theirs remains the handbook most aligned with the similar combinational pedagogy of the German *Theaterpädagogik,* for example (see section 3.2.2). Indeed, this direct connection between the worlds of drama and language teaching is clearly made in their definition of drama techniques as "… activities, many of which are based on techniques used by actors in their training"; by engaging in them, they claim, "students are given opportunities to use their own personality in creating the material on which part of the language class is based" (Maley and Duff 1978: 2). Several of the features of drama-based pedagogy explored this far are underlined by Maley and Duff as key benefits of the approach. Use of the integrated skills of the language classroom is emphasized: "Spontaneous verbal expression is integral to most of the activities; and many of them require reading and writing, both as part of the input and the output" (Maley and Duff 1978: 1). The holistic learning championed by John Dewey and others is acknowledged in the integration of "verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication […] bringing together both mind and body, and restoring the balance between physical and intellectual aspects of learning" (ibid.: 1). Other aspects referred to are the contextualization of the language use within the class social environment; the student-centred nature of much of the work; the potential for development of self-confidence; and the development of a fun, open and "exploratory" learning situation (Maley and Duff 1978: 1-2). Wilson (2008) presents a similar practical handbook, in his case solely based on principles of improvisation, in order to practice and improve fluency in spontaneous communicative situations in ELT learners. Wessels (1987) comes closest in this vein to a comprehensive *Theaterpädagogik*, presenting the case for drama not only for the practice of spoken communication, but for the teaching of literature, and involving both in-class exercises and larger-scale performance models. In Schewe's terms (2013) (see section 3.2.2) however, many of the above resources are still focussed on "small-scale" (Schewe 2013: 12) games and exercises that could easily be slotted into a single class session, in support of whatever the linguistic-pedagogical aim might be. Many of the existing handbooks cited above, useful as they may be, miss out on a full utilization of the aesthetic, performative potential of drama as a teaching tool, and run the risk of demoting drama to a merely instrumental additional tool in the classroom. This is fully treated by David Hornbrook in his *Education and Dramatic Art* (1998), and seems to be an issue most pertinently in the Anglo-American system (German *Theaterpädagogik*, by contrast, openly celebrates and utlilizes the full aesthetic range of applied drama). However, the scope can be widened to a certain extent to be more encompassing and arguably more aesthetically ambitious in the English-language research (going in the direction of the "large-scale" category delineated by Schewe (2013: 12)). Kao and O'Neill (1998) surveyed the "continuum of drama approaches" (5) taken in the ELT classroom, while nevertheless bemoaning the "exercise-based, short-term, and teacher-controlled" nature of many techniques, suggesting that this is responsible for "diminished" educational usefulness (3). Against such perceived curtailment of effect, they claim, drama methods can instead be used to constitute

"a world of social roles and relations in which the learner is an active participant" (Kao and O'Neill 1998: 4). This context-creation, in the view of Kao and O'Neill, allows language learners to engage in a more authentic, socially oriented linguistic interaction in which, in an implicit reference to language philosopher J. L. Austin (1962), "drama does things with words" (Kao and O'Neill 1998: 4). Austin's influential work had explored the multi-layered performativity of utterances in terms of "locution", i.e. the act of simply saying something; "illocution", i.e. the intention or force behind an utterance; and "perlocution", i.e. the effect of the utterance on the addressee (Austin 1962: 101). In this sense an utterance (locution) can transport a speaker's intention (e.g. to advise) as well as cause a particular effect in the addressee (e.g. persuasion) (ibid.: 101). Austin identifies speech acts that do not state facts or express information, but instead constitute part of the "doing of an action" (Austin 1962: 5) – a famous example being the "I do" declaration of a marriage ceremony being part of the actual process of becoming wed (ibid.: 5). This kind of "performative utterance" (ibid.: 6) has an almost exact parallel in the acting system of Stanislavski (2008), with its emphasis on "psychophysical" actions (O'Brien and Sutton 2013: 30) – performative actions on stage which express internal objectives through verb-based motivations (e.g. to provoke). This technique is also used by native-speaking actors working on more challenging text (e.g. Shakespeare) to elucidate potentially difficult language in order to make the communication of the actor, and the effect on an audience, more direct – a system known as "actioning" (Purcell 2018: 71). The potentially clarifying effects of using dramatic language in this way are thus of relevant applicability in a language education context, where it is perhaps helpful, especially in a communicative context, to consider not only the correctness of language forms used, but also the underlying communicative intention of the utterance.

Since around the time of publication of Kao and O'Neill (1998), the field of drama-based second-language teaching has flourished and arguably established itself as a separate sub-category of drama-in-education. In an influential article from 2013, Manfred Schewe surveyed the scene and looked ahead to potential next developments. He claims "a more systematic classification and conceptualisation" (Schewe 2013: 9) of the field at the beginning of the new millennium (2000's), tracing this back to the interdisciplinary "building of bridges" between language and drama educators starting around twenty years previously (ibid.: 8). Disciplines relevant to this interactional development, which Schewe locates most especially in German-speaking countries, are named as "general pedagogy, British drama and German theatre pedagogy as well as the 'didactic disciplines' associated with the relevant school or university subject" (ibid.: 9): the latter observation would seem especially relevant to the field of English didactics with which this present study is concerned. As the shaping and forming of the new pedagogical area emerged, publications continued to appear that dealt with drama applied to language education generally: as well as Schewe's own works (1993; 1995; 2011 (discussed in more detail below)), publications included those by Wagner (1998), Podlozny (2000) and Almond (2005). A number of texts on the effectiveness

of drama on specific language teaching areas also emerged, including those focused on the teaching of grammar (Even 2003, 2008, 2011) intercultural competence (Bräuer 2002; Cunico 2005; Bournot-Trites et. al. 2007; Piazzoli 2008; Wedel 2011) and, most importantly for the present study, oral communicative effectiveness (Miccoli 2003; Stinson and Freebody 2006; Stinson and Winston 2011). This renewed and growing interest in the potential of drama methods applied to language teaching has given rise to an attempt to define, in Schewe's words, a "Performative Foreign Language Didactics" (Schewe 2013: 18); an attempt therefore "to create a new approach to teaching and learning, whereby emphasis is placed on forms of aesthetic expression" (ibid.: 16). This is in keeping with the turn in applied drama towards the aesthetic generally, and has continued to be expanded upon by other scholars (e.g. Crutchfield et. al. 2017).

As alluded to in section 3.3., drama-based methods in education have tended to focus more on school and indeed pre-school contexts (see for example Tschurtschenthaler 2013), and less so on post-compulsory educational settings. Anna Weiss bemoaned the restricted amount of research into higher education (HE) uses of drama methods, while simultaneously highlighting the great potential of a post-compulsory-level performative language pedagogy (Weiss 2007: 25). Alluding to Byram and Fleming's (2002: 143) discussion of the beneficial effects of emotional distance in roleplay situations in the language classroom, Weiss reports on her own observations of the increase in communicative enthusiasm when HE language students are involved in roleplay (Weiss 2007: 27). She disavows the view of drama as "a linear teaching strategy", suggesting instead a model of "a dynamic teaching and learning process during which a multitude of different drama-based methods are applied in order to achieve aims relevant for a specific target group" (Weiss 2007: 25). Allusion is also made to the use of drama in integrated skills in the language classroom (see section 3.2.2. and discussion in chapter 7): "DiE enables the teacher and learner to work on literature, culture and language in an integrated way rather than in isolation" (Weiss 2007: 27); a feature of crucial importance to the pedagogical context of the present study (see section 1.3). On the question of HE student engagement, Koerner (2014) is in agreement over the possible benefits of drama methods, in the context of a US college German department language class, in which a wide range of language proficiency among the students presents a similar challenge to the wide range of degree types and stages dealt with in the present study (Koerner 2014: 4) (see section 1.1). Referring specifically to techniques from post dramatic theatre, Koerner also emphasizes the creative, student-oriented nature of drama work being of particular relevance to university-level learners: by "prioritiz[ing] theatrical performances over dramatic texts" (Koerner 2014: 1), the classroom situation becomes one of "collaborative learning-by-doing-and-creating" (ibid.: 14, italics in original) which, as well as motivating students, "also catalyzes critical reflection on questions of representation and narrative" (ibid.: 14). Borge (2007) also discusses German language classes at HE level, highlighting the need for methodological innovation (represented in this case by drama methods) when faced with "prescribed language textbooks" (Borge 2007: 2)

– in this, she would appear to be emphasizing the creativity of the drama approach in keeping with the views of Koerner (2014). Borge re-iterates the multi-role nature of the teacher in drama-based classes, in the vein of the Joker of Augusto Boal (see section 3.1) – this rather 'back seat', non-controlling role of the teacher offers students "sufficient freedom to both explore and act in situations in a natural manner" (Borge 2007: 4); a freedom perhaps not beneficial or desirable to younger, less advanced learners and therefore particularly relevant in an HE context. Eucharia Donnery has also written on the effectiveness of drama in an HE ELT context, focusing on Japan and her own teaching environment (Donnery 2009 and 2014). Another challenge identified here in the ELT HE context is in Donnery's view, "vastly disparate teaching pedagogies" (2009: 18) among instructors, leading to her discussion of drama methodology as a potential means of covering the various linguistic focal points required (grammar, reading, (academic) writing, speaking etc.), as well as alleviating the intercultural tensions specific to her particular context. In her second project (2014), Donnery focused specifically on spoken communication skills, using the Process Drama techniques of Kao and O'Neill (1998) to create a socially immersive communicative environment to deal with the issue of historical emigration from Japan. In an important article from 2011, Fonio and Genicot calibrate drama methodology against CEFR objectives in an Italian HE ELT context. As such, and by referring to CEFR guidelines for language teaching (everyday life situations; informational exchange; foreign cultural content) (Fonio and Genicot 2011: 79), they set out to standardize certain criteria in line with CEFR objectives "in order to promote language learning through artistic practice syllabi" (ibid.: 75). Given these various examples, it would appear that Schewe's recognition of "a more systematic classification and conceptualisation" (Schewe 2013: 9) of drama-based language teaching methods would also seem relevant, albeit to a lesser extent, at the higher education level. Much of this work follows on indeed from Schewe's study (1993) grounded in his own teaching practice as a German language lecturer in Ireland. Schewe defined his work as a language lecturer as having to cover literature; grammar; translation; and regional/national studies[14] ; therefore displaying many overlaps with the teaching context of the present study (see section 4.2) (Schewe 1993: Chapter 1). In the same vein, Schewe's original focus for his study was specifically conversation classes (ostensibly the same as the oral communication classes of the present study, discussed in section 1.1), of which he identified a "konzeptloser sprachpraktischer Unterricht" (Schewe 1993: Chapter 1; italics in original)[15]. This situation, which Schewe regarded as typical of many universities, was according to him compounded by the delegation of such classes to temporary teaching staff, and the generally unscientific and unprofessional view of such classes at the institutional level (ibid.: Chapter 1). Therefore his nascent formation and conceptualization of a performative pedagogy in HE ELT was prompted by institutional

14 From the German *Landeskunde*
15 Practical language tuition with no underlying concept (my translation).

and pedagogical issues and challenges, similar to Borge (2007); Donnery (2009 and 2014); and Koerner (2014); as well as to the present study.

3.3.2 Drama methods in teacher education

Another important area of relevance to the present study is the extent to which drama methods are interconnected with language teacher education. Despite a current lack of extensive research, two main trends can be identified. Firstly, the use of drama methods themselves in the training of various professional pedagogical skills (e.g. roleplay used for conflict resolution practice; theatre voice exercises for teachers, and so on); and secondly, drama methods being introduced into the didactics curriculum in order to provide trainee teachers with a different kind of pedagogical tool that they can use themselves in their future jobs.

Jordi Casteleyn (2019) has identified the benefits of improvisational theatre techniques in the overcoming of public speaking stress, modelling the improvisation approach as directly applicable to three training principles in public speaking: "systematic desensitisation […], cognitive modification […], and skills training" (Casteleyn 2019: 147). Such principles have been used in more specific professional training contexts, such as in business English (Giebert 2014) and even medical training (Watson 2011). Against the backdrop of the German educational system, Adrian Haack (2010) bemoans the lack of creative and holistic elements in language teacher training (35), and points to the desire of teacher trainees to get more practice in authentic classroom situations during their training period (ibid.: 36). Haack posits drama methods as beneficial to students getting used to their future 'roles' as language teachers, dealing with, among other elements, the resolution of classroom conflict – drama offering a safe, simulated space in order to do so (ibid.: 35). Drama methods, according to Haack, can create "ein Verständnis von Unterricht als *performance*, in der Grenzen zwischen Lehrenden und Lernenden, Spielenden und Zuschauenden verschwimmen und durch Theaterspiel und Rollenübernahme geschützte Räume für Grenzerfahrungen (z.B. *crossgender* und *crossculture*) eröffnet werden sollen" (italics in original) (ibid.: 36-37)[16]. Here again we see the use of (applied) drama in breaking down traditional binary distinctions, whether between performer and observer; or teacher and learner – in Haack's view, drama can create a world in which the ever-increasing heterogeneity of learners themselves and teaching methods can be distilled, with an emphasis on creativity and co-exploration (Hack 2010: 38-39). Hardison and Songchaeng (2005) discuss the utilization of formal theatre vocal techniques (e.g. relaxation, diaphragm breathing, projection etc.) in the context of general ELT oral skills instruction, leading to the question of what specialist

16 "An understanding of teaching as performance, in which the borders between teachers and learners, actors and spectators become blurred, and through dramatic activity and roleplay, a safe space for liminal experiences (e.g. cross gender and cross culture) can be achieved" (my translation).

skills, if any, teachers need to lead such drama-based work in the classroom. In their view, the crucial aspects include that teachers have "experience in a variety of interactional situations", presumably but not explicitly including theatre/drama (Hardison and Songchaeng 2005: 596); and an "awareness of and comfort in creating an atmosphere" conducive to the exploratory nature of drama work (ibid.: 596). Here again the observation is made that in a drama-based classroom, the teacher herself "need not be the sole source of control" (ibid.: 596).

In this vein we can now turn to the second category identified above – that of offering drama skills and techniques to teachers during their training for their own future professional use. Relatively few studies have investigated this area (see Griggs 2001; Hart 2007; Lutzker 2007; Buley et al 2019). Beaven and Alvarez (2014) point to the weighting in the research towards students' experience, and the dearth of publications on teachers' competence in leading drama work, as well as possible training development in this area. In this regard drama-based teaching tends to be grounded in "interest and experience" of teachers rather than comprising "an expected component" of ELT curricula (Beaven and Alvarez 2014: 5). Their project focused on non-formal professional training in drama techniques for HE teachers of English, and initial feedback emphasized the emotional and social aspects of teaching using drama, contrasted with more traditional methods (Beaven and Alvarez 2014: 10-14). Despite the limited number of studies such as Beaven and Alvarez (2014) into providing drama techniques to trainee teachers in order to "provide them with an opportunity to expand their pedagogical repertoire" (9), the concept of the teacher-as-artist more generally has attracted more considerable attention. Elliot Eisner, following in much the same tradition back to John Dewey, published on the benefits of arts in education, examining the role of the teacher and the educational system generally in the success of arts-based classes (Eisner 2005). In Eisner's view, "teaching well requires improvisation within constraints" (Eisner 2006)[17]; a certain freedom of individuality and even willingness to go against expected or traditional methods, all within the specific educational context at hand. Interestingly in Eisner's opinion this individuality involves the "inseparability of what is learned from the manner in which it was taught" (Eisner 2006), effectively a synthesis of his concept of teaching itself as an art form. Contrastingly, Haack (2010) warns that concepts of teacher-as-artist (actor) and lesson-as-performance involve the danger that "die inhaltliche Komponente in den Hintergrund rückt" (Haack 2010: 43)[18]. The concept of the performatively charismatic teacher, taken to extremes, can even hide a lack of substantial content, and indeed lead to the teacher being literally in the limelight of the lesson rather than the students: a perversion of one of the key principles of drama in education, that of student-centred learning (ibid.: 43)[19]. "[W]hile the teacher

17 Taken from the transcript of a commencement speech given at Stanford University.
18 "The content of the lesson slips into the background (i.e. loses importance)" (my translation).
19 A danger memorably illustrated in the character of Gilderoy Lockhart, teacher at Hogwarts in the Harry Potter series of J. K. Rowling (Rowling 1998).

functions as director, stage manager, and prompter", according to Edward L. Rocklin, "it is the students who must be the stars" if performative teaching is to succeed (Rocklin 1990: 154), in a distinction mindful of the Boalian "Joker" (Boal 1992: 261). Dunn and Stinson (2011) conclude that the key to success of performative teaching in the language classroom lies not in any particular inherent dramatic talent on the part of the teacher, but rather in background work and preparation, in much the same way as any other form of lesson, in fact: positive outcomes are more likely "when drama experiences are planned and implemented by teachers who are concerned with, and aware of, dramatic form and are able effectively to manage the four roles of actor, director, playwright and teacher" and "who are aware of the nuances of both language learning and drama learning" (Dunn and Stinson 2011: 630). To this end, it has been suggested that drama/theatre methods be integrated as methodological content into teacher training programmes (see Haack and Surkamp 2011), a development that is seeing increasing support on a state and federal level in Germany, for example[20].

Work on the definition and development of performative competence in language teaching on a structural and conceptual level (see Hallet 2010) has arguably reached its zenith, in practical terms, in the still-developing concept of a performative pedagogy in foreign language teaching, with the attendant implications for teacher training. Such implications focus principally on aesthetic, holistic and emotional aspects of language teaching (see Schewe 2011; Fleiner 2016) without necessarily conceding entirely to the 'teacher as artist' principles espoused by Eisner and others (see above).

3.3.3 Using literature with drama in ELT

The use of literature in the ELT classroom generally is well documented. Widdowson (1995) positions stylistics, as the linguistic analysis of literature, at the centre of a matrix connecting literary and linguistic disciplines (literary criticism and linguistics) and subject areas (English language and English literature), in order to demonstrate that the teaching of literature need not, and should not, exist only on an aesthetic plane (4). Since the second half of the 20th century, literary texts have also been a major element in the overall concept of communicative English language teaching (Kirchhoff 2019: 222). Koerner (2014) has observed how "identification exercises and role play scenarios can catalyze interest in literature" (2). Klippel and Doff (2007: 128) highlight the usefulness of literature in the language classroom in both receptive and productive aspects, while emphasizing the importance of choice of works. Of the three phases of text work identified (pre-, while- and post-reading) (ibid.: 134), it is perhaps the post-reading phase that allows for the most effective and natural drama-based work. Klippel and Doff identify post-reading phases that are immediately recognizable as coming from a drama in education background, such as freeze frames or the production of performed

20 See https://www.butinfo.de/aktuell (last accessed 16/03/2022)

readings or stagings; as well as those that would only be included in a wider, more multi-medial understanding of drama work (such as in the *Theaterpädagogik* tradition, for example): these would include the creation of alternative endings, imaginary pre-story situations, or an adaptation from one textual genre to another (Klippel and Doff 2007: 134). Thaler (2008: 23) concurs with the usefulness of literature in the EFL classroom, pointing to aspects of language development, intercultural learning, personal enrichment, motivational value, interpretational openness, and social prestige. The aspect of interpretational openness, in which individual responses are elicited, segues into methodological considerations for teaching literature, which in Thaler's account also include creative, although not necessarily strictly dramatic techniques, such as setting a text to music or producing short video clips (Thaler 2008: 121). Dramatic forms are however included in various forms of recital, e.g. choral or role reading of poetry (ibid.: 120); and most explicitly when dealing with dramatic literature: here Thaler refers to the double-meaning of play as both literary genre and enjoyable activity (ibid.: 145), exploring shorter, exercise-based drama activities as well as longer, performance-based work to teach dramatic literature in what he terms "learning by playing" (ibid.: 145-146). This distinction between an ostensibly dramatic activity and one that is 'merely' creative, or based more generally in the creative arts, is important to the study, and is further discussed in Chapter 7. Maley and Duff (2007: 9) view the literary text as "simply […] one element in a linked set of activities", an approach in keeping with the concept of a dramatic literary work as a pre-text for performance: a first step, or blueprint. Their approach, which aims at the "deep processing" of literature by students (ibid.) involves exercises based on reading, writing and speaking, thus covering all essential language skills; and combines exercises based on specific language areas (e.g. passive forms), written textual work (e.g. reducing a text) and creative approaches (ibid.: ix-xv). Under creative approaches, several activities with a drama basis are discernible, such as genre adaptation, work with character dialogue, and even formal voice work such as vocal warm-ups and "verbal tapestry" (ensemble-based vocal interpretations) (ibid.: 77-98). One exercise, entitled "Rehearsal Time", involves a process very similar to that of a professional theatre rehearsal process, with students required to analyse and mark the text for performance, adding stage directions and planning stage movement (blocking) (ibid.: 82-84). This is commented on as involving a much longer time commitment for both teacher and students, thus fitting the "large-scale" category of Manfred Schewe (2013), and corresponding to the more performance-based concept of the German *Theaterpädagogik,* for example. Crucially, however, the literary text in the account of Maley and Duff is merely one element in the learning process, as are the drama-based activities.

Some of the very earliest traces of drama-based methods in education were those involving literature – schools' performances of classical plays, for example (see section 3.1). And arguably this natural synthesis – the use of drama methods in the teaching of dramatic literature – has remained the most dominant iteration of DiE in the teaching of

literature. Thaler's account of "learning by [dramatic] playing" (Thaler 2008: 145) is outlined exclusively and explicitly in connection with plays, although discernibly dramatic exercises are included in connection with poetry and prose as well. This connection is seen perhaps most strikingly when associated with the works of Shakespeare, where a playful approach has often been posited as a solution to the problem of dealing with the archaic language. Indeed, Shakespeare's language is often seen as "the central characteristic" of his works in the view of teachers, but simultaneously as "the feature with which pupils need most help" (Gibson 2000: 1). Rex Gibson was an early pioneer in the development of a systematically dramatic Shakespearean pedagogy. In his major work *Teaching Shakespeare* (1998), he posits active methods as helpful in overcoming the apprehension of both teachers and students when exploring the plays (Gibson 1998: vi). Citing adaptability as one of the main reasons for Shakespeare's enduring legacy, Gibson encourages a creative, individual response approach to the "multiple possibilities" of the works, utilizing students "imaginative enactment" (ibid.). For Gibson, indeed, dramatic methods of teaching are essential – through "expressive, creative and physical activities", the plays are "completed" (ibid.: vii). Such an approach, in Gibson's view, involves merely "treat[ing] the plays as plays" (ibid.: vi). Another important insight, and justification for using playful methods with Shakespeare, is to counteract the canonical status of the works, and the attendant anxiety this may cause in students (and teachers, indeed): "[the] legacy of textual scholarship", according to Gibson, "has weighed heavily on school Shakespeare" (Gibson 1998: 8). Gibson's own legacy included a second handbook of exercises aimed specifically at younger learners (2000), and, most enduringly, the development of the *Cambridge School Shakespeare* – editions of the works geared at school-level study and based on the practical, exploratory approach espoused in his earlier works[21]. Gibson's influence stretched to further publications based on a practical approach to teaching Shakespeare, including James Stredder's important *The North Face of Shakespeare* (2009). This collection of more theatrically rooted techniques and exercises is arguably better suited to higher level learners, and cites an explicit debt to well-known theatre practitioners such as Augusto Boal (see section 3.1) and Cicely Berry, the legendary head of voice at the Royal Shakespeare Company (Stredder 2009: xi). Other publications in this vein include those by Thompson and Turchi (2016), and those that root the approach in the work of specific theatre companies like the Globe (Banks 2013) and the Royal Shakespeare Company (Winston 2015). Such work on accessibility would seem especially pertinent in a German context, given the canonical position that Shakespeare's works have held in the German school system (see Kirchhoff 2016).

Although much practical drama work focuses on teaching literature at school level, the approach is also well documented at higher education (HE) level, again with an apparent focus on Shakespeare. Shakespearean practical pedagogy in the HE classroom has a long history, traditionally rooted in the universities of Oxford and, more espe-

21 https://cambridgeschoolshakespeare.com/about (last accessed 17/3/2022)

cially, Cambridge, with some academics using dramatic recital as part of their lecturing technique, often combining this in-class activity with extra-curricular performance (see Greenwald 1997). Ex-Cambridge students went on to establish the Royal Shakespeare Company, using the techniques they had been exposed to at university in the professional training of the actors at Stratford (see Barton 1984; Hall 2003; Cordner 2017). Several studies have outlined specific techniques that can be utilized effectively as part of a university-level drama class. Howe and Nelson (1984: 632) discuss the advantages of the "spectrogram" in the HE literature classroom: a physical visualization, involving the students themselves, of the inter-relationships of the various characters in the work, as an immediately perceivable representation on which to base further exploration. This is embedded in a wider range of pedagogical methods in an approach that "combine[s] both literary and theatrical perspectives, methods, and experiences" (ibid.). In order to help the students overcome the problem of identifying with Shakespeare's texts, given their age and 'foreignness', Michael Flachmann has suggested a technique of "parallel scenes", in which students present and investigate the original scenes with parallel versions from their own experiences, and, crucially, time period (Flachmann 1984: 644). Others have staged more extended, structured performance elements in HE classrooms, including performances of individual scenes, rather than entire plays, in a combination of Schewe's "small-scale" and "large-scale" performance categories (Schewe 2013) (see Sauer 1995; Sharp 2019). These impulses led to earlier notions of a performative pedagogy in the HE literature classroom, mostly conceptualised as one teaching strategy among many, in contrast to later, more comprehensive theories (see below). In the HE context, emphasis was still on the main educational goals of literary analysis and criticism, using drama methods as a means of greater enlightenment. Rocklin's (1990) notion of "a performance-centred method to teach dramatic texts" at HE level was combined with a "performance-centred criticism" of the texts, thus building on, rather than replacing, earlier traditional classroom methods (Rocklin 1990: 148). Rocklin developed these ideas into a greater matrix which started to involve not only the students in the creative process but also the university instructors: the play script became a "cue for pedagogic invention" in which the instructor becomes a "pedagogic designer[s] who participate[s] in their own designed occasions" (Rocklin 1995: 135). Perhaps most salient in this remark for the current study is the notion that the HE classroom stages occasions rather than performances: earlier notions of performative pedagogy in HE regarded the locus as "classroom-as-workshop" (Swander 1984: 531) rather than as theatre, again with the emphasis on making the students better critics as a result. In Ellen O'Brien's view, "[h]aving once been actors, even in this limited sense, [her] students emerge as better readers" (O'Brien 1984: 622). By 1999, Maria Cozart Riggio was presenting a collection of examples and techniques of performative pedagogy for both the secondary and post-compulsory (HE) classroom context, involving both mining the text for performative clues, as well as the practical, acting-based methods already discussed (Riggio 1999). In time, such approaches opened up new avenues for practical work, most

notably those involving performance elements as research instruments – this gave rise to performative research outcomes involving professional actors (Bessell 2015), in which "a pedagogic framework" was established based on "the language of actor training" in order to "explore how actor training methodologies might reveal something new about the plays of Shakespeare" (Bessell 2015: 186). Other performance-as-research projects made use of the students themselves acting in performances, or at least excerpts, of the plays. Conceiving of the HE classroom as a performance laboratory, Jonathan Heron emphasizes the part that the students themselves play in the co-creative process; in his view the recipe consists of "the creativity of makers and producers; the imagination of dramaturges and designers; the expertise of technicians and teachers; and now, the participation of spectators and students" (Heron 2015: 249). Heron's work is rooted in the earlier work of the CAPITAL Centre at the university of Warwick, a performance laboratory originally rooted in the English Department, but whose methods expanded and extended to include such diffuse disciplines as medicine, philosophy, law, and mathematics in a concept named open-space learning (Monk et al 2011). The project fostered workshop-based learning in a "pedagogic interaction between facilitator and participant" (Monk et al 2011: 1). Through active and collaborative work, "the participant [becomes] the producer and discoverer of knowledge", rather than a passive recipient (ibid.: 1-2). In this regard, the project expressed a debt not only to the applied theatre pioneer Augusto Boal and collaborative educationalist Paolo Freire (see Section 3.1); but also to developmental psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978); educationalist David Kolb and his work on experiential learning (1974); and Howard Gardner's (1993) work on multiple intelligences.

Within the context of higher education ELT, research has also been undertaken in the use of drama-based methods with dramatic texts. Multani (2015) has written about the cultural nuances of Shakespeare being performed in both English and Indian languages in Indian universities from a post-colonial perspective. Christa Jansohn's study of student Shakespeare productions in English at German universities (2015) concludes that the aims of such productions were "to offer an attractive complement to the usual course material, to improve competence in English, and to gain practical and social experience" (Jansohn 2015: 128). This multi-faceted nature of practical drama methods using literary texts is one of the most attractive aspects of such an approach in the HE classroom, as reflected in the pedagogical challenges at the root of the present study (see Section 1.3). Eisenmann and Lütge (2014) in their collection *Shakespeare in the EFL Classroom* devote a section to "Performative and Creative Approaches" (243-346), an aspect which in the view of the editors "holds a huge potential for communicative EFL classrooms" (ibid.: 8). Christiane Lütge (2014) investigates the issues of teaching the history plays in the EFL classroom, with the particular example of *Richard III*. She warns therein against an unconsidered piety towards "popular albeit superficial notions of so-called creative approaches", suggesting that a well-worn drama technique such as hot-seating, in which a student in role is interrogated by other members of the class

in order to ascertain personal details of the character, may not necessarily be appropriate for a figure like King Richard III (Lütge 2014: 307). Instead, Lütge suggests certain performative pedagogical elements as an outcome of textual analytical work – e.g. students work first on finding out the stress patterns of a piece of the text, then transfer this to a vocal interpretation which is then performed as an outcome (ibid.: 306). Here again we see practical drama methods being used in combination with others, including more traditional textual-analytical work, in a balanced pedagogical range with performative elements.

Although, as previously mentioned, most performative approaches to the teaching of literature have focused on dramatic literature, some investigations have been undertaken into performative teaching of other literary genres. Performative work with prose, both fiction and non-fiction, tends to focus on dramatic elements of the story (e.g. character, situation, mood etc.) that highlights the clear connection between prose fiction and dramatic texts, which are themselves ostensibly performed fiction; the drama exercises used may also have a pedagogical focus on a particular narrative feature, such as free indirect speech (Maley and Duff 2007: 121-125). With poetry, however, the situation is slightly more complicated, given the more abstract linguistic nature of much poetry, and (often) the absence of identifiable characters. Giebert (2014) discusses performative approaches to poetry in ELT, suggesting that poems are "mostly short and thus well-suited for exploration during a class period" (107). Giebert observes that many of the perceived advantages of using poetry at all in ELT are actually to do with spoken language – e.g. pronunciation, intonation, presenting competence, confidence and general fluency (ibid.: 107-108). To justify performance approaches, Giebert points to the need to hear poetry aloud in order to fully enjoy it (ibid.: 108): a notion entirely in keeping with the classical performative roots of poetry, which in ancient Greece was largely indistinguishable from drama itself (c.f. Nicholl 1976 Chapter 1). Interestingly, Giebert also refers to the truism that poetry is often the least popular literary genre in class (see section 6.1.2) – an effect she attributes to students' perception that the only aim of the typical "overly-analytic approach" is to hit upon the one "approved interpretation" (ibid.: 108). This effect is counter-balanced by the opportunity for poetry to be "emotionally and physically experienced and enjoyed and interpreted creatively" that is offered by performative methods (ibid.: 108). The emotional aspect of poetic texts, and the advantage therein to the ELT context, is more thoroughly investigated by Stöver-Blahak (2012), in a study that focuses not on principally on the literary/aesthetic appreciation of poetry, but on its usefulness as a medium to practice oral and presentational competence in the language. Her starting point is that "inhaltloses Sprechen und emotionsloses Sprechen nicht gibt"[22] (Stöver-Blahak 2012: 126), a foundation for her project that "[e]s wird *nicht über* Gedichte gesprochen, sie sind nicht der Anlass für

22 "There is no such thing as speech without content or emotion" (my translation).

Klassenraumgespräche – sondern die *Gedichte werden gesprochen*"[23] (ibid.: 9, emphasis in original). By using poetry in this way, the perceived gap between pronunciation and presentational skill can be bridged, through an emotional connection to the words, in a form of "ästhetischen Kommunikation"[24] (ibid.: 312). The holistic relationship ideally achieved between the student-reciter and the poem is intended to help overcome micro-level problems such as a misunderstanding or mispronunciation of individual elements, in order to gradually and firmly improve the overall linguistic competence (ibid.: 40). Interestingly, the suggested lesson planning involves not only recital: but a first recital, followed by a reading/discussion round, followed again in turn by a repeated recital, and so on, to improve the oral presentation stepwise (Stöver-Blahak 2012: 129). In this, we can again see drama-pedagogical methods not as an entire lesson concept, but as a single building block in a larger and more diverse framework of methods. More recently, O'Toole and Dunn (2020) take a similar approach to poetry, in terms of weaving performative exercises into a scaffolded framework for dealing with poetic texts (75). In their book, aimed as a practical textbook for secondary teachers, texts of all three genres (poetry, prose, drama) are presented together with drama exercises and secondary medial materials such as photographs and peripheral historical information, to constitute a diverse framework of approaches of which performative pedagogy is one.

Despite the predominance of compulsory educational (school) contexts in the literature on educational drama then, higher education is a growing, if still relatively under-researched area in this regard. There is also however a tendency towards what one might term a fragmented pedagogy: drama used in its instrumental, functional form as smaller games and exercises to practice oral communication; its role-play function in order to model real-life situations (such as in teacher education contexts, for example); or as a natural complement to dealing with linguistically challenging texts (such as Shakespeare). The comprehensive pedagogy offered by *Theaterpädagogik* for example is lacking in the English-language world, and with it the concept of a single class context, but with varied aims and strands, defined and organized around a drama-based, performative model, in which drama is not merely another tool in the box, but the defining pedagogical principle.

23 "The poems are not dealt with as the subject for classroom discussion, but are read out loud" (my translation).
24 "Aesthetic communication" (my translation).

4 The action research project: context, questions and design

The study is focused on my own practice as a teacher of Academic English (*Sprachpraxis*) at the English Department of a university in south-west Germany. Having been interested in drama-based methods in English Language Teaching since early in my career, I became keen to apply these methods more systematically in my classes, with the challenges particular to my present context (see section 4.2). This chapter will introduce the Department of English at Tübingen, and the Academic English section within it. Subsequently the specific class involved in the study will be described in detail. The research questions will be set out, against which background the research methodology will be described and justified as the best available option for the aims of the study. Finally, the student-led sessions that form the basis of the investigation will be individually described in detail, using relevant sections from the teacher diary that I kept throughout the project (see section 4.4).

4.1 Context of research

4.1.1 *Sprachpraxis* at the University of Tübingen English Department

The Eberhard Karl University of Tübingen (subsequently the University of Tübingen, or simply Tübingen) was founded in 1477, and today is one of the eleven elected German Excellence Universities[25]. The English Department at the University of Tübingen was established in 1906. At time of writing the department employs around 70 staff and caters to a student body of around 2500. The department offers bachelors and masters degree programmes in education, aimed at students wishing to train as teachers of English in the German school system (BEd and MEd). Teacher trainees represent the majority of the student body, whose training is stated as being "one of our most important tasks"[26]. At bachelors level, there are also degrees offered in English and American studies (BA Ang/Am) and Interdisciplinary American Studies (BA IAS). In addition to the MEd degree, there are further masters degrees (MA) in English Literatures and Cultures, American Studies, and English Linguistics.

25 https://uni-tuebingen.de/en/university/profile/history-of-the-university/
26 https://uni-tuebingen.de/fakultaeten/philosophische-fakultaet/fachbereiche/neuphilologie/englisches-seminar/

The department is divided into five sections, four of which deal with separate academic fields: English Literatures and Cultures; American Studies; English Linguistics; and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) (the latter being the most recent addition to the department, and closely aligned with the newly reformed educational degree programmes). The fifth departmental section is Academic English (*Sprachpraxis)*. While the other four sections operate largely separately, offering their own field-specific classes and lectures, the Academic English classes are taken by all students, regardless of their degree type and academic focus. The resultant academic diversity within the classes is therefore unique to this section, and has to be kept in mind when considering the content and focus of the curriculum (see section 4.2). The aim of the Academic English section is the practice and improvement of students' English language abilities: "developing (your) language skills for better speaking, listening, reading and writing, as well as (…) critical thinking and reasoning skills"[27]. Rather than a focus on content *per se*, the curriculum is intended to instil students with the confidence to continue developing their language skills outside classes, focussing on the model of a "better, more independent learner"[28]. Additionally, with the recent reformation of the education degree programmes and introduction of the TEFL academic section, teachers of Academic English (AE) have been encouraged to engage more with educationally relevant material and topics in their classes.

The AE curriculum is divided into three areas: oral communication, written communication, and translation; and within each area, into two levels, depending on the stage of study. The first AE class taken, normally in first semester, has recently been re-named Academic Writing I, and as the name suggests, focuses on the basics of text production at university level; this class is obligatory for all students of English. Subsequent classes, both writing based and speaking based, exist on two levels, and obligation to take them highly varies depending on degree type. The first level classes are taken by students in their second to fourth semester, followed by the second level classes at a later stage in the degree programmes. As discussed in section 1.1, the AE classes are taken at some point by all students of English, or with a significant English degree component, regardless of specific degree programme and level (including even postgraduate).

4.1.2 The drama-based class

The class under investigation for the study was offered as an Oral Communication (level 2) class in the summer semester (April-July) of 2017. As with all Academic English classes, the class was described on the university registration platform, Campus, before the registration period began. The description was as follows:

27 https://uni-tuebingen.de/fakultaeten/philosophische-fakultaet/fachbereiche/neuphilologie/englisches-seminar/sections/academic-english/
28 https://uni-tuebingen.de/fakultaeten/philosophische-fakultaet/fachbereiche/neuphilologie/englisches-seminar/sections/academic-english/

> In this class we will be building on the oral communication skills practiced in 'Oral Communication I'. The work of the semester will be built around a central project: the exploration of selected literature through drama-based methods. The aims of the class are: 1. To build and consider a stock of drama methods and exercises applicable to language teaching (of specific relevance to students of education); 2. To consider the usefulness of drama methods when dealing with literature; 3. To consider the usefulness of drama methods to foster oral communication skills. No pre-experience of drama is necessary, but students should be prepared to get actively involved in drama exercises throughout the semester! The literature for the course is: Public Library by Ali Smith (prose); The Wardrobe by Sam Holcroft (drama); and Darling: New and Selected Poems by Jackie Kay (poetry). Please note it is not necessary to buy these books before the semester starts: you will only be dealing with one of them, depending on your assigned group! More details will be explained in the first class session!

27 students enrolled in the class initially, appearing on the official list generated by the Campus system. However one student pulled out of the class shortly before the sessions began, so did not appear in any of the collected data. Of the 26 students who remained, 19 were on the pre-reformed teacher education degree course for the academically-oriented high school system in Germany (known in German as *GymPo*); one was enrolled in the new BEd teacher education programme, which has been designed to eventually replace the older *GymPo* degree entirely; one was studying *Berufliches Lehramt* (teacher education for professional vocational schools in Germany); two were on a BA programme; one was on an MA programme; one was preparing for the state examination in teacher education (now discontinued); and one did not enter this information. So of the 25 students who entered the information, 21 were training to be teachers of some kind. Of the 26 respondents, 22 were monolingual native speakers of German; one was bilingual with German and Spanish; two were monolingual native speakers of Albanian; and one was a monolingual native speaker of Chinese. The most advanced student was in her 10th semester; the least advanced in her 2nd semester; and the average semester level was 6.5. The youngest student was 20 years old; the oldest was 29; and the average age was 23.3 years.

As an oral communication class, the main medium of expression and assessment is spoken English. At level 2, oral communication classes normally focus on a particular topic, and assessment takes the form of student presentations held in groups of 2 or 3, exploring a particular aspect of the chosen class topic. Since I started teaching at Tübingen, many of my 'Oral Communication II' classes have focused on an aspect of drama, mostly with an educational focus[29]. For the class the study was based on, the stated topic was educational drama applied to literary texts. As mentioned in section 1.2, two previous studies (Sharp 2014; 2015) laid some of the practical and theoretical

29 See Sharp 2014 and Sharp 2015 for a full discussion of this context.

foundations for the present study. The first of the studies (2014) was based on a more general application of drama methods to language classes at university, and had given the students a more free-ranging experience of the relevant methods, not based on any given literary texts. The outcomes had been positive, with students confirming the perceived effectiveness and appropriatness of the drama work, and suggesting that a greater offering of drama-based classes at the department would be welcome (Sharp 2014: 32-33). The second study was based on a specific text (Shakespeare's *Macbeth*), and had attemped to extend the work done in the 2014 study to literary analysis (2015). The outcome of this study had been ambiguous in terms of the effects of drama methods on everyday language practice, but had been extremely positive in terms of the effects on the study of the literary text, including linguistic aspects of the text (Sharp 2015: 45). Combining these applications, therefore, in a single class where drama methods are investigated from both perspectives (linguistic and literary) more systematically, was the motivating impulse for the present study. The assessed presentations (held in groups of 2 or 3) were designed around a combination of literature (poetry, prose, drama) and drama exercise type (non-verbal, verbal, text-based) so that there emerged 9 unique combinations that formed the basis for each presentation:

	Poetry	**Prose**	**Drama**
Non-verbal exercises	Group 1 (17/05)	Group 4 (14/06)	Group 7 (05/07)
Verbal exercises	Group 2 (24/05)	Group 5 (21/06)	Group 8 (12/07)
Textual exercises	Group 3 (31/05)	Group 6 (28/06)	Group 9 (19/07)

The presentation was to be between 45 and 70 minutes long (within a 90-minute class period). Further instructions to the students were given on the required focus:

> The aim of each session is to apply your drama exercise type to an exploration of an aspect/s of the literature you're dealing with. You should think about leading the class, not presenting to them. They should be actively involved in the drama exercises, rather than passively listening to you the whole time. The focus of your session can be using the drama exercises to explore the literature for its own sake (literary focus); or else using the drama exercises to explore how the literature could be dealt with in a school classroom (educational focus). This is entirely up to you.

The groups were instructed to restrict the material they dealt with so that it was feasible within their allotted time slot. Groups dealing with poetry focused either on one or a maximum of three poems, depending on length and complexity; prose groups focused on a single short story from the collection provided; drama groups on one or two scenes from the given play. The week before each session, I spoke to the presenters to check that preparation work was going ahead effectively, and to gather the literary excerpts to send to the rest of the class in advance. After each presentation, there was enough

time left of the session to give informal feedback to the presenters and to discuss any issues the class were interested in. The first class session was dedicated to introducing the students to the class schedule, completing the pre-course questionnaires, and discussing the drama exercise types involved.

For the purposes of the class, drama exercises were organized under three types (see section 4.4.1 for a detailed discussion of the drama exercises used). Non-verbal exercises were explained as being those not involving spoken language, relying instead on various forms of physical communication such as mime, frozen picture and dance. Verbal exercises include those, in contrast, which do use vocal communication, such as word association exercises, role-play and (other) verbal improvisational work. The third category, text-based exercises, include all exercises that utilize written material – either in the form of an assigned text (e.g. a scene from a play), or else a text generated by the students themselves; this category would also include all intertextually adaptive tasks (e.g. the adaptation/performance of a poem as a dramatic monologue). These three categories were chosen as it was felt they were sufficiently contrasting to form the basis of distinct session presentations; other obvious categories were omitted as it was felt they could be included within one or other of the three categories provided: improvisation, for example, can be performed verbally as well as non-verbally; role-play exercises can be based on spontaneous language production (as a verbal exercise) or on a given text (as a text-based exercise).

Similarly, in order to investigate possible differences between the literary genres, all three main types were included: poetry, prose and drama. For the poetry focus, the chosen work was *Darling*, a collection of poems by contemporary Scottish poet Jackie Kay (2007). The prose work was *Public Library*, the most recent collection of short stories by contemporary Scottish writer Ali Smith (2015). The dramatic work chosen was *The Wardrobe* by contemporary English playwright Sam Holcroft (2014). Contemporary works were chosen in order to reduce the potentially confounding effects of works in archaic forms of the language (e.g. Shakespeare), and in order to increase the chances of the students finding contemporary and/or personal resonances in the literature. However other thematic and structural considerations were involved in the choices. Jackie Kay has earned a reputation as an accessible poet of wide appeal, being appointed in 2016 as the current holder of the office of *Makar* – the National Poet for Scotland[30]. Much of Kay's work is autobiographical, and explores her racial identity and sense of belonging (as the child of a Scottish mother and a Nigerian father); her specific childhood experiences (as an adopted child); and her sexuality (Kay publically self-identifies as a member of the LGBTQ community). Therefore it was felt that many contemporarily relevant issues were addressed in the work. Stylistically, Kay also favours more established, accessible poetic forms and styles (e.g. even, regular stanza

30 The term *Makar* is Scots for creator, writer, and/or poet (c.f. Middle English *Makar*; Early Modern English *Maker*).

and line length, and a prose language style). In her story collection *Public Library*, Ali Smith uses a thematic focus on books and reading as the connecting concept, which was felt to be an appropriate and engaging topic for the class. Similar to the poetry of Jackie Kay, the stories in Public Library are structurally and linguistically accessible, and indeed consistently so throughout the collection. *The Wardrobe* was written by Sam Holcroft as a commissioned work for the National Theatre Connections Festival in 2014. The festival commissions ten plays each year to be performed by young theatre groups all over the UK[31]. As such, the plays engage with issues of relevance to young people and appropriate for educational contexts. *The Wardrobe* specifically uses the central thematic device of a physical wardrobe, which is portrayed chronologically in various settings throughout its 'life', in different historical periods and social contexts in Britain. Thus readers and performers are able to engage with scenes set in some of the defining periods in the history of the country, perhaps offering a more vivid angle on material learned in class. Structurally the play is broken into twelve scenes, framed by a short prologue and epilogue, all of which feature different, unrelated characters. The scenes are short, and scene casts small (between one and four actors in each case). These structural elements make it easy for scenes to be performed and analysed separately in a class context, while still coming under the main device of the wardrobe itself.

After an introductory session, the following three class sessions of the semester were dedicated to preparing students for the required presentations. Each week we explored one of the drama exercise types and one of the literary genres, in two 45-minute mini-units. This work was led by me as the teacher.

4.2 Research questions

The *Sprachpraxis* section of the English department at Tübingen has been described in section 4.1.1. above. From a teacher's perspective, however, I started to get interested in how drama-based methods might be applied in my sphere of practice. For this reason, in terms of the practitioner addressing a specific contextual issue, or 'problem', it was felt that an Action Research methodology would be the most appropriate paradigm for the study (for a more detailed discussion of research methodology see section 4.3 below). In a previous short study of the teaching context (see Sharp 2014), I identified three pedagogical challenges in *Sprachpraxis.* These challenges are also most keenly felt in the oral communication classes, where the aims are more general, in contrast to the other class types, written communication and translation, where the outputs and materials are more clearly defined. The oral communication classes have the aim of practicing and improving students' spoken communication skills: i) In general academic contexts (e.g. presentations, debates, discussions) which is of course relevant across the other areas at the department (e.g. literature and linguistics), and also ii) In

31 https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/learning/connections (last accessed 16th July 2020 09:15)

terms of professional communication skills for students training to be teachers (the vast majority). This diversity of aim, represented by the variety of degree types in the student group, was identified as the first of the pedagogical challenges in the context. The second and third challenges were closely interrelated: the oral communication classes are typically large (between 20 and 30) when the aim of the classes is considered: the active, individual practice and improvement of oral communication skills. As confirmed by comments in the pre-course questionnaire (section 6.1); the moodle data (6.2-6.4); and the post-course questionnaire (6.5), opportunities to speak, active participation and group interaction are desirable aspects in such classes, from a student perspective. This becomes difficult in terms of numbers of students in the classes, and given the diversity of degree type/academic interest.

The use of drama methods to stimulate interactive communication in ELT classes is not new (see section 3.3.1). But I became interested in designing a project that would extend this exploration for additional relevant aspects. Oral communication skills are still the first priority of any oral communication class, and are of relevance to all degree types, as mentioned above. With an emphasis on pronunciation and pragmatic communicative strategies, this area also touches on the field of linguistics. The second element I considered was of relevance to the students who make up the majority of all *Sprachpraxis* courses: those on the teacher training degrees. Drama methods, as well as developing English language skills for professional level communication for the students planning on becoming teachers themselves, constitute professional 'tools': ideas of strategies and methods of potential usefulness in the students' future careers. This double relevance of drama education as both a process (in improving students' own skills) and a product (as methods to help them develop their own students' skills in the future) can be seen in the context of Tessa Woodward's concept of "Loop Input" (Woodward 2003). Finally, most students of English at Tübingen, regardless of degree type, have to engage with literature in English, either as a major degree focus or else as an elective, contributory element. So I wanted to also plan in a literary angle to the class, again with "Loop Input" in mind: drama to explore the literature as students, as well as drama methods as ideas for teaching literature to others. Clearly these pedagogical aspects are overlapping in terms of relevance and appropriateness to each respective group of students: literature is by no means irrelevant to students on the teacher training degree, even though it might not hold the same level of interest as that in the students on the literary studies degrees. Likewise, oral communication and presentational skills may be of particular interest and relevance to the trainee English teachers, but are arguably of relevance to almost all jobs, especially in the context of English as an International Language.

I also wanted to explore these areas from the students' own perspective as well as my own. As a drama practitioner myself, I was enthusiastic and positive about the potential of drama in an ELT context, and had been using these methods for some years previously; but in the spirit of the student-centred, participatory pedagogy constantly

re-emphasized in the literature on drama-in-education, a student angle on the issues was felt to be most appropriate. The research question was therefore divided into the three areas of interest, but prioritizing the student view in each case, as co-producers of knowledge and the most important stakeholders in the process:

- In which ways do drama in education classes at university level foster oral communication skills in the view of the participants?
- In which ways do drama in education classes at university level foster career-relevant skills (for *Lehramt*) in the view of the participants?
- In which ways do drama in education classes at university level foster an exploration of literature in English in the view of the participants?

Under oral communication skills, the implication is first and foremost the practical spoken English developed as part of the degree programmes catered for at the English Department. This covers the spoken English needed and utilized for purposes within the department, such as class discussion, academic presentations, and oral examinations. However the term also includes language skills developed for use after graduation, whether in the classroom as teachers of English, or elsewhere in the career market. Career-relevant skills for the students on the teacher education degrees would therefore include the oral communication skills in English required to do the job, but would also cover the drama methods themselves, to be experienced and potentially used in the students' future classrooms when they are in-service teachers. Under exploration of literature is understood the use of the drama methods in order to illuminate or expand upon aspects of the literary texts not covered, or not necessarily covered, by more traditional text-based analytical approaches. Such an application has already been piloted in a previous study on Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (Sharp 2015). Therefore the three areas under investigation have both educational relevance, of value to the students' university studies, and relevance to future careers, whether in language teaching or otherwise.

The Action Research project was therefore designed to explore not only my own practice as a teacher, and thereby address the pedagogical challenges outlined above, but also the reactions of the students, the primary stakeholders, on the question in which ways drama-based methods contribute to engagement with the three areas of most striking common relevance to the typically large and diverse groups in the oral communication classes.

4.3 Research methodology and design

Having described the context of the research, as well as outlined the main pedagogical issues at stake, this section will describe and discuss the chosen research methodology in more detail, both generally and within the specific context of the study.

4.3.1 Action Research

The term Action Research (AR) was first coined by Kurt Lewin (1946), and has been described as a "self-reflective, critical and systematic approach" to an exploration of teaching context (Burns 2010: 2). It is closely related to concepts of reflective practice (see Griffiths and Tann 1992; Zeichner and Liston 1996; Burton 2009) exploratory practice (see Allwright 2005) and teacher-as-researcher (see Fischer 2001; Pine 2009), but attempts a more systematic synthesis of such principles, "tak[ing] [them] into the realms of research" (Burns 2010: 17). AR applied to educational contexts tends to take a particular problem/s or issue connected to the context to explore and try if appropriate to resolve (Burns 2010: 2)[32], although the present study propounds the term challenge rather than problem, as the pedagogical status quo was not regarded as necessarily dysfunctional; the attempted use of drama methods was rather largely exploratory. The ultimate aim of an AR project is to effect change somehow, whether on the pedagogical means, ends, theory, institution, society and/or teacher (ibid.: 6). In the present study, the research considered the educational means (drama methods); institution (how such classes could/should be embedded in the ELT curriculum at Tübingen); students (how the students themselves felt about the methods involved) and teacher (my own role in the project); all based on the participants' own views on the process. The aims having been established, the standard AR procedure would involve a planning phase, where the problem/s are identified and the research designed appropriately; putting the plan into action (conducting the research); observation (a systematic observation of the process and collection of data); and finally, reflection on the process (reflection, evaluation and description of the phenomena observed) (see Kemmis and McTaggart 1988). This account of AR is regarded as the standard, described as:

> "involv[ing] teachers in evaluating and reflecting on their teaching with the aim of bringing about continuing changes and improvements in practice…it is small-scale, contextualized, and local in character, as the participants identify and investigate teaching-learning issues…it is participatory and inclusive….based on collecting and analysing data systematically….based on democratic principles; it invests the ownership for changes in curriculum practice in the teachers and learners who conduct the research and is therefore empowering" (Burns 2010: 10).

Here several key characteristics of AR come to the fore, including the reflective and participatory role of the teacher, the case-specific nature of the work, the systematicity of the process, and finally the "democratic" nature of the research, which ideally should be "empowering" (ibid.:).

This model has been criticized as over-restrictive and rules-bound, however (see McNiff 1988; McNiff and Whitehead 2006 and 2009; Ebbutt 1985), and counterargu-

32 For details of the pedagogical challenges relevant to the present study see section 4.2 above.

ments have been put forward for the need for greater creativity, adaptability and spontaneity in AR, given that the relevant research contexts often do not correspond to the neatly ordered sequence of research steps suggested above (cf Burns 1999). Nonetheless, exploratory AR in education is undoubtedly aimed at investigating (and hopefully improving) classroom practice, from all potential sides, and is rooted in the lived experience and knowledge of the participants themselves (Burns 2010: 14). To this end, Burns (2010) cites Schön's (1983) distinction between reflection-in-action (i.e. during the actual pedagogical process, in the present study the drama-based work itself) and reflection-on-action (a meta-level post-action reflection period) (Burns 2010: 14). Clearly, a post-action phase, be it formal (as in the present study) or informal, is crucial to any action research study.

Given that two of the core principles of AR have been identified as "the effective learning and best interests of students" and "working towards more inclusive, democratic and just educational goals" (Burns 2010: 33), the direct participation of the students in the project, including the garnering of their views on the process, is a key element. Paolo Freire (1970; 1982), a close intellectual associate of drama theorist Augusto Boal (see section 3.1), worked intensively in the area of adult educational research and was instrumental in the development of the approach known as Participatory Action Research (PAR). In keeping with his democratizing beliefs in the emancipation of the "silenced" (in this case the subjects of educational research), Freire emphasized the importance of the active participation in the research projects of the subjects themselves, seeing AR as a means of "inquiry into the underlying causes of the events in their [i.e. the students'] world" (Freire 1982: 30). Although other research methodologies were to emerge from such work (see for example Hall 1975; 1992 and exploratory teaching in Allwright 2005), the basic principles of Freire's vision for AR have been incorporated into standard AR practices (see above). This methodology has particular revelance to the study, given that the learners involved are adults, responsible for and capable of reflecting upon their own learning and the wider educational context, which includes the double-focus of their own development as language learners as well as insights gained that could be applied in their future careers as language teachers.

4.3.2 Planning the action

The main instrument of data collection chosen was the questionnaire. There are several considerations in this regard. Questionnaires are easy to produce, flexible, and appropriate for gathering large amounts of data from a medium-to-large group of participants, as well as being relatively easy to process (Dörnyei 2003: 1). Compared to alternative methods, questionnaires display an "unprecedented efficiency" (ibid.: 9) regarding time, effort, and resources. A wide range of data types can also be gathered simultaneously using questionnaires, broadly categorizable under factual questions, behavioural questions, and attitudinal questions (Dörnyei 2003: 8-9). Despite the man-

ifest advantages of using questionnaires to collect data, however, Cohen et al (2011) identify some important considerations when using them (317). Researchers must gain participants' consent and assure their right to withdraw from the study. They must also assure them of the likelihood of a beneficial outcome of the research, and guarantee that the research will not in any way disadvantage nor harm them. The questions should be constructed as clearly as possible, and possibly biases avoided.

Burns (2010) suggests some leading questions before embarking upon an AR project which I answered before the data collection process began (Chapter 2). In order to record and reflect upon some of my considerations, I include my answers in italics below:

1. Is there something in your teaching situation that you would like to change?

I'd like to make it more dynamic, free, and less 'rules bound'. The restrictions imposed by curriculum, Prüfungsordnung and so on, seem to work in opposition to the fundamental aim of Sprax – to give the students an opportunity to practice and improve their practical language skills in a low-pressure, low-risk context. Personal experience has continually confronted me with a rather negative image of the typical student in a typical Sprax class: sitting down; minimal eye contact with teacher or fellows; as little spoken contribution or interaction as possible; being 'polite' but not challenging, critical or active; having the apparent main aim of 'doing what is necessary to pass the course'; 'just getting by'.

2. What 'burning questions' do you have about your students' learning?

Generally: Why did they choose to study English? Why did they choose to train as teachers? Specifically: How might creative approaches to learning encourage them 'out of their shells'? Can creative/drama approaches be effective even with those with little previous experience of or affinity for them?

3. Have you ever tried out a new teaching idea in your classroom and wondered whether it really helped your students to learn?

Yes – I've been using literature and drama in one way or another since I first started teaching Sprax (2001), and have always wondered whether it really helped. However, I've always had a strong inclination, based on gut feeling and informal student feedback, that it does help, and is enjoyed and appreciated.

4. Are there aspects of the way you teach that you would like to improve?

I would like to better structure and formalize my creative/drama teaching methods. This might involve more specialized training (e.g. Theaterpädagogik), further critical reading and planning, or simply trial and error. In the medium to long-term I would like to develop an effective assessment model for creative/drama work in class, which would consider both linguistic and artistic aspects of the students' efforts.

4.3.3 My role as teacher-researcher

The present study is Action Research based, and is grounded in my own practice as a language instructor at the University of Tübingen. Therefore my own role is double: that of a practitioner whose practice is the focus of the research; and that of the researcher himself. Much Action Research involves a researcher/s who is professionally involved the organization being investigated (Efron and Ravid 2013: 2; Burns 2010; 10); and a reflective practice model, where the researcher and the practitioner are one and the same, requires a particular level of self-awareness of potential conflicts of interest and implications for the research (Burns 2010; 17; Allwright 2005).

The impetus behind such research into one's own institution is, despite the problem-focused nature of Action Research, ultimately one of improvement, and is "attached to an expectation or contract that the research will make a useful contribution to the organization" (Coghland and Brannick 2005: xiii). While this can be seen as a benevolent motivational factor, it requires significant sensitivity towards potential research limitations and failures, in the face of what might be a strong desire for the research to effect positive institutional change. As well as the pedagogical challenges explicity stated in section 1.3, there were additional personal and institutional motivations for embarking on the project. As a keen drama practitioner myself, and being convinced of the benefits of using drama with students (see Chapter 1), I envisioned the project as a chance to focus and hone my own drama-based practice, in order to be able to offer more effective classes of this type in the future, and to expand my own repertoire of exercises and approaches through exchange with the students. As a teacher of future teachers, an additional motivation is my position as a potential role model for students – by introducing them to drama-based teaching methods within an AR paradigm, I wanted to encourage them to become more self-reflective in their own practice, current and future, and introduce them to the concept of trying out new innovations in the classroom, that may lie outside their normal scope of experience. In this way, the drama-based methods could be seen as representative of new, creative approaches in general, especially given the fact that the students had to find and develop their own drama exercises throughout the semester (see section 4.4). Finally, on an institutional level, there was a motivation to spread values such as creativity and innovation, as well as perhaps raising the awareness of potential benefits of drama-based teaching methods. In this latter point, the project was intended as an exploratory exposition of an approach that has been lacking in practice, and certainly in research, in higher educational contexts thus far (see section 3.3)

4.4 The teacher-led sessions

Section 4.1.2 has given a detailed description of the framework and organizational structure of the class, the students who enrolled, and the drama exercise types and literature chosen. This section will go into more detail in terms of how the students were introduced to the concepts involved, and how they were guided to planning their sessions. Following this, the sessions will each be described in turn (4.4.2-4.4.10).

It was important that no pre-experience of drama or dramatic methods was assumed on the part of the teacher: this was also explicitly mentioned in the course description, and was important for the data analysis (see section 4.1.2). The literature to be used was stated in the course description as well, and students were requested to have copies before the class started (see class guide in Appendix B1). In the very first class session of the semester the class concept and project was described to the students; a live demonstration of the Moodle-based weekly questionnaire was conducted; students were assigned their identification numbers for the data anaylsis; and students were organized into groups for their assessed sessions. The groups were formed according to literary preference – so three groups were found who wanted to focus on poetry; three for prose; and three for drama. Each group consisted of three students each. Finally, an example poem from the Jackie Kay collection (see section 4.1.2) was given to the class to read for the following week's session. No particular task was given here: the students simply had to read the poem and begin familiarizing themselves with Kay's work. The same pattern was repeated in the subsequent two weeks with excerpts from the short story collection and the play. In preparation for the subsequent teacher-led sessions (see below), the students were also given a list of example exercises under each category (see Appendix B2).

The subsequent three class sessions were teacher-led, and focused on introducing the students to the literature, and to the types of drama exercises that were going to be used throughout the term. The first of these three class sessions began with the students completing the pre-course questionnaire (see section 5.1). The next phase of the class set a pattern that would be repeated in the subsequent two class sessions. The students were set a warm-up task which in this case involved simply walking around the class space, this having been emptied of chairs and desks. Variations were introduced in terms of speed, on a scale of one to four, where one was slow-motion walking, and four was walking as quickly as possible. Followng this, the class had to freeze mid-exercise on an audible cue from the teacher, then resume their movement on a second cue, in order to start building a sense of group awareness. Next, three examples of drama exercises were given and enacted: one each for the non-verbal, verbal and text-based categories the students were required to use. In this session, the non-verbal exercise involved human puppetry: one student was the puppet, the other the puppet master, who used imaginary wires attached to the arms and legs of their puppet to manipulate her into different poses; after 2 minutes, the students swapped roles. The verbal exercise

was a simple word association game, in which the whole class stood in a circle, and had to respond spontaneously, one by one, to an English word introduced by the teacher. The final exercise was a text-based one in which the class were split into pairs, and given the following dialogue:

A: Hi.
B: Oh hi! I wasn't expecting you.
A: What's going on?
B: Nothing.
A: Can we go for a walk?

Each pair had to imagine a situation in which this dialogue would make sense, and then present their scene to the class, after a 5-minute preparation period. The intention was to display how much subtext and interpretational choice lies behind even the simplest of dialogues. For the last 20 minutes of the class the poem that had been read in preparation was discussed and key themes identified. This was intended to introduce the class to the work of Jackie Kay and start them thinking about possible lines of interpretation. Finally a short scene from the Sam Holcroft play (see section 4.1.2) was assigned as reading for the following week.

The next session began straight away with more drama exercises. As a warm-up, Augusto Boal's exercise 'Columbian Hypnosis' was used (Boal 1992: 51). Again the students are in pairs. One of them holds a single outstretched palm close to the face of their partner. The 'hypnotizer' then moves their palm slowly around, while the partner has to move themselves accordingly so that their face always remains the same distance away from the hypnotizer's hand. The next exercise was a non-verbal exercise again using body sculpture. In pairs, the students had to take turns to position themselves in accordance with the pose of their partner, with the condition that one part of them should be touching the partner before freezing. Once the partner felt the touch of their fellow student, they unfroze and had to position themselves differently again, touching their colleague and then freezing. Before this exercise, as well as any others involving close physical proximity, students were given the opportunity to sit out if they felt uncomfortable with the contact involved. The next exercise, a verbal one, was based on improvisation. Students were given a situation to be acted out in pairs – both had been at a party, one of them had argued with another friend, and had decided to leave. This person was sitting in their car ready to drive off. The second actor, a neutral friend, had to enter the car and try to persuade the person to calm down and return to the party. Two volunteers were asked for to play the scene, then both of them picked a numbered card from a deck (2,4,6,8 or 10) which they kept to themselves alone. The size of their number indicated the strength of their desire in the scene –the desire to drive away in the one actor, and the desire to persude the friend back to the party in the other actor. The scene was then acted out in free improvisation, and the rest of the

class had to guess which number each player had. The final exercise, text-based, was, in contrast to the previous week, based on text written by the students themselves rather than one assigned by the teacher. The students were split into groups of three, and given a basic scenic task: *A and B are talking. C enters. There is tension.* In the first run, the groups were given unlimited improvisational freedom. In a second turn, they had to condense the scenes they had played into no more than five scripted lines, while trying their utmost to maintain the situational integrity, tension, and character relationships established in the improvised version. This exercise was intended to introduce students to the challenges of using restricted dialogue to express often complex situations and relationships, as well as highlighting the importance of aspects like tone of voice, facial expression, and body language. Finally the drama scene read for homework was discussed and a short passage of prose assigned for the following session, before I met with the first two student groups to already discuss their plans for their sessions coming up (see section 4.1.2). Having been assigned their literary genre based on preferences, as discussed above, the groups then had to select a type of drama exercise to use: non-verbal, verbal or text-based. This had been discussed and negotiated as a class.

The next week was the final of the teacher-led preparation sessions. After a brief stretching and shaking warm-up phase, the students were divided into groups of three and given key words representing thematic concerns in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (e.g. revenge, ambition, superstition etc.). After a ten-minute preparation phase, they had to present their word as a group frozen picture, during which the rest of the class had to guess what word they had been working with. The verbal exercise for the week was a free improvisation based on a given object. Three everday objects were used: a coathanger, a hole-punch and a computer cable. The objects could represent anything similar to themselves, but not what they actually were (e.g. the computer cable could become a poisonous snake; the hole-punch a camera etc.). The final drama exercise, the text-based example, was a set of games played around a Shakespearean sonnet. This ranged from physical (reading the text while walking in a certain way); verbal (using a different accent when reading out) and dramatic (taking on a particular role). The intention was two-fold: firstly to demonstrate exercises that could be used to familiarize oneself with challenging text, and secondly to demonstrate the range of dramatic possibilities one has when dealing with texts in class. Finally the prose passage assigned the previous week was discussed in the group, before I met with the next two student groups to discuss their plans for the assessed sessions.

These opening weeks had been intended to introduce students to the chosen literature, as well as getting them familiar with the drama exercise types: non-verbal, verbal and text-based. The subsequent nine student-led sessions were aimed at challenging the students to find their own dramatic exercises, within the assigned type, and applying them to the literature they had chosen. Tips were given in terms of resources for drama games and exercises, but students were also encouraged to be creative in terms of generating their own exercises. Thus the opening teacher-led sessions were supposed to provide

an informative basis of knowledge of the varied repertoire of possible exercises under each category, while then leaving the students with the space to do further exploration on their own in terms of generating the exercises for their own session. This was intended to develop the kind of resourcefulness required of the students in their future careers as language teachers, applied, but not exclusive to, the drama-based teaching approach.

4.5 The student-led sessions

As described above, the three teacher-led sessions at the start of the semester were intended primarily to introduce the students to the class concept, in particular to the drama methods and exercises. As previously mentioned, there was no expectation or requirement of previous dramatic experience, so it was important that the students received this introductory phase. As also previously mentioned, the students were provided with a checklist of the three drama categories (non-verbal, verbal and text-based) along with example exercises under each category (see Appendix B2). With this information, and having been introduced also to the three literary works for the semester (see section 4.1.2), the students then had to form groups for their assessed presentations. This was carried out based on literary preference: the class was split into larger groups interested in poetry, prose, or drama; then the smaller groups of three students were formed around further interest in a particular drama exercise type – non-verbal, verbal or text-based, within each literary genre. At this stage, it was left to the individual groups to decide what specific poem, short story, or scene to work on, which particular drama exercises or methods to use, and then to design a session around a combination of these two, in which each group would lead the rest of the class in a drama-based literary exploration (see section 4.1.2).

4.5.1 Session 1: poetry and non-verbal exercises

The first presentation session took place in May, held by a group of three students. The session focused on the combination of poetry and non-verbal drama exercises. The group decided to deal with a thematic focus: nature in poetry; and selected two poems from the collection (Kay 2007) to work with in class: 'Life Mask' (ibid. 198) and 'Yell Sound' (ibid. 219). 'Life Mask' is a short poem consisting of three 5-line stanzas that construct a reverse personification of nature ("the nose is a mouth full of spring/the mouth is an earful of birdsong" lines 2-3). The last two lines of the final stanza introduce a first-person Lyrical-I ("I sat up with my pale face in my hands/and all of a sudden it was spring" lines 14-15). 'Yell Sound' has five four-line stanzas, and is a self-reflective meditation of the Lyrical-I in a specific natural environment[33]. The poem is written

33 Yell Sound is the stretch of sea between the island of Yell and the Mainland island in the Shetland archipelago of Scotland.

throughout from the Lyrical-I perspective ("I always looked out at the world/and wondered if the world looked back at me" lines 1-2).

The first non-verbal exercise, used as a warm-up to the topic, was carried out in groups of three. These small groups were given the task to plan, then perform, a frozen picture with the title "Me in the (sic) nature". After the performances and a brief discussion of each picture, the presenters began work on the poems. Nature poetry was discussed in general, with some examples of sub-themes given (e.g. nature as metaphor, seasonal differences, etc.). Then the two Jackie Kay poems were discussed in groups, with a particular emphasis on the presentation and role of nature, as well as how each Lyrical-I was positioned in relation to nature. After a discussion of each poem in turn, the students reconvened in their groups of three to prepare a second frozen picture, this time with the title "the Lyrical-I in the (sic) nature". The rest of the students had to guess, in each case, which poem was being represented. There followed a brief discussion of the differences between the two frozen pictures for each group. Then the presenters posed three final questions for class discussion that put the focus more on the meta level and pedagogical concerns:

1. What were the difficulties illustrating the Lyrical-I and its relationship with nature in a frozen picture?
2. What did you think of our non-verbal exercise? Which non-verbal exercises would you choose to work on the nature theme in poems?
3. What year level would you use the technique of 'frozen pictures' in?

From the teacher's diary that I kept, the entry for this first session noted some positive effects of the non-verbal exercises combined with poetry:

I feel that the frozen pictures helped to focus their minds on the main themes and of course the role of nature.

Despite the rather challenging nature of the task, it was felt that there were benefits to this 'hardship', especially on an interpretative level:

In the final frozen pictures, the rest of the class had to decide which 'lyrical I' was being represented – not an easy task, as there was a lot of thematic overlap between the poems, particularly regarding nature. So when the class guessed 'wrongly', it opened up a vigorous discussion between the performers and the other students about conflicting interpretations (…) one of the great things today was the freedom of discussion which emerged, and the quality of the interpretational responses, all based on references to the poem.

My impressions of this first presentation session were generally very positive, with an acknowledgment of the students' willingness to engage with the preparatory work that had been done in the opening weeks of the semester:

In general the class is working very well with the drama exercises, and this goes back to the first four introductory weeks. They are approaching the exercises with the necessary positivity and willingness to 'give it a go', but at the same time are remaining disciplined, and 'present' enough to be able to reflect on the work. At least that's the impression I get from observing, and listening to the comments.

4.5.2 Session 2: poetry and verbal exercises

The second session, led by a group of three students, focused on the combination of poetry and verbal exercises. The focus of the session was 'emotions in poetry', whereby the presenters led the group in acting exercises designed to explore the emotional tones of the two chosen poems: 'Brendon Gallacher' (Kay 2007: 201) and 'Attention Seeking' (ibid. 209). 'Brendon Gallacher' consists of five five-line stanzas and details a friendship the Lyrical-I had as a child with the eponymous character. In the final stanza it is revealed however that Brendon Gallacher never existed in reality: he was an imaginary friend. 'Attention Seeking' is a single 34-line stanza prose poem, written from the perspective of a childish Lyrical-I. It details various common attention-seeking tactics, before revealing a serious twist at the end in which the Lyrical-I is involved in a car accident; as such it explores the range of semantic and psychological nuances of the titular phrase.

Before dealing with the poems, however, the group spent a lot of time easing the class into the thematic focus on emotions. A warm-up exercise was staged in an imaginary café in which the participants had to act according to pre-assigned emotions to be guessed at by the observers. This was followed by a brief presentation of the theory of 'pillars of emotion' developed by acting coach Brian Timoney, in which emotional expression on stage is categorized into three stages: mental process, physicality and language. A follow-up exercise illustrated how difficult it is, for example, to play an emotion (e.g. happiness) in a seemingly contradictory physical posture (e.g. slumping shoulders, head down, frowning). The aim was to synchronize all three 'levels' towards the desired emotional expression. The main exercise of the session involved three groups of three students each being assigned one of the poems. Each of the three groups working on the same poem, however, were assigned a different emotion (anger; hurt; boredom); the three emotions were the same regardless of which poem the groups were working on. The groups then had to create an interpretative performance of the poem that focused on their assigned emotion. After a discussion of each performance, the groups gathered not according to which poem they had been working with, but according to their assigned emotion. The discussion topic focus was the manner in which the assigned emotion had influenced the group's reading of the poem.

Due to the obvious emphasis on performance and emotion, the main focus of this session was on the dramatic process, rather than the literature itself. As I recorded in the teacher diary for the week:

…the session was using the poetry, through the drama exercises, as a means of exploring the emotions themselves, which remained the focus throughout.

Or, as one of the presenters expressed it, the poetry was being explored as a "vessel for emotions". As such, then, this session placed significant demands on the students' willingness to perform, in some cases involving challenging emotions. The potential exposure of such a challenge, however, was noted as being manageable within the collective atmosphere of the class: a "shared vulnerability", as one presenter put it. And there seemed to be some consensus on this point, as recorded in the teacher diary:

I was struck by the increased intensity of the acting, and of the great range of interpretations they came up with. The group later commented that they noticed this better acting, which they attributed to the class feeling more relaxed with each other, and being able to commit to the safety of the "shared vulnerability".

The session finished with a consideration of three questions:

1. Did the emotion affect/change your interpretation?
2. Was the exercise helpful or challenging?
3. Anything unexpected?

Students reported that they had found the emotions as useful to focus their performances, rather than simply being asked to present the poem in general. It was also commented that the exercises helped them to find possible multiple meanings in certain phrases and passages. Despite the obvious acting challenge, the group felt overwhelmingly that the drama work had helped them to engage with the poetry, leading to different perspectives than those gained from simply reading the poem themselves.

4.5.3 Session 3: poetry and text-based exercises

The third class session, on poetry and text-based exercises, was presented by a group of three students. The work chosen, 'George Square' (Kay 2007: 187), is a prose poem of two seven-line stanzas which details a memory of the Lyrical-I in which her elderly parents prepare to go on an anti-war demonstration in George Square in Glasgow. The session had an educational focus, with students being asked to consider the teaching potential of the text-based exercises used.

To begin with, small groups of students were provided only with the first stanza, and the first line of the second stanza, of the poem. At this point, the reader is presented only with the couple preparing to leave the house – their destination or purpose is still unclear. The group then had to complete a written version of the poem in four lines. After this exercise, each version was read aloud to the rest of the class. The range of interpretations was significant, given the ambiguity of the material provided, so versions ranged from the tragic (the couple dying in a car crash) to the sentimental (visiting the grave of a mutual friend) to the romantic (visiting the site of their first encounter) and even to the comic (re-visiting a nightclub they had frequented as teenagers). An interluding exercise was then provided as an example of textual adaptation: an original fight scene from the film Star Wars, between Darth Vadar and Luke Skywalker, was shown, before the class was presented with a Shakespearean-style reimagining of the same scene in blank verse form (Doescher 2014). The main drama exercise followed: the same groups had to adapt their newly written poems into a dramatic scene, to be played out, involving all group members. A final exercise used the poem 'Somebody Else': a very short (two three-line stanzas) poem of self-exploration that uses regular repetition of the phrase 'somebody else'. The students were given a copy of this poem with every instance of the phrase blanked out; they had to complete the work with their own inventions. The class was finally presented with three questions:

1. Which school year could these exercises work with?
2. Which skills can be practiced through these exercises?
3. Would they help to raise pupils' interest in poetry?

An excerpt from the teacher diary records the general impressions of the ensuing discussion:

One student liked the use of media, and stated that this could help raise interest. That raises the question of media in DiE *generally. The usual comments were made in terms of active, creative responses helping to engage pupils. One student said she didn't like poetry, but enjoyed the completion exercise, as it made the poem more personally identifiable. The dramatic versions according to one student had the effect that the poems "got more real". Any year group could benefit, according to one person, depending on the complexity of the poem used.*

Another interesting element was raised in this session for the first time – the potential of drama exercises, perhaps most specifically text-based exercises, in practicing all language skills simultaneously:

One student made a very interesting point that I hadn't considered: that the session had actually engaged all of the language skills – reading (the poem); writing (their own versions); and speaking and listening (performing).

This effect emerged consistently in sessions based on text-based exercises, and is coded and discussed at length in section 6.2.

4.5.4 Session 4 : prose and non-verbal exercises

The fourth session, led by another group of three students, was the first session based on prose, in this case in combination with non-verbal drama exercises. The group centred the session on the Ali Smith story 'And so on' (Smith 2015: 211-220), the last from the collection *Public Library* which was the class prose reader (see section 4.1.2 above). The story is written in the first person (seemingly from Smith's own personal perspective). The background is an anecdote about a friend of the narrator who died young, which leads to some further anecdotes on the nature of death, and the role that art and literature play in preserving the memories and impressions of lives. The anecdotes also include a story-within-the-story about an old woman who hires actors to play her relatives over Christmas time.

Similar to the group who combined poetry with non-verbal exercises (see section 4.4.1), this group decided to base their session on a specific theme – in this case, death. Groups were formed using a mime activity, before each group assigned a particular emotion (e.g. guilt). Each emotion was performed non-verbally in turn, to be guessed at by the rest of the class. After all emotions had been played the class had to guess at the theme that drew all of the emotions together – which was death. The theme of death in literature was briefly introduced. After this was established, the main exercise began. Groups of three were assigned a particular passage from the story. Firstly they could read and discuss their passages, guided by the following questions:

1. What mood can you detect in the passage?
2. How is the theme of death represented?
3. What do you feel when you read the text?

They had time to then prepare a non-verbal performance based on their interpretation of the given passage. They were encouraged to be creative, and not to merely present a straightforward representation of the excerpt. Following each performance, each of the three presenters, who had focused on one particular excerpt, presented their own interpretations, which offered a contrast to base a discussion on. Finally, two educational questions were posed:

1. Is 'death in literature' an important topic at school?
2. In which grade would you start using it?

Impressions of the session recorded in the diary include the variety of interpretation:

It was interesting to see how different groups interpreted each passage, in this rather fragmented and 'interpretable' story. With the 'story within a story' passage, one group focused on the old woman returning home, the actors knocking at her door, before a kind of 'resurrection' tableau in which all performers stretched their arms heavenwards; they had interpreted the climbing of the stairs as the woman dying, and perhaps the actors arriving as angels/harbingers? The other group presented the avaricious old woman in a temper after her relatives die in the car crash.

The questions on education at the end appear to have struck me at the time as rather inconsequential:

The group then posed two questions about classroom applications, but I feel this was very much lip service – the class answered briefly, and the group did not elaborate. For me, this was a session exploring the literature.

Contrastingly, the idea that drama-in-education might be best applied to literature (with or without an educational focus) seems to have occurred at this stage:

The group today decided to focus on the theme of death in literature. I checked, and of the first four groups, only last week's poetry group focused on a theme which was vaguely educational. The other three focused on some aspect of the literature itself – I wonder if this is an early indication of a confirmation of the Macbeth project[34] *: that drama, it is felt, works best when applied to literary rather than educational aspects?*

Also noteworthy perhaps is that both the poetry and prose-based non-verbal sessions focused on a literary theme rather than an educational one – an effect that will be discussed in chapter 13.

4.5.5 Session 5: prose and verbal exercises

The fifth session, on prose literature and verbal drama exercises, was delivered by three presenters. The session was centred around the story 'Last' (Smith 2015: 5-17), which is the first story in Ali Smith's collection *Public Library*. The story is very short – around 12 pages – and focuses on an anecdotal experience of the narrator after a train journey. She

34 See Sharp 2015

leaves the train with the other passengers once it has reached its terminus, but then she notices that a woman in a wheelchair is still on the train, alone, and seemingly unable to get out. During the subsequent mission to release the trapped passenger, the narrator starts to consider the meaning of words and phrases (inspired by various instructional signs around the train and the station), and how these have changed throughout time.

Perhaps inspired by the etymological theme of the story, the presenters decided to focus on an educational topic, namely the acquisition and use of new words. Each student in the class was assigned one word taken from the story, with which they undertook all the subsequent exercises in the session. Dictionaries were provided, and the participants were encouraged to use them at any time they were unsure. A warm-up game of taboo allowed each student to describe their words to the rest of the class – this established a firm foundation of comprehension from the beginning. A second exercise involved students in small groups, telling a shared story in turns, again using their respective words. Then the presenters set up an improvisation exercise, in which students were given an initial sentence to set the scene, before they had to continue spontaneously, restricted only by the need to again use their assigned vocabulary. Finally the group set three discussion questions for the class:

1. Do verbal exercises reduce anxiety in terms of oral communication?
2. Do improvised drama exercises improve the use of words in context?
3. To what extent can a dictionary support heterogeneity in the English classroom?

Several aspects were noted in the relevant entry in the teacher diary. Firstly the question of the need for literature was raised, given that the words were taken, and used, entirely out of the aesthetic context:

Interestingly, the session was based on the assignation of a single word to each student, which they would use throughout all the various exercises. The session was built around getting to know the meaning of the word; using it in context; and using it spontaneously. There was no reference at all to the actual details or content of Smith's story. The words were taken out of their artistic context in this case.

Secondly, I was struck by the way the presenters had adapted games and exercises that had been introduced to them in the opening weeks of the semester:

After the warm-up, the group conducted two rounds of shared story – the fortunately/unfortunately variant I used in the opening weeks. I was struck by how much smoother, quicker and more effective this worked when the students had a specific word they had to use (their assigned ones), as compared to being completely free when we did it at the start of the semester. Back then there had been hesitation, contradiction, and a good deal of

shyness. Perhaps the slightly 'competitive' element of using your new word adds an edge to this? Despite the stories being contrived and therefore generating a lot of laughter, the aim of mentioning the words kept it together and gave the whole exercise some structure. This was continued in the next phase, in which the students had to use their words in an improvisational setting. Again, the necessity for all the class to use their words led to a much faster player turnover than had been the case before when we did it totally 'freely'; although the storyline was of course contrived and cut short. A great example of the drama serving the educational purposes: drama-as-tool, rather than as aesthetic product[35].

The two final thoughts recorded in the diary entry concerned the use of literature mentioned above, as well as the definition of drama-based exercises as 'dramatic' (see discussion in chapter 7):

Overall, I was struck by how the vocabulary element improved the student motivation and success of the exercises. Two issues that stay with me are firstly: what relevance has literature in all of this? Is the literary text simply a pre-text, a store of potential new vocabulary to be learned? After all, the group didn't refer to the story at all; and secondly, how can we distinguish 'drama methods' from 'games'?

4.5.6 Session 6: prose and text-based exercises

The educational focus continued into the sixth session, on the combination of prose with text-based exercises. The presenting group of three students picked Ali Smith's story 'The human claim' (2015: 77-95), which interweaves a personal experience of the narrator of credit card fraud with her explorations of the life and work of DH Lawrence. For the first time in the semester, the presenters used the class as a model for a class in school, and focused on the main topic of using drama to arouse interest in and introduce a work of literature before the close reading stage. The class was asked to keep in the role of school pupils until the end of the main exercises and the meta level discussion.

After a physical warm up, the first language exercises involved students being assigned random lines from the story. Half of the class sat silently on chairs with their eyes closed, while the other half wandered from student to student, whispering their assigned lines in their ears in a range of freely chosen emotions. Then the groups switched round. After this dramatic start, the whole class brainstormed what the subject of the story might be, based on the lines they had heard. Finally, an excerpt from the story was distributed round the whole class, involving a pickpocket incident at a café. Small groups formed in order to think of a possible resolution to the incident, and

35 See section 3.2.2 for a discussion of drama as product versus instrumental tool.

script a dramatized version of it, to be performed in front of the class: a classic textual adaptation exercise of the text-based category.

The teacher diary recorded the teacher-oriented focus of the session:

This was the final prose session, and also the most overtly 'educational' session so far. From the outset, the aim was made clear: – how to teach prose, specifically how to arouse interest in the story before reading it.

Another positive observation was made of the combination of dramatic 'modelling' (i.e. the students taking on the role of school pupils) with class discussion in their 'true' roles as trainee teachers:

A nice aspect of this session was the sense that the class were being 'used' as a school class in order to try out the ideas. But then there was always a follow-up phase in which the discussion took on a meta-level character in order to reflect. A useful, utilitarian session which explored the possibilities of text-based exercises in teaching literature.

4.5.7 Session 7: drama and non-verbal exercises

Session 7 was the first of the sessions on drama, in this case combined with non-verbal exercises. It was held by a group of three students. The chosen literature was scene 3 of *The Wardrobe* by Sam Holcroft (2014: 22-26) (see section 4.1.2 above). The scene plays in the wardrobe of the title in 1644, in Bolton, England, during the English Civil War. Three children are hiding from Royalist soldiers when they are joined by a servant girl. The girl panics and starts to make noise. To silence her, the children accidentally suffocate the girl to death.

The presenting group chose to use the session to introduce the play to the class (which they had not read beforehand), focusing on the function of the wardrobe itself. A warm-up exercise involved the presenters giving the class instructions based on who and where they were, and what function the wardrobe fulfilled – these began as non-related invented situations (e.g. a Royal Wedding photographer hiding to get an exclusive shot; or a mafia informant eavesdropping on a conversation), before the real scene context was given. A discussion round then posed the question how the students felt in each of the different circumstances. The next exercise then introduced the text of the scene – students were asked to pick a key phrase from the opening two pages, which was then acted out non-verbally in small groups. The main exercise was split into two phases. In the first phase, a video was shown with the three presenters acting out the first part of the scene. Small groups then had to decide on a possible ending which was played in mime version to the rest of the class. The next phase involved one of the presenters reading out the ending as it happens in the play, with the groups of students miming along. This allowed a side-by-side comparison of what each group had decided

on their own with a feel for the actual ending as written by Holcroft. A discussion phase at the end focused on the main theme of the presentation, namely the dramatic function of the wardrobe in the scene. Some responses were collected in the teacher diary:

"A space where normal laws don't apply"
"A fantasy world as an escape"
"Place of false or temporary safety"
"A place of limitless possibilities"
"Place of deception/liberation/bad memories"

At the end of the session the class were asked to reflect on the non-verbal exercises as applied to this particular literary excerpt. Again, the teacher diary recorded some of the more commonly raised points:

"It's sometimes easier without words – e.g. playing the crazy servant"
"Extreme settings are easier non-verbally".
"The wardrobe is a place of endless possibilities".
"Different performances showed different possible interpretations".

4.5.8 Session 8 : drama and verbal exercises

The eighth session focused on drama and verbal exercises, and was held by a group of three students. They focused on scene 1, which the class had not read beforehand. Scene 1 of *The Wardrobe* takes place in London in 1485 shortly after the defeat of King Richard III and the subsequent coronation of Henry VII (Holcroft 2014: 9-14). Two nieces of the deceased King Richard meet in the wardrobe to discuss their impending marriage prospects and uncertain futures.

Similar to session 6, which dealt with prose and text-based exercises (see section 4.4.6 above), the eighth group decided to once more focus on treating the class as a model school group, and use the exercises as a means of introducing the literature to them. After a short warm-up phase focused on the voice, the students were assigned cards with words on them from the scene. They had to describe their words to each other, avoiding not only the words themselves, but any cognate forms, as well as a list of closely related words. This not only increased the difficulty level of the game, but exposed the class to an effective word field of the scene to be explored. Having guessed each other's words in this taboo game, groups of four students were formed, which were given time to prepare (semi-improvised) performances set in the wardrobe. At this stage they still had not read the original version, so the performances were highly varied, but due to the inclusion of the key words from the script, many of them were related to the themes raised in the original:

- Sisters together discussing marriage
- A priest clandestinely marrying a king and his own sister
- Servants gossiping about an upcoming royal wedding
- A king and queen planning the marriage of their daughter in secret
- A king imposing an undesired marriage on his young daughter

All students in the group were to be assigned a speaking role, ensuring that all participants were indeed speaking and practicing key vocabulary from the play. After all of the scenes were performed, three questions were raised for discussion:

1. Which of the methods did you like most and why?
2. Which grade would you apply them in?
3. Any difficulties in applying them?

It was generally felt that both games involving the key words were very effective in preparing students for the actual scene, by involving them creatively. As I noted in the teacher diary:

What was interesting was the extent to which the groups anticipated the actual scene from the play, despite not having read it. This proved that the key words had been well-chosen, and also proved the effectiveness of this kind of 'pre teaching', especially using vocabulary. All of the scenes involved a royal arranged marriage, and most of them reluctance to accept it (anticipation); some ended very extremely (patricide/regicide!). In each case, the wardrobe had a key function – safe space, secret location, quiet spot, crime scene, tragic location: so the importance of it as a locus was also underlined.

4.5.9 Session 9: drama and text-based exercises

The ninth and final session dealt with drama combined with text-based drama exercises, and was led by a group of two students. They focused on scene 2 of *The Wardrobe,* which is set in England in 1633 (Holcroft 2014: 15-21). Two brothers, descendants of Spanish Jews who were forcibly converted to Christianity before fleeing to England, are hiding in the wardrobe in order to practice Hebrew in secret (they continue to practice Judaism while outwardly confessing the Christian faith).

The presenters chose to concentrate on a key moment from the scene, at which one of the characters presents a banana that he bought at the market, to his brother. Neither boy has ever encountered a banana before, and the scene presents their curiosity and first attempts at eating the fruit. After reading the excerpt, the main exercise involved small groups of students being assigned another object (telephone; car; electric light; perfume), which they had to present dramatically, as a new discovery, similar to the original scene. They were not, however, permitted to use the name of the object, rather

allowing their dramatic exploration of it reveal the identity to the class. In a post-performance discussion phase, the presenters asked the class to recall how the characters had reacted in each scene to the newly discovered object. The entry in the teacher diary reveals some of the ideas that emerged:

Here we got into some useful observations – they touched it; smelled it; compared it to familiar objects. They referred to a higher power (e.g. God) if they had no rational explanation; they were scared; curious. It forced us (them) to reflect on the objects afresh, and to realize how much we take things for granted (e.g. electricity for light).

The presenters made a brief reference to Constructivism and the co-creation of knowledge, as displayed in the scenes, before a possible ending to the original scene was discussed. After hearing some ideas, one of the presenters read out the end of the excerpt.

5 Data collection

The data was gathered before, during and after the language class under investigation. The data collection instruments consisted of 1) a pre-course questionnaire; 2) a weekly feedback platform on the online class learning space (Moodle); 3) a teacher diary; and 4) a post-course questionnaire. Finally, there was a class discussion held during the last session after all the assessed presentations had been completed. This variety of instruments was intended to maximize the richness of the data by eliciting student views at different stages of the process, and also through the various item types, as well as by including the view of the researcher from the parallel perspective of teacher. To ensure the anonymity of the respondents and thus counteract a possible acquiescence bias, an identification number system was employed. The first four digits corresponded to the day and month of the student's date of birth, which was extended by then adding the final three digits of the student's telephone number. The idea was that the information was personal enough to be recalled if necessary by the students themselves, but not too obvious as to be easily identifiable by others. The numbers were utilized in all written data collection procedures to allow individuals' various responses to be matched up. All the instruments apart from the final class discussion took written form. All questions were in English, and responses were also required to be in English. The main reason for this was to keep the language consistent for all participants: using German, for instance, may have biased the questionnaire towards the majority, whose native language was German, to the detriment of visiting students who may only have had rudimentary skills in German, if any at all. The question types varied between factual, behavioural and attitudinal items, and between structured, closed response questions and open items, in order to gather as wide as possible a range of data.

The pre-course questionnaire was intended to gather basic personal information such as age and course of study, and to gauge pre-experience of drama, self-reported language skill level, enjoyment of literature, and details of the students' views on the teaching profession (only completed by the teacher trainees). They were also asked about their opinions on *Sprachpraxis* classes at the department generally, and their expectations of the course. The main aim of these items was to establish a personal profile for each respondent, based the above-mentioned details which could then be compared and contrasted with the responses to parallel items in the subsequent data collection instruments, thus fulfilling an important role in the data triangulation process. The questionnaire form was also chosen due to the demands of dealing with students as individuals rather than a statistical 'mass' of people, given the questionnaire's usefulness in dealing efficiently with "a variety of people in a variety of situations targeting a variety of topics" (Dörnyei 2003: 10). The pre-course questionnaire was completed individually, in written form, during the first class session.

The Moodle-based weekly feedback instrument was also completed individually, but outside of class, after each student-led session. Respondents had to log on to the class Moodle page, where they answered questions regarding the perceived effectiveness of that day's session in terms of oral communication, exploration of the literature, and ideas for future teaching (if relevant). They then had to comment on the specific combination of drama exercise type and literary genre dealt with in that particular session (e.g. non-verbal exercises and poetry).

Throughout the semester I wrote a teacher diary entry after every class. The diary was principally intended to record my impressions of the class as the teacher, thus offering an important yet distinct perspective on the class activities, separate from my role of 'researcher'. I used each entry to note down the details of the day's session, including the literature the students had worked with as well as the exercises they had used, and any comments which came up during the session. In this way, the diary was meant to provide a mixture of factual information on and teacher's impressions of each student-led class.

In the final session the students completed a post-course questionnaire, in an identical individual written-response format to the pre-course questionnaire. Contrastingly, however, the post-course questionnaire focused on more open-ended items in order to elicit longer, more complex responses. This was followed by the general class discussion during which I took written notes.

A possible drawback of the data collection process might be over-reliance on written questionnaires. This of course can limit the amount and detail of respondents' contributions, and can involve certain negative effects such as respondent fatigue with longer questionnaires; varying and various levels of respondent motivation; and, especially in the context of an assessed class, the acquiescence bias noted above, as well as a social desirability/prestige bias (see Dörnyei 2003). The latter is perhaps a particular problem in a questionnaire asking for a self-assessment of English language skills within the scope of a university English language class.

I attempted to counteract these effects firstly by only focusing on closed items in the pre-course questionnaire to elicit more easily quantified and comparable information, thus utilizing the "unprecedented efficiency" (Dörnyei 2003: 9) of the questionnaire form when gathering a large number of responses in a relatively short space of time. The Moodle-based questions were, contrastingly, open ended, featuring limitless text-response boxes, as a counterpart to the more specific, shorter answers required in the initial questionnaire. The Moodle questions were answered outside class in the students' own time, also in contrast to the in-class questionnaires, and as always, anonymously. The length and complexity of the responses seemed to reflect the increased time the students had had to consider each session: benefits which may not have arisen from face-to-face interviews, for example, as well as avoiding the severe attendant risk of an acquiescence bias. The post-course questionnaire featured a mixture of the kind of closed items found in the pre-course questionnaire with more open-ended items. This allowed on the one hand an easier comparison with the similarly closed items of the

pre-course questionnaire; but on the other hand gave respondents a chance to express their thoughts more fully with questions pertaining to the overall effectiveness of the class, after all the sessions had been completed. Thus this final questionnaire was calibrated to combine features of both previous data collection instruments.

Lastly, the students were given the opportunity to respond orally to the class, in an informal discussion held during the last session, after the post-course questionnaires had been completed. By this stage all assessment and written data collection instruments had been completed, lessening the risk of acquiescence bias. I took notes during the discussion in order to compare the comments with the other written responses.

In the following section each data collection instrument will be described in more detail, before the data analysis in Chapter 6.

5.1 Pre-course questionnaire

The pre-course questionnaire was the first data collection instrument to be employed (see Appendix A1). The first session had been taken up with explaining the course and various administrative and organizational aspects. Although there would have been time to complete the questionnaire in the first session, I wanted to avoid the risk of the students being too unfocused or concerned with the administrative details discussed to properly concentrate on the questionnaire. For this reason, the questionnaire was completed as the first item of the second weekly session. 26 out of the 27 students enrolled in the class completed the questionnaire.

The opening paragraph explains the study and the fact that all answers are to be treated anonymously, as well as reminding respondents of their right to withdraw at any time. The questionnaire is structured in six sections and is intended to gather basic information about the respondents and their attitudes towards and experience of the aspects to be explored. Section I is concerned with pre-experience of drama. Section II focuses on attitudes to literature. Section III requires students to self-report their practical English language skills. Section IV is focused on aspects of English teaching and is only completed by students on the teaching degree course. Section V is based on attitudes to *Sprachpraxis* generally and expectations of the present course. Finally, Section VI asks for personal details of the respondents, to be used in the data list for identification. The questionnaire mostly consists of closed-items for the reasons explained in the previous section, but opportunities are given where relevant to expand on closed-item answers. Each question will now be analysed in more detail.

Section I: Drama experience

Question 1: Have you ever taken part in practical drama before, including educational drama? Examples would include theatre groups in school, role-play exercises in class etc. Circle the ONE answer that applies to you: YES NO

This question addresses one of the aspects most crucial to the study: that of pre-experience of drama. It was felt before the study began that those students with extensive experience of drama would have a much more established attitude towards it, presumably in most cases positive, if they had continued to pursue such an interest throughout their school days. Therefore it was vital to have a formal record of the extent of all respondents' pre-experience in order to set this off against other answers and attitudes expressed throughout the course.

The wording of this question was considered particularly carefully, as terminology in this field can be confusing to outsiders. The phrase 'practical drama' was used to distinguish from more passive involvement, such as simply being an audience member, that may have been elicited by the more general phrase 'taken part in drama'. Thus what was being asked for was any experiences of actually making drama or theatre – acting, directing, producing, etc. The phrase 'including educational drama' was added to make sure that respondents did not adhere to the perceived dichotomy between applied and non-applied forms of drama (see discussion in section 3.1). To limit the effects of possible uncertainty over the term 'educational drama', examples were given of two of the most common forms of drama in educational settings: school theatre groups (product-based; large-scale) and role-play exercises in class (process-based; small-scale). For a discussion of the distinctions between these educational forms, see section 3.2.2. At this stage, respondents simply had to answer yes or no, making it easy to quantify what percentage of participants had indeed had previous experience.

Question 2: If you answered YES to question 1, please give brief details below:

This question is typical of the clarification often asked as a follow-up to a closed item such as question 1. It was employed in this case as I anticipated a wide and varied mixture of experiences throughout the class which I wanted brief details of, and it has the added advantage of being able to sift out any experiences not deemed relevant to the present study, such as simply having been an audience member, as discussed above.

Question 3: If you answered YES to question 1, please rate the following statement by putting ONE cross (X) on the line:

I enjoy/ed being involved in practical drama activities.
AGREE____:____:____:____:____:DISAGREE

This question was also a follow-up to question 1, and was interested in the degree of enjoyment of drama. The present/past tense inclusivity ('enjoy/ed') allowed for those who were still involved in drama activities at the time they completed the questionnaire. The five-point opinion-based Likert scale was employed in this case to allow a clear value, which could then be numerically coded. Although the five-point scale makes a

middle value possible, this was an option I wanted to allow the respondents, some of whom may indeed have felt completely neutral about role-play exercises undertaken as part of an obligatory language class at school, for example. Nevertheless, it was anticipated that the average agreement with the statement in question 3 would be high, given that much, if not the majority of drama activities experienced would have been on a voluntary basis.

Section II: Literature

Question 4: Please rate the following statement by writing ONE cross (X) on the line:

I enjoy reading in English
VERY MUCH _____:_____:_____:_____:_____ NOT AT ALL

With question 4 I wanted to elicit an initial response to literature in general, again giving respondents the option of a neutral answer, with a five-point Likert scale. Similar to question 3, a high level of enjoyment of literature might well inform responses to later questions, most especially those on the Moodle platform, which asked for details of how effectively the literature was dealt with in each session.

Question 5: Please assign each literary genre a number according to how much you enjoy reading it. You can repeat numbers as many times as you wish.

1= Very much enjoy it (my favourite!)
2= Enjoy it
3= Don't mind it either way
4= Don't enjoy it
5= Don't enjoy it at all (my least favourite!)

POETRY: _____ PROSE: _____ DRAMA: _____

This question builds on the general opinion elicited by question 4, by asking for enjoyment levels for each of the main literary genres. A numerical rating scale was employed rather than a rank order scale, as I was most interested in the enjoyment levels for each individual genre, rather than the order in which students preferred them. It also gave respondents the chance to report an equal enjoyment level for two or even all three genres. The sentence 'you can repeat numbers as often as you wish', as well as the additional phrases 'my favourite!' and 'my least favourite!' were included to emphasize the employment of a numerical (non-ranked) scale, and thus to reduce the risk of misinterpretation which could confound results. Again I included a middle value to offer the option of a neutral response to the question.

Section III: Language Skills

Question 6: Please RANK your competence in the four skills in English, from 1=BEST to 4=WORST. This time, please use each number only ONCE:

Reading ____
Speaking ____
Listening ____
Writing ____

For question 6 a rank order scale was employed, emphasized in the wording of the question by the explicitly capitalized 'RANK', and an elucidation of the numerical correspondence ('from 1=BEST to 4=WORST'), as well as the final sentence ('This time, please use each number only ONCE'). In contrast to the literary preferences requested in question 5, then, question 6 asked for a self-reported rank order of practical language skills.

Clearly such a question runs the risk of many bias effects, such as acquiescence, self-deception, prestige, or the halo effect (cf. Dörnyei 2003). Firstly however, this can be viewed as a more general problem of qualitative participant data gathering in an action research context, and furthermore the rank order was important in this case, as I wanted to elicit a true ranking with no option for repeated ratings, as possible with a numerical scale such as question 5. The reasons for this were to attempt to avoid one major bias effect, i.e. either ranking all skills well, poorly, or neutrally in order to avoid true self-assessment with its associated risks; and also to get an overall sense of the particular skills that tended to be ranked higher and lower than others, rather than to look at actual numerical values within each skill type, which is very much up to the respondents' self rating in each case, with all attendant idiosyncrasies.

Question 7: Please mark the words/phrases you associate with when you are speaking English. You can mark as many as you like with a cross (X), and add others of your own if you want.

Confident ____
Using the wrong register ____
Insecure ____
Restricted ____
Correct pronunciation ____
Lacking vocabulary _____
Performing a role ____
Effecting body language ____
Fluent ____

Embarrassed ____
Others? (Please state) _____

Question 7 consisted of ten ready-made response options, plus a space for other suggestions. Rather than asking a specific question, it asked respondents to mark the items they associated with when speaking English – the verb phrase underlined for emphasis to lessen the risk of inaccurate responses. This time no numerical order system was employed; students simply marked with a cross any of the items they felt applied to them.

The ambiguity of the phrase 'associate with' was intentional. It was intended to generate ideas and concepts connected to spoken communication to see whether any general trends could be perceived. The items were a mixture of the emotive, unscientific (e.g. 'confident', 'embarrassed' etc.) and the linguistic, precise ('correct pronunciation', 'using the wrong register' etc.). I wanted to access students' experiences both as users and learners of the language (hence the emotive level) and as language teachers-in-training (hence the linguistic terms). The item 'performing a role' was included consciously as a theatrical metaphor, to be compared with pre-experience of drama (see question 1). The space for other suggestions was intended to follow on from the associative thinking elicited by the ten given terms.

Section IV: *Lehramt*

Question 8: Rate the following attributes in terms of how important you believe they are in an English teacher. Use ALL numbers, but only ONCE each.
1=most important; 8=least important

Patience ____
Cultural knowledge ____
Language competence ____
A good accent ____
Friendliness ____
Presentational skills ____
Reliability ____
Self-reflection ____

Section IV was aimed only at those students training to become teachers (23 out of the total 26). Question 8, similar to question 7 in the previous section, offered respondents a list of words and phrases: in this instance, attributes connected to the job of a teacher. The eight items offered consisted of four general, 'soft skills' (patience, friendliness, reliability, and self-reflection) and four knowledge-based, trainable competencies (language competence, cultural knowledge, a good accent and presentational skills). The even balance between soft and trained skills was intended to reflect an unbiased spec-

trum of some possible teacher attributes in order to hopefully parallel perceived benefits or drawbacks that drama methods might have in developing some of these skills. The specific choice of lexical items was based on informal experiential interaction with and feedback from teacher trainees over many years of teaching. The use of the indefinite article in the wording ('…an English teacher') tried to emphasize consideration of the ideal, generic teacher, rather than any specific teacher the students might have in mind, or indeed the teachers they themselves hoped to become. In this question the students had to apply a rank order scale rather than simply mark any of the attributes they liked, as was the case in question 7. There was also no space for adding other words or phrases.

My intention here was to map, similar to question 6, a general pattern of which attributes rated higher than others, and then to cross-reference these against some of the later responses aimed at aspects of teacher training, against the constant background of the drama methods and their perceived effectiveness.

Question 9: Please state, in one sentence, why you want to become an English teacher:

Question 9 asked for a short statement (single sentence) on what motivated the respondent to want to become an English teacher. As mentioned before, open-ended items have drawbacks despite the increased freedom they offer; the restricted item type employed in this case allows for a degree of that freedom, but in a form which is still direct and succinct (cf. Dörnyei 2003). It was felt that given the wide-ranging and highly subjective nature of the subject (professional motivation), an opportunity to give a longer, less restricted answer could yield fruitful results.

Section V: The class/other comments

Question 10: Please fill in the following table by placing a cross (X) in ONE of the boxes for the statement: I generally enjoy *Sprachpraxis* classes

Strongly agree Agree Partly agree Slightly agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Section V turned to questions focused on the *Sprachpraxis* area and the class itself. Question 10 again featured a statement which students had to respond to by marking one cross on a Likert scale of agreement. In contrast to all the other Likert scale questions employed in the questionnaire, which featured five-point scales, however, question 10 was the only one to use a six-point scale. The most obvious difference is that a middle value disappears, and with it the chance to give a completely neutral response.

This question aimed to generate an initial, general response to enjoyment of *Sprachpraxis* classes, before subsequent questions focused in on the present class itself. This was felt to be important as a background against which the subsequent class-specific responses as well as later responses to different items in the post-course questionnaire

could be compared. The lack of a neutral response reflected the desire to map an initial trend for each student, either in the direction of enjoyment or non-enjoyment, whereas a completely neutral response would be rather unhelpful in this direction.

The word 'generally' was used as a pre-modifier in the statement to be considered. This again emphasized the intention to gather a broad impression of enjoyment level, and also might have acted as a softener against any acquiescence bias.

Question 11: Please complete the following two sentences:
a. If I could change anything about *Sprachpraxis* classes, it would be:
b. I believe the thing that would help me most in oral communication classes is:

Question 11 consisted of two sentence completion items. In fact questions 10 and 11, both concerned with *Sprachpraxis*, can be viewed as a kind of mini multi-scale item block: in an attempt to gather opinions of and attitudes towards the language classes by asking differently-worded questions (cf. Dörnyei 2003: 33). Part a. builds on the box-check response given in question 10. This therefore offered respondents the chance to justify a negative response to the positive statement in question 10, or else required them to give more details in the case of a positive response, thereby minimizing somewhat the danger of students unthinkingly answering positively to question 10, either out of acquiescence or otherwise. Also, the positive agency and first person form featured in the syntax of the statement ('If I could change…') attempted to change the mindset of the respondents from 'passive receivers' of the classes to 'positive stakeholders' in the process: a change of perspective vital to forms of participatory action research (cf. Burns 2010).

Part b. in some ways can be seen as a multi-item form repeat of part a., assuming students would indeed have made suggestions in the first part of changes they felt to be potentially beneficial to them. The main differences of course are that part b. focuses specifically on oral communication classes, and on a more positively-worded main theme ('the thing that would help me most') when compared to part a. ('If I could change anything…').

Question 12: Please complete the following statement:

My expectations of this class are:

Question 12 completes the main questionnaire with a question more specific to the present class itself. It was thought potentially interesting to compare all answers in section V to see if any patterns of commonality could be found, but also any discrepancies depending on the wording and the specific focus of the question. I also anticipated a wide range of answers to question 12, given the open nature of the statement. Indeed taken

as a whole, question 12 was the most open-ended of all of the items in the pre-course questionnaire, which focused more on closed items for the reasons discussed above.

Section VI: Personal details

Question 13 requested the following personal details of the students:
- Identification number
- Age
- Degree course
- Semester of English study
- Native language/s
- Other language/s

The formation of the identification number (see above for details) allowed comparison across the various data collection instruments for individual respondents. Degree details were felt important not only as these would determine what part the class played in the curricula of each student (e.g. whether the class was obligatory or not), but also perhaps affect subsequent answers to questions about the drama exercises applied to the three areas under investigation (oral communication skills, career-relevant skills and ESAP). Semester of English study was included to compare different levels in the class, although at 'Oral Communication II' stage the range is typically small. Finally, it was deemed necessary to determine each student's language background; the language status (e.g. bi-lingual/multi-lingual/monolingual) could conceivably play a role in how other questions regarding language competence, and those involving the effects of drama on language use, were answered.

Question 13: Please place ONE cross (X) on the line according to where you think your personality sits:

EXTROVERT _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ INTROVERT

Question 13 was the final item of the pre-course questionnaire, and was the only question to ask about respondents' personality. Students had to self assess the extent of their extrovert/introvert nature by placing a cross on a line between the two words. The advantage of such a semantic differential scale is that the response activity is more straightforward than a sentence completion, for example, and the results can be numerically coded (cf. Dörnyei 2003). It also allows students the chance to simply place the cross on the line as they see fit, rather than having to agree or disagree with a given statement, which might already affect their responses, as is the case with a Likert scale of agreement.

This question was seen as important, as the claim is often made that drama methods tend to suit naturally extroverted individuals more than introverts. Therefore a cross-referencing of this answer with subsequent responses to the drama work was seen as potentially productive.

The pre-course questionnaire was rounded off by a short paragraph thanking the respondents and reminding them of response confidentiality.

5.2 Moodle-based weekly feedback platform

Having completed the pre-course questionnaire, the students settled down into the weekly rhythm of the semester (see section 4.1.2). The next main data collection exercise for them was the online Moodle-based questions, which were to be answered as soon as possible after each class had ended. To encourage them to complete this in a timely fashion, and to minimize the disruption of their free time, the session normally finished between ten and fifteen minutes early.

The feedback platform consisted of three prompts, two questions, plus a sixth text box to enter the identification number. The questions were as follows (week 1 example):

1. Comment on the session in terms of practice of oral communication.
2. Comment on the session in terms of helping you to explore/understand the literature.
3. Comment on the session in terms of useful ideas for future teaching (ONLY FOR *LEHRAMT* STUDENTS!).
4. How effective did you find the specific combination of poetry with non-verbal drama exercises?
5. Is there anything else you would like to mention which is not covered by these questions?

Prompts 1-3 remained identical every week, as did question 5 and the subsequent request for the identification number (question 6). Question 4 varied in wording according to the specific combination of literary genre and drama type being used that week.

Prompts 1-3 were phrased as requests for comments rather than true questions. They were explicitly aimed at gathering opinions on the session in terms of its relationship to the three main areas under investigation. The idea was to cross reference responses to these questions with other similar items asked in the pre-and post-course questionnaires, under the headings of the three areas. Question 4 was in interrogative form, and was intended to be analysed separately from the other responses (see section 6.3), the reason being that it is the only question explicitly dealing with the combination of exercise type and literary genre. This of course varied from week to week, and was an additional focus area, despite of course still being related to, the main question; thus

it was felt that this item needed to be analysed as such: separately and individually. Question 5 offered respondents the chance to add anything that was not perhaps felt relevant enough to mention for any of the other questions.

The main difference when compared to the pre-course questionnaire, for example, was that the items in the Moodle-based platform were completely open-ended. Students entered their responses into a limitless text field for each question. Such responses, while more challenging to code and analyse, offered an important counterpoint to the closed item data, as well as giving students the opportunity to express themselves more freely. Except for question 4, which will form the basis of a separate analysis (see above), all the other questions were not separately analysed, but rather formed a text-based source from which I could draw in comparison and contrast with the other data gathered.

5.3 Teacher diary

Throughout the course I kept a diary that I updated after each session. Especially in my double-role as teacher and researcher, it was important that I recorded my own thoughts and impressions to be included in the analysis, an instrument regarded as a "classic tool" in action research methodology (Burns 2010: 89). One of the main jobs of the diary was to record the basic facts of each session: I began each entry by stating the date and the specific combination of drama exercise type and literary genre being dealt with that week. I also noted down which specific poems/story/dramatic scenes the group was working with, as well as the structure of the session, including materials and exercises used. Furthermore however, the diary recorded my own subjective impressions of the session. I remarked on how well the group had organized and delivered the session, with specific examples; impressions of how well the class had responded; and comments from the class made in response to questions posed as part of the presentation, for example. The teacher diary often managed to capture otherwise unexpected or unplanned data – for example comments made during a class discussion, or even after the session had finished; or aspects which could be compared to previous sessions. Since each diary entry was connected to an individual session, the relevant teacher diary entries are presented together with the relevant class session description to which they correspond (see section 4.5).

5.4 Post-course questionnaire

The final student-led session happened on the second-last week of the semester, to leave the final meeting open for the last data collection exercises. The first of these was the post-course questionnaire (see Appendix A2). 23 of the registered 27 students were present and completed the questionnaire. The opening and closing paragraphs of the questionnaire were identical to the pre-course questionnaire (see section 5.1).

The aim of the post-course questionnaire was to ask respondents once more about areas explored in the pre-course questionnaire, in order to see if any changes to beliefs and opinions had taken place. The questions asked more explicitly about the three areas under investigation, but there was also a more general 'overview' question on drama methods in university *Sprachpraxis*. An important difference to the pre-course questionnaire was the inclusion of more open-ended items. The post-course questionnaire was also not structured in numbered sections, as the pre-course questionnaire was, but opened with some closed items as a prelude to the open-ended responses. The items will now be analysed in more detail.

Questions 1-3:

1. How suitable do you think the class was in terms of opportunities to develop confidence and fluency in your spoken English?
2. How suitable do you think the class was in terms of developing topics and ideas relevant to your future career?
3. How suitable do you think the class was in terms of exploring and engaging with the literature we dealt with?

VERY MUCH _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ NOT AT ALL

Questions 1-3 aimed at single, direct responses on a five-point Likert scale (scale repeated after each question). The beginning of each question was worded identically ('How suitable do you think the class was in terms of…'). This was intended to ensure that the risk of response variation due to differences in wording was minimized, and also that the questions were as clear as possible. The rest of the questions focused on each of the three areas under investigation, using key words and phrases taken from responses to the pre-course questionnaire.

Question 1 focused on oral communication. The word 'opportunities' was taken from pre-course questionnaire responses that indicated that more chances to speak in such classes was desirable (see analysis chapter 6). 'Confidence' and 'fluency' were also terms that emerged from some of the open items in the pre-course questionnaire.

Question 2 focuses on career-relevant skills. However, in contrast to the corresponding sections in the pre-course questionnaire, which stipulated that only those students on the teaching degree should answer, this question does not restrict the respondents. In this way the teacher trainee students would of course be included, but the opportunity would also be extended to the other students to answer with regard to whatever other career they may have in mind, having by this stage completed the semester and perhaps formed opinions on that issue.

Question 3 focused on literature and tried to cover both content-based ('exploring') and approach-based ('engaging with') aspects. I was interested in both how drama might impact on questions of literary comprehension and interpretation, as well as opinions on the suitability of the drama methods when applied to literature generally. This was an area covered in more detail by the Moodle platform (see section 5.2).
Question 4a: Please rate the following areas, in terms of how relevant the class was for each of them:

- Practice of spoken English: _____
- Introduction to career-relevant topic/s: _____
- Exploration of literature: _____

(1=highly relevant, 2=relevant, 3=irrelevant)

Question 4a was a follow-up to questions 1-3, and also asked for a numerical response. I wanted to be able to compare students' responses to these questions in order to check for consistency across differently worded items (see section 5.1 question 11; Dörnyei 2003: 33).

In this case a numerical value was assigned to three stages of relevance. Initially I intended to use only two – relevant and irrelevant – but I wanted to allow a 'top grade' (highly relevant), in an attempt to avoid across-the-board assignment of 'relevant', for example. The hope was that perhaps one of the three aspects would then be rated in the top category in distinction from the other two, for example. After question 4a, the questionnaire consisted of open-ended items.

Question 4b asked for an expansion on the numerical responses:

Now, please explain your choices below:
With this question I intended to start getting to the heart of how the students had felt about the course with a specific focus on the three areas under investigation. 17 lines were provided for responses, indicating that fairly detailed responses were desired. By asking them explicitly to explain 'their choices', I expected that respondents would feel the obligation to clarify why one particular aspect had been graded with lower relevance than others, for example, in 4a. These explanations could then be textually coded ready for comparison with earlier answers in the pre-course questionnaire, for instance.
Question 5, on the following page, continued the open items:

How suitable do you think drama-based classes are in the Sprachpraxis *curriculum?*

With this question, I wanted the students to respond to the 'bigger picture' of drama methods in the department language classes generally. Such a question, it was felt, could really only be asked once the entire process had been experienced, and indeed this was the very last specific question to be answered. It was expected that in a comparison with question 4b, for example, there could be similar results, yet any differences may be

highly productive in the analysis. Of course, such a generally worded question runs the risk of answers that are vague or unreflected; however as mentioned before, I wanted to include a final question which allowed exactly the kind of free associative thinking often denied by more specific questions, especially those which involve numerical scales. 33 lines of space for answers reflected the desire for longer, freer answers.

Question 6 ended the post-course questionnaire with ten lines for response:

Do you have any other comments?

5.5 Final class discussion

After I had gathered in the completed post-course questionnaires, we had a final general discussion as a group. This lasted around 20 minutes and was not structured around any specific questions. I asked the students generally what they felt about the class now it was over, and simply moderated those wishing to contribute. I took notes during the process.

Although this was in no way intended as a formal data collection exercise, it was felt important to include this one oral response feedback round – firstly to allow students the chance to react spontaneously, and interactively, in the group; and secondly as a way or rounding off the semester. I kept the notes I made to be compared with responses to the formal data collection instruments in the analysis.

6 Data analysis

This chapter will analyse the data gathered during the study. The data is analysed chronologically in order to best compare earlier and later attitudes and views of the participants. As discussed in chapter 5, data was gathered before the semester in the form of the pre-course questionnaire; during the semester in the online Moodle platform; and after the semester in both the post-course questionnaire and a final class discussion.

The data gathered from the pre-course questionnaire was reviewed for initial trends and emergent categories that could then be further explored and micro-analysed in the Moodle data. The Moodle platform data, constituting the largest and most diverse data pool of all, was micro-analysed using the MAXQDA software programme. Emergent categories were organized for discussion under the three main areas of exploration in the research question: oral communication skills, aspects of relevance to future teaching careers, and aspects pertaining to engagement with the literary texts. The post-course questionnaire data is compared and contrasted with similar items in the pre-course questionnaire and categories from the Moodle platform data, in order to ascertain whether students' viewpoints had altered throughout the semester. Finally, post-course comments from the final discussion are explored. Comments from the teacher diary (see Section 5.3) are woven into the analysis of each session (see Section 4.5), as they correspond most closely to the details of each individual student-led class, and are therefore not considered separately here.

In all quotations from the data, students' identities are kept anonymous by using their assigned respondent numbers.

6.1 Pre-course questionnaire

The pre-course questionnaire was handed out for completion in the second session of the semester. As discussed in section 5.1, the questionnaire was intended to gather basic personal information on the participants. It also asks them about their pre-experience of drama, and other areas of relevance to the study: practical English language skills, literature, and career-related aspects (the latter only completed by the students of education). Finally, the participants were asked for their views on some aspects of *Sprachpraxis* and their expectations of the course. The pre-course questionnaire constitutes an important record of what participants felt about the various aspects before taking the class. The data was therefore used to generate and predict possible categories of investigation in the subsequent data sets.

6.1.1 Drama: experience and contexts

Section I of the questionnaire (items 1-3) asked students about their pre-experience of drama. This was felt to be highly relevant, as extensive acting experience could of course bias later responses to and attitudes towards the work in class. Of equal importance and interest were potential cases of no experience and reported enjoyment levels.

In answer to question 1 (*Have you ever taken part in practical drama before, including educational drama? Examples would include theatre groups in school, role-play exercises in class etc.),* 18 of the 26 respondents reported pre-experience of drama. Eight students reported no previous experience at all. Of the 18 with experience, the vast majority reported the experience as having taken place in an educational context. 21 mentions were made of school-based drama work: seven in extra-curricular school theatre clubs; four within English classes; three within German classes; two within specific drama classes; and four further mentions of drama work in non-specified classes. One mention was made of participation in a school drama contest. Five students reported drama experience in previous university classes: four as part of their teacher education programme, and one in an acting-based class within the literature department. Two students reported participation in external, non-educational theatre clubs. Question 3 asked respondents to report their level of enjoyment of drama activities on a Likert scale from 1 (agree) to 5 (disagree). The average response to this question was 2.05. Seven entered the top level of enjoyment (1); six reported a level 2; two reported a level 3; three reported a level 4; and no-one reported the lowest level (5).

The most striking data trend in this section was clearly the overwhelming existence of educational-based drama experience. This could arguably be expected in a group of university students who have in most cases progressed straight from school into higher education. A further split is noticeable in the data between process-based and product-based forms: in-class drama methods would by definition fall within Schewe's 'small-scale', process-based category, while the 7 students who took part in a school theatre group outside of class time experienced drama in its 'large-scale', product-based form (see section 3.2.2). Next, consideration should be taken of the nature of the involvement in each experience: classroom-based, process-oriented drama methods tend to be woven into a larger lesson block or thematic scheme, and could thus be seen as compulsory; whereas extra-curricular theatre participation is to a much larger extent presumably voluntary. University classes involving drama could also be assumed to involve a higher level of voluntary participation and/or choice. All of this could perhaps be reflected in reported enjoyment levels. However, even disregarding all potentially 'voluntary' drama participation experiences (external drama clubs, school drama clubs, school drama contests, university classes) the average enjoyment level of the whole group was still 2.25 on the 5-point Likert scale. Regarding those with no previous experience at all, it was felt important to consider these 8 students' various responses to the class individually in later data sets, in order to try to ascertain whether experience did indeed seem to constitute a predisposition towards such work.

6.1.2 Literature preferences and language skills

Section II (questions 4 and 5) and section III (questions 6 and 7) asked students to rate their literature preferences and enjoyment, and to self-report on their practical English language skills. Question 4 elicited an average rating of 1.65 on the 5-point Likert scale. Such a high value could perhaps be expected of university students of English. Question 5 asked students to rate their enjoyment of the three literary genres of poetry, prose, and drama, again on a 5-point Likert scale. Here a clear distinction could be noticed: prose was the top ranked genre with an average value of 1.73, followed by drama with 2.15; poetry ranked the lowest with an average value of 3.11. This correlates with informal, anecdotally expressed views of many students, who intimated that poetry is seen as 'difficult' and hard to handle due to the often-ambiguous meanings it expresses. This discrepancy, and in particular the negative views of poetry in the classroom, offered an interesting opportunity to see whether drama work could in any way help with these comprehension issues and provide a key to greater enjoyment.

Question 6 asked students to assess their own abilities in practical English by ranking the four skills in order from 1=Best to 4=Worst. As is perhaps to be expected, students tended to rank the receptive skills of reading and listening higher than the productive ones of speaking and writing. In descending order, the average values were: reading (1.73); listening (2.00); speaking (3.00); writing (3.26). A potential confounding aspect here is the fact that students have to read constantly during their English studies, leading to an inevitable sharpening, but possibly also overestimation of the skill; on the other hand, most assessment in seminars takes written form (seminar papers, exams etc.), so the low rating of writing skills could also be partially caused by students' constant confrontation with correction of their written work – an effect not felt as much with the other skills. This could lead to an underestimation of written English. Of particular interest to the present study is of course the value for speaking skills – the area most clearly relevant to drama work in the classroom.

Question 7 offered respondents ten items consisting of words/phrases, of variously positive and negative connotations, that they associated with speaking English (see section 5.1). They could mark as many as they wished, and were given a space to add other items of their choice if desired. This question tried to delve deeper into some specific elements of spoken communication, given the close connection to drama work mentioned above. The results here were rather mixed between positive and negative items. The top item was 'lacking vocabulary', marked by 17 of the 26. Next however came 'correct pronunciation', marked by 15 of 26. 'Confident' came in equal third place, with 14 responses (in contrast, 'insecure' was checked by only eight respondents); 'fluent' was also checked by 14 students. 'Performing a role', an item with clear associations with drama, was checked by only five students – however in the section for other comments, respondent 1007669 made the comment: "imitating – but that's perhaps what you meant by 'performing a role'?" Other comments of potential relevance to

drama-based work included "problems with collocations" (respondent 0707766) and "identifying with English expressions" (respondent 2711031).

6.1.3 Aspects of teacher training

Section IV of the questionnaire dealt with attributes and motivations connected with English teaching as a future career, and as such was only completed by those on the education degree (*Lehramt)*. Question 8 offered the students a list of eight items associable with English teaching – four items concerned general skills, and four were subject-specific 'trainable' competencies (see section 5.1). They were asked to rank the items in order from 1=most important to 8=least important. The top ranked item emerged as 'language competence', with an average rank position of 2.08, followed by 'patience' (3.34) and 'self-reflection' (3.52). Language competence is of particular note, as it constitutes both a tool of communication (*Vermittlung*) as well as a competence to be taught (*Lehrstoff*) in the English language classroom. This dichotomous item can be seen as particularly relevant to the study, reflected as it is in the class design, which was concerned firstly with drama applied to the oral communication skills of the students themselves; but also with drama as a means of teaching oral communication skills, and literary texts, to future school pupils.

Question 9 (Please state, in one sentence, why you want to become an English teacher) was the first of the open-ended items in the questionnaire, albeit in this case a restricted one (…in one sentence). Responses were coded into the categories of 'Subject' (reasons given due to an aspect of English as a subject); 'Education' (reasons connected to the importance of education in general); and 'Children' (reasons connected to an interest in children and their education). The top two most frequent responses to the question were both under the category of 'Subject': firstly a personal interest in the subject (14 mentions), followed by the importance of English as a world language (eight mentions). The third most frequent reason given, with five mentions, was a general interest in the process of teaching (under the 'Education' category). The least most frequent reasons given were a general desire to work with children, and to help them improve their confidence in communicating (two mentions each); and an attraction to the variety of the subject of English (one mention).

6.1.4 *Sprachpraxis:* experience and expectations

Section V of the pre-course questionnaire dealt with students' general views on *Sprachpraxis* and oral communication classes, as well as their expectations of the specific class. Question 10 asked students to respond to the statement 'I generally enjoy *Sprachpraxis* classes' on a 1 (agree)-6 (disagree) scale. Question 11 was split into two parts, both of which required respondents to complete a sentence:

a. If I could change anything about Sprachpraxis classes, it would be…
b. I believe the thing that would help me most in oral communication classes is…

Both items offered students the chance to expand upon their numerical response to question 10, and give their views on both *Sprachpraxis* in general and oral communication classes specifically. Responses to the first prompt were categorized under 'Organizational' (aspects of class planning etc.) and 'Content' (curriculum aspects, materials etc.). The most frequent responses were a desire for more opportunities to speak in class (under 'Content'), with six mentions; and a desire for smaller classes (under 'Organizational') with four mentions. Three mentions were made respectively for more classes to be offered; more emphasis on educationally relevant content; and an alternative to the standard presentations-based assessment methods. So a trend can be seen towards a wish for more speaking time in class: a wish arguably also reflected in the comments regarding smaller class sizes and more classes to be offered. Taken together these represent 13 comments of 26 respondents. As an extension to the desire for more speaking time, mention was also made of the kind of communication involved – respondent 0301684 stated the desire "to interact more" as an aim of her wish for smaller classes; a concept mirrored by respondent 2802087 who requested "more opportunities to actively engage with (her) fellow students", and respondent 0612869 who observed the probability that "everyone has to be included" in smaller size classes. The desire for alternatives to presentations as an assessment instrument was also in some cases linked to this need for more actual speaking time. Respondent 2902947 commented that a presentation-based format "usually leads to having to speak a lot in one session (presentation session) and being rather passive in other sessions, so not much practicing of the speaking ability is done". Taken together – smaller classes, more classes, more opportunities to speak, and an alternative to presentational assessment – many of the students' comments therefore centred around the desire for an increase in real, interactional communication in *Sprachpraxis* classes.

Question 11b elicited a clear top response, which was 'chances to speak': this comment occurred 14 times in the data set, in various expressions. The next most frequently occurring response was the opportunity to improve confidence in speaking, with five mentions. It is of interest that this top response occurred so often in part b, and not as much in part a, despite also being the top answer. One possible reason for this could be the wording – in part a, the question of what could be changed in *Sprachpraxis* in general possibly led to a wider range of responses, some to do with general class organization, as well as individual student-centred aspects. In part b, however, the direct address of the student as an individual learner ("…the thing that would help me most…") was intended to exclusively elicit each student's personal desires in terms of language improvement. So the high frequency of the desire for chances to speak, when considered with the variations on this aspect seen in part a, represents an important common thread in the data. A new trend noticeable in part b was again to do with

the kind of communicative atmosphere in the class. Respondent 2005303 expressed a desire "to practise (her) oral communication skills in 'natural' situations." One can assume that this ties in with the aspect of interactional communication expressed in part a, in contrast perhaps to the 'unnatural' format of the one-off presentation session. Respondent 0908925 appeared to confirm the need for open, 'natural' communicative situations, with a wish "to establish an atmosphere that allow(ed) (her) to speak freely without fear of being judged by other students." Respondent 1907754 mirrored this opinion almost exactly with her desire for "an atmosphere in which everyone is able to talk freely without e.g. being afraid." This aspect of confidence, also mentioned by five other students, was specific to this question on oral communication classes, and perhaps therefore suggests that confidence is a particular concern of the students when it comes to oral communication.

Question 12 attempted to elicit general comments on students' expectations of the present class. This took the form of an open item sentence completion task, beginning with 'My expectations of this class are:'. The most frequent response (12 mentions) centred around the expectation that the class would be of high interest to the teacher trainees, in terms of professionally relevant material: respondent 0510319 looked forward to getting to know "how to implement drama activities in the English classroom"; respondent 0901364 expressed the expectation that exposure to and familiarity with the drama techniques would "make (her) a better teacher". It is noteworthy that this aspect was most frequently mentioned for question 12, despite only three mentions of the same aspect for question 11a (desired changes in *Sprachpraxis* classes). One possible explanation for this is the recent curriculum change at Tübingen to the BEd/MEd degree system, where more of the curriculum feeds into the students' future careers as educators, in contrast to the purely language based *Sprachpraxis* classes of the past. The second most frequent response for question 12 regarded opportunities to practice speaking (10 mentions). Interestingly, this response and variations was the most frequent comment in both parts of question 11. Perhaps the fact that this is not repeated in question 12, dealing with expectations, represents disappointed past expectations regarding opportunities to speak in *Sprachpraxis* classes. Another potential reason for the high frequency of educationally relevant expectations is the fact that this element was specifically mentioned in the pre-semester description of the class, available to students online.

6.1.5 Summary

An important initial data trend was the extensive pre-experience of drama, and the high reported enjoyment level of such experience. This clearly suggests a good potential receptiveness to and acceptance of drama methods. A related aspect was the overwhelmingly high frequency of educational drama experience. In this regard, the majority of the class had indeed already experienced drama-in-education specifically. Most

of these educational experiences had however taken place in school, so the extent to which drama methods in a university class would be enjoyed and accepted as useful, largely remained to be seen.

As regards literature, the ratings of the different genres established an order with poetry being the least enjoyed of the three. This already set up an interesting element in terms of whether the drama work in its three forms (verbal, non-verbal and text-based) would show any effects on this rather low enjoyment rating of poetry.

As might also be expected, the productive language skills of writing and speaking were graded lower than the receptive skills in the self-reporting question. Despite this low self-assessment of oral communication skills, however, the students regarded 'language competence' as the most important of the offered elements connected to what makes a good teacher. In addition, 'opportunities to speak' constituted the highest frequency comment regarding desired aspects of both *Sprachpraxis* generally and oral communication classes specifically. Moreover, it was commonly expressed that classroom communication situations should be interactive and 'natural', avoiding the 'lopsided' speaking time often caused by the traditional presentation-based assessment format. Finally, in addition to chances to speak more often, educationally relevant content was expressed frequently as an expectation of the present class. So it would appear that the students recognized the need for increased practice of oral communication skills, which they regarded as a particular weak point; and the importance of these skills in their future careers as teachers.

6.2 Moodle data

As described in section 4.1.2, each of the nine class sessions featured a specific combination of drama exercise type (non-verbal; verbal; text-based) and literary genre (poetry; prose; drama), meaning that every individual session involved a unique combination. After each session, students were then required to respond to the five questions posed on the class Moodle platform. These questions were aimed at generating responses on the effectiveness of the session in terms of i) oral communication skills; ii) understanding and exploring the literature; and iii) skills for future teaching careers; as well as on the specific combination of drama type and literary type featured that particular week (for a detailed explanation see Section 5.2). The following section analyses the Moodle-based response data, under each of the three drama exercise types in turn, in combination with the three main aspects under research: oral communication; exploration and understanding of the literature; and teacher training aspects. A separate section deals with question four, which generated responses to the unique weekly combination of drama exercise and literary type (e.g. non-verbal exercises with poetry). The data generated was micro-analysed using the text analytical software programme MaxQDA. Student responses were analyzed and assigned codes in order to cross-reference similar response types. For an example of a coded questionnaire, see Appendix C1. For a

full list of the code system involved, see Appendix C2. After an initial survey of the emergent codes here, a further discussion section explores in more detail the trends and categories that evolved (Chapter 7).

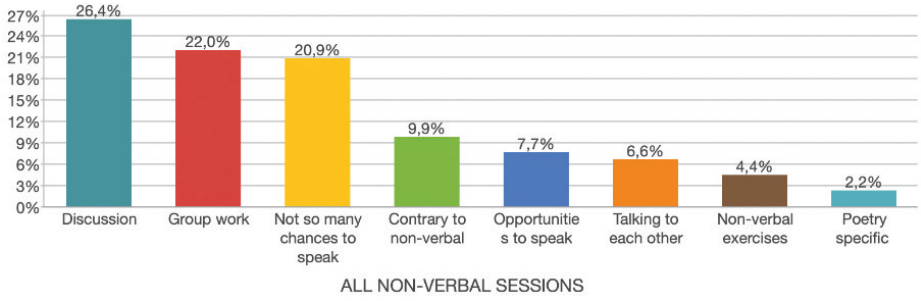
6.2.1 Non-verbal exercises (sessions 1, 4 and 7)

The non-verbal sessions involved techniques and exercises from the realms of applied drama and drama-in-education that do not involve verbal language. These include the typical classroom drama activities such as frozen pictures, mime exercises, exercises only involving body posture and facial expression, and so on. The sessions involving non-verbal exercises were sessions 1 (poetry); 4 (prose) and 7 (drama). The questionnaire on session 1 (poetry) was completed by 22 out of the 27 participants; that of session 4 (prose) by 14 of the participants; and that of session 7 (drama) by 16 participants. Given the stated desire in the pre-course questionnaire for more opportunities to speak (see section 6.1.4) as well as the ostensible aim of the oral communication classes generally, it could perhaps be expected that exercises that explicitly prohibit verbal interaction might be counterproductive, and indeed unpopular with the participants.

6.2.1.1 Oral communication

Question 1 on the Moodle platform asked students to *Comment on the session in terms of practice of oral communication.* This section explores responses to this item from the non-verbal sessions (sessions 1, 4 and 7). Firstly, the responses across all three sessions are considered when coded together; then the codes from each of the three sessions (poetry, prose, drama) are examined individually. It has to be accepted that the responses of individual students who happened to answer the questionnaire after all three sessions would have a greater weight in the data than those who may only have responded after one or two sessions.

Table 1: Question 1 (oral communication) responses for all non-verbal sessions



N=91

Table 1 represents the codings of responses to question 1 across all three sessions involving non-verbal exercises. A total of 91 comments were coded across all three sessions for question 1[36].

At first glance, the specific combination of non-verbal exercises and oral communication practice might seem paradoxical and unpromising, especially in light of the emphasis given to drama for speaking practice in the literature (cf Maley and Duff 1978). In fact, comments that the non-verbal sessions were not particularly helpful for oral communication did occur relatively frequently, being the third most common response type in this set, at around a fifth of all codings (19 out of the 91 comments made). There were however significant differences in these responses between each of the three sessions, which is further explored below. The next most common statements in the set however were those suggesting that, despite the non-verbal nature of the session, the class had indeed provided useful opportunities to practice spoken English ('contrary to non-verbal'), thus contradicting the rather negative researcher expectations in this regard, stated above. The comments under this code are distinguished from other positive codes by their contrastive constructions, e.g. "Even if the whole session was composed to work with non-verbal activities, we still had the chance to practice oral communication sufficiently" (Respondent 2902947).

Insights and comments on 'Discussion' were the most frequent in the data set, at a quarter of all comments analysed (24 out of 91). These comments pertained to the phases during the class that the exercises or literature was discussed in more traditional format, i.e. either before or after the drama exercises themselves. The nature and usefulness of discussing the literature alongside doing the drama exercises was either contrasted negatively with the non-verbal nature of the sessions, or else seen as a positively complimentary aspect. The next most frequent response type was 'Group work', appearing 20 times in the relevant 91 comments. These comments placed particular emphasis on smaller-group communication, often followed by (and mentioned in combination with) a more general class-level discussion phase. This social aspect of drama work is important and is a significant feature within work on educational drama (section 3.2), but the question is raised to what extent this effect could not in fact be achieved by other, non-dramatic teaching techniques. This aspect is discussed in detail in Chapter 7. The aspect of one-to-one student communication ('Talking to each other') appeared much less frequently in the data, with only 6 mentions. The frequency of comments on group-level communication, many of which explicitly mention the benefits of such exchange as a means of sharing interpretations of the literature, raises the possibility that such discussion constituted the main means of knowledge and opinion exchange, and potentially suggests that the drama-based pedagogical approach was indeed irrelevant. However some students included the benefits of discussing "the meta levels"

36 NB: the tables that follow were generated automatically by the MAXQDA programme, and are admittedly not the best visualization for the relatively small sample numbers involved.

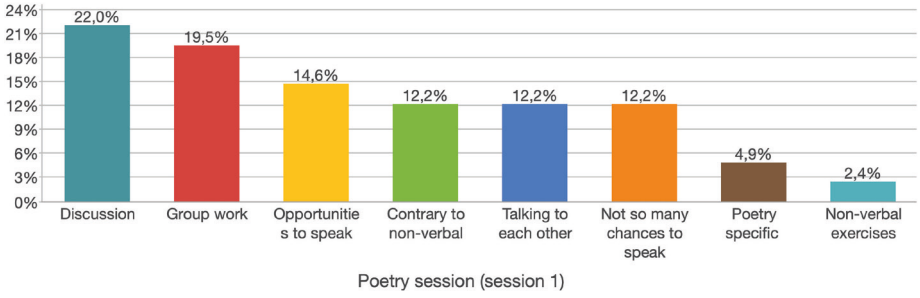
(Respondent 0604589) of the exercises themselves: "…it was useful to talk after each exercise about the tasks and the effectiveness of non-verbal exercises" (Respondent 1508476). The importance of a verbal feedback phase, so important to the effectiveness of drama work, was also observed: "…there was a lot of space that was used for discussion and reflextion (sic) between the tasks which does make sense" (Respondent 2011107). Building on this idea was the concept that, contrary to expectations, non-verbal exercises offer particular potential at the meta-level: "…in our group we had to discuss how to perform the scenes without speaking and what to perform in general" (Respondent 0707766). As a side note, some students touched upon the specific benefit of communicating in English, which was not the native language of any of the participants: "…in the session we had to do group work and so had to discuss our plans and ideas. This was helpful in terms of speaking English, as you had to express your thoughts not in your first language" (Respondent 2210576), with others even hinting at an opinion of some advantages of L2 communication in terms of expressing more personal/emotional information: "Sometimes, it is easier to talk in a foreign language when fewer people are listening. Also, it was easier to talk English because one was able to talk about their own feelings and ideas" (Respondent 0707766)[37]. So at least in the communicative spheres of preparing dramatic work (rehearsing); debriefing after it (feedback) and considering its very nature as a pedagogical tool (meta-level), discussion did seem to be congruent with the non-verbal nature of the sessions. On a more general level, comments pertaining simply to 'opportunities to speak' occurred seven times, perhaps reflecting student expectations of the class as discussed in section 6.1.4.

Comments on the nature of the non-verbal exercises themselves were rare – only four such statements were made in the entire set. The comments were useful however in determining students' views on the effectiveness of non-verbal communication generally – "…we had the chance to "speak" through our body language and gestures and facial expressions" (Respondent 1712078) – as well as on the collective meaning-generating nature of such communication (cf Boal 1979): "I was once more quite impressed how preciesed (sic) one can illustrate a word so that it's meaning becomes obviouse (sic) to the other groups" (Respondent 0612869, referring to the representation of a particular word as a frozen image). The point was also raised that despite the fact that the presenting groups had to stick to non-verbal forms of communication, it was precisely this restriction that liberated the oral communication possibilities for the rest of the class, opening up an interesting possible angle of enquiry over the participant/observer distinction in such applied drama contexts: "Frozen pictures need a lot of pretalk to make clear what is gonna be expressed. If the ones looking at the picture try to guess the motive of the frozen picture, it's a good practice explaining and giving space to talk everyones thoughts through" (Respondent 2711031). This comment underlines the potential for interpretative language production (based on watching and responding

37 For an examination of this phenomenon, see Tschurtschenthaler (2013).

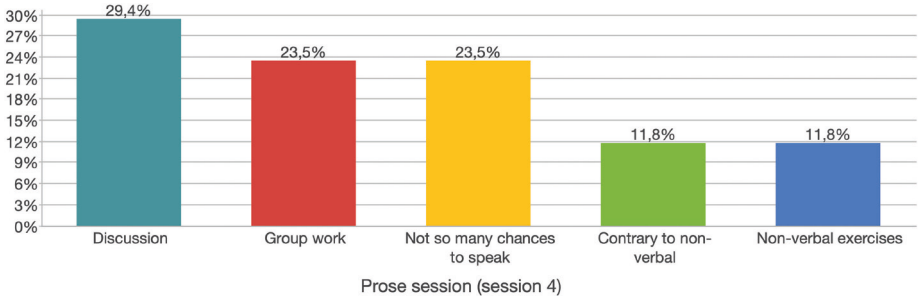
to the frozen picture) as well as the language production involved in preparing the performance. This aspect of supplementary verbal communication was also occasionally expressed more negatively, as an element in fact necessary to aid understanding in either the pre-performance stage ("In terms of practice oral com, I think this non-verbal exercise was not as useful as the verbal exercises. We only discussed in our groups what we are going to present" Respondent 2906560) or post-performance stage ("All the nonverbal exercises needed to be discussed afterwards to fully grasp their meaning" Respondent 2711031). Despite these negatively connoted comments, however, the general impression, given by both the code set and the nature of specific comments, was that the sessions had been positive in terms of practicing oral communication.

Table 1.1: Question 1 responses for non-verbal poetry session



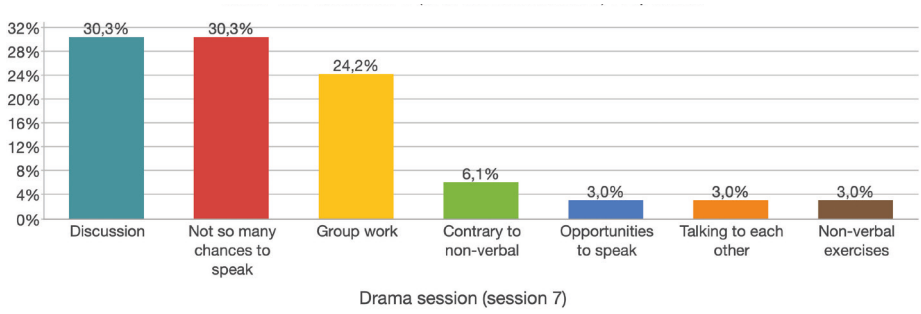
N=41

Table 1.2: Question 1 responses for non-verbal prose session



N=17

Table 1.3: Question 1 responses for non-verbal drama session



N=33

When looking at each of the sessions individually, some differences are apparent. In Table 1.1 the code system generated by responses to question 1 (oral communication) for session 1 (poetry/non-verbal exercises) is displayed. Here the responses are rather evenly spread across the first six codes, with the third to the sixth being equally frequent. The first two response types are in the same order as the general code ranking in Table 1 ('Discussion' and 'Group work'). 'Opportunities to speak' occurs in third place. 'Not so many chances to speak', the only negatively connoted response type, occurs in fourth equal place, with only 5 comments out of a total of 41 coded comments for this session. Two comments emphasized the usefulness of oral discussion as a necessary means of clarifying interpretation in poetry: "First, you needed to clarify words you didn't understand in order to discuss the poem, second you needed to come up with vocabulary reffering (sic) to the poem to talk about it with your partner" (Respondent 2711031); "The session was very useful in terms of oral communication because we had to talk about the meaning of the poems, about their possible interpretations" (Respondent 1207638). However these comments do not make any reference to the non-verbal drama exercises: they simply underline the importance of oral discussion for literary (poetic) discussion.

The responses to the session on non-verbal exercises and prose (session 4) displayed some different trends (Table 1.2). There were only five generated codes, the fewest of all three sessions, and responses were heavily concentrated in the first three. Responses connected to 'Discussion' once again dominated, but the response type 'Not so many chances to speak' occurred four times in a total of 17 coded comments, coming second in order of frequency. When chances for oral communication were mentioned, they tended to again emphasize the preparation aspect e.g. "Only in the period of preparation for the group tasks we had the chance to talk to each other" (Respondent 0604589).

The session on non-verbal exercises and drama (session 7) was the most striking in terms of dominant codes – the first three dominated strongly out of a total of seven. Most striking, however, is the fact that the 'Not so many chances to speak' type topped

the responses as the most frequent (10 comments out of 33). Many of these however again made reference to the practice of oral communication at other points in the session: "Concerning the actual drama exercises, there was not really much oral communication as the focus was on non-verbal tasks. However, there was a lot of space that was used for discussion and reflextion (sic) between the tasks" (Respondent 2011107); "The exercises themselves were non-verbal, but in between those exercises we discussed the differences" (Respondent 2210576).

It would appear then that, as expected, there was a strong element in the responses that underlined the lack of opportunity for oral communication practice in sessions involving non-verbal drama exercises. However, opportunities to speak and discuss 'in and around' the exercises were deemed to be plentiful and useful (e.g. preparation and rehearsal); and, at the meta-level of discussing the drama exercises themselves, the non-verbal nature of the sessions might even have constituted an advantage in this regard. Finally, an interesting trend could be noticed along the lines of an 'audience effect' – the phenomenon of responding orally to other groups' (non-verbal) performance. This is an effect not often emphasized in the literature on drama-in-education/language teaching, and one to be further explored in chapter 7. In my teacher's diary for these sessions, I noted "the freedom of discussion which emerged", which was connected to the literary interpretational aspects to be discussed in the following section. So in this case non-verbal exercises constitute a medium through which themes and concerns are concretized, before they can then be discussed: a springboard for oral interaction.

6.2.1.2 Exploration of literature

Question 2 on the Moodle platform was as follows: Comment on the session in terms of helping you to explore/understand the literature. This section explores responses to this item from the non-verbal sessions (sessions 1, 4 and 7). Firstly, the responses across all three sessions are considered together; then the codings from each of the three sessions (poetry, prose, drama) are examined individually.

Table 2: Question 2 (literature) responses for all non-verbal sessions

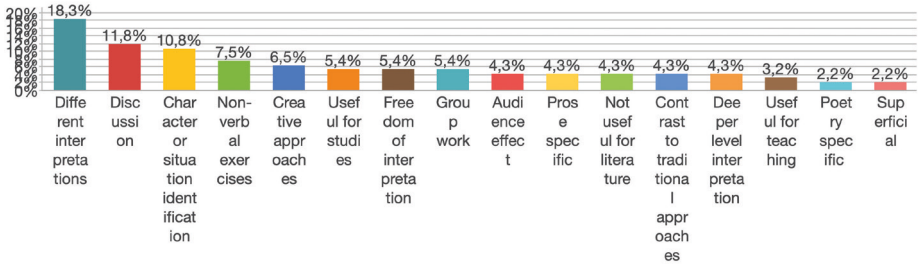
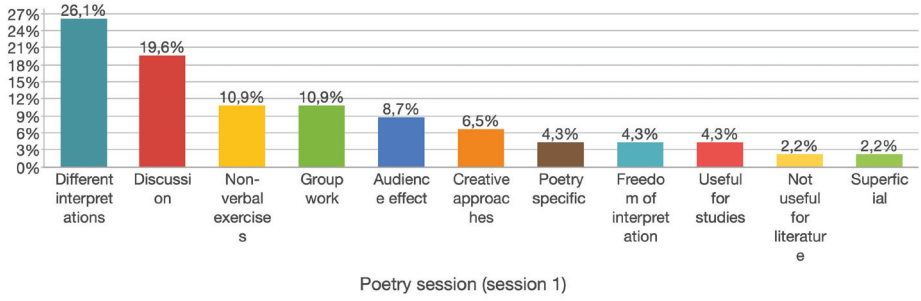


Table 2 displays the codes that emerged from responses to question 2 across all non-verbal exercise sessions. A total of 93 comments were coded.

When comparing these overall responses to those for question 1 (see Table 1), an initial striking impression is the large range of response types, as well as the relatively low frequency of each. This can be contrasted with the codings for question 1 in which the first three categories clearly dominated. A further general trend is the frequency of positively connoted comments. The negatively connoted response types ('Not useful for literature' and 'Superficial') occur at relatively low frequency, compared to responses to question 1 (oral communication), in which 'Not so many chances to speak' was the third most frequent response type across the same three sessions (sessions 1, 4 and 7).

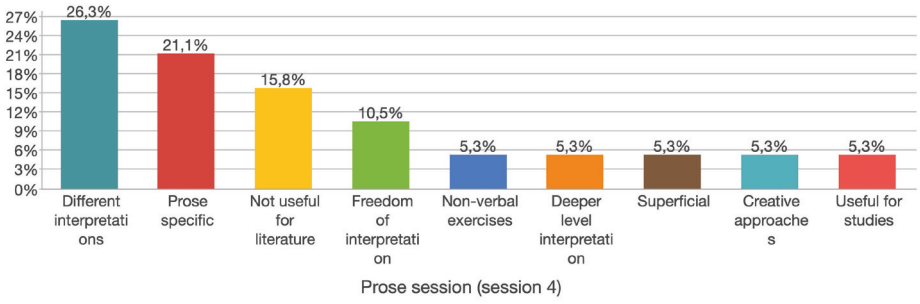
Despite the wide variety and low frequency of each response type in Table 2, many of the codes can be further categorized under two more general headings. Firstly, those responses that refer to personal engagement with the literature – 'Different interpretations', which is the most frequent type at around a fifth of all coded comments; 'Character or situation identification'; 'Creative approaches'; 'Freedom of interpretation'; 'Deeper level interpretation'. And secondly, response types that refer to the educational or practical value of the sessions – 'Useful for studies'; 'Discussion' and 'Group work'; 'Audience effect'; 'Contrast to traditional approaches'; 'Useful for teaching'. Another noteworthy aspect is perhaps the inclusion of 'Audience effect' as a separate code in this set. This effect was already inferred from some responses to question 1 (see above), but occurred as a more unambiguous response type for question 2, justifying a specific category. Interestingly, all of the comments under 'Audience effect' were made in relation to the session on poetry (session 1), which is discussed further below.

Table 2.1: Question 2 responses for non-verbal poetry session



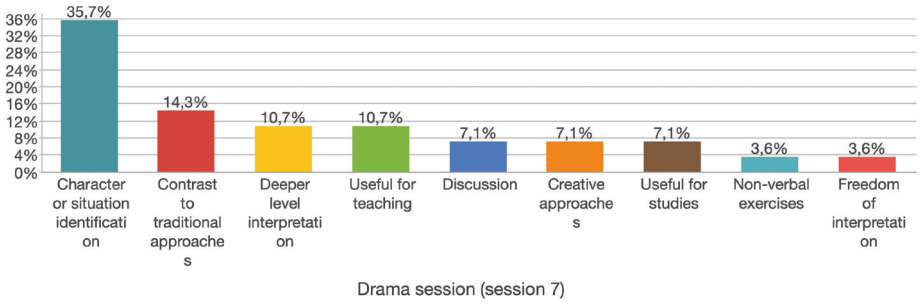
N=46

Table 2.2: Question 2 responses for non-verbal prose session



N=19

Table 2.3: Question 2 responses for non-verbal drama session



N=28

In the codings for session 1 (poetry), some interesting trends are noticeable (see Table 2.1). Responses connected to 'Discussion' rank highly (second most frequent), compared to the first place ranking of this response type for question 1 of the same session. Again, several comments emphasized the discussion element as the main driver of information exchange, arguably separate from any effect of the drama exercises: "We were allowed to discuss about the poems which helped me to understand the different ways of interpretation and to "see" the poem from another point of view" (Respondent 2906560); "It helped to analyze literature because when talking in smaller groups about the poems, we shared different views and therefore we developed even more ideas" (Respondent 0707766). Some students expressed this idea even more directly, and negatively contrasted with a perceived negligible effect of the drama work: "I'm also not convinced of the way this is to help me explore the literature. Most of the literary analysis was done in our group discussion which wasn't based on drama exercises" (Respondent 1007669). However, many of the comments on 'Discussion' overlapped with those of the most frequent type, 'Different interpretations'. Indeed, these top two

codings, taken together, dominate the set for this session. Comments on 'Different interpretations' could be divided into those based on class and/or group discussion, e.g. "I had first no proper picture what was going on in the poem but provided (sic) by several discussions I could chose (sic) from different points of view and make up my own mind about it" (Respondent 2711031) and those based on the non-verbal drama exercises, e.g. "Trying to find a way to interpret the poem and to show it with just one frozen picture helped me to see the poem from a different perspective" (Respondent 2005303). Interestingly, there was a feeling that the missing element in the interpretative process was not connected to the drama aspect, but to a lack of technical familiarity with poetry itself: "…unfortunately the group work was not that good since we had no clue how to analyze poems. It would have been more helpful for us to hear some theoretical aspects of analyzing poems and then to work on a poem in groups instead of directly working on it" (Respondent 1508476). This would perhaps suggest the need to both pre-teach aspects of the technical process of literary interpretation, as well as discuss the specific poems before embarking on the drama exercises. This supplementary use of drama was reinforced by a trend in the data which seemed to view the drama exercises as a tool for consolidating, rather than (co-)creating, knowledge of the literature: "It was very interesting to see how we all in class had somehow different interpretations of the same poem. Somehow in the end, we could still agree on a general motif of the poems. The non-verbal exercises were challenging but not too demanding and helped us to consolidate the meaning of the poems" (Respondent 0901364). This would suggest the incorporation of drama exercises as a step in the interpretative/pedagogical process, helping a group to converge on commonalities of interpretation, rather than to express a more improvisational, spontaneous initial response to the literature. This idea was also expressed as an imperative, with a sure understanding of the literature being seen as a necessary prerequisite to the dramatic work: "In order to create a frozen picture, it was necessary to discuss and fully understand the poems first" (Respondent 2902947). Finally, the reported benefit of watching others' performances of the drama exercises, the so-called 'audience effect' which was noticed in responses to question 1, was much more overtly expressed for question 2. Respondent 2902947 commented that "through listening to other student's interpretations and seeing their visual presentation of the poem, I found new ways of looking on (sic) the poems". These comments also often overlapped with comments pertaining to the gathering of different interpretations: "The exercises and different interpretations from my fellow students helped me a lot to interpret the poem" (Respondent 2711031).

The codings for the session on prose (session 4) show a fairly similar pattern to the poetry session, albeit with some important differences (Table 2.2). The most frequent response can be subsumed under the code 'Different interpretations', with the same thematic exploratory aspect as seen in responses to this question in session 1, e.g. "it (i.e. the drama work) does help to read the story from another perspective and explore its meaning" (Respondent 1506908). Another observation which also came up in the

poetry session responses was a perceived need to pre-teach aspects of the literature before engaging in the drama exercises, once more emphasizing the idea of drama as knowledge consolidation and exploration rather than creation: "I think it would have been helpful to go through the story at least once (of course we were supposed to read the story in advance but it would have been better to remember) and focus on one specific theme e.g. death and chose non verbal exercises to express this specific theme" (Respondent 0612869). Indeed the most striking aspect of the responses to the prose session was the third most frequent category, 'Not useful for literature'. As the title of the code implies, these comments suggested that the session and the exercises involved were not in fact useful for literary exploration. This category was either completely absent (drama session) or else very infrequent (poetry session) in the other two sessions. One suggestion was made that the drama work somehow was not compatible with the formation of individual interpretations of the short story, a justifiable argument, that perhaps underlines the necessarily collective nature of effective drama work: "…the exercises did not really help me to understand the literature… I know that they tried hard to describe and explain their interpretations of certain parts of the short story, but this does not help anyone to explore short stories on their own" (Respondent 1508476). A second similar comment pointed out the tendency of group drama exercises to miss a general overview: "My impression was that we worked on a variety of aspects without really connecting them" (Respondent 2802087). However this 'serial' aspect of dealing with the story was also mentioned several times in a positive light, under the response type 'Prose specific' – e.g. "I liked very much that they cut the story into parts and reconstructed the story with the non- verbal scenes acted out by us students…this increased my exploring of literature and the horizon of interpretation" (Respondent 2711031). For the first time, the theme of adaptation was mentioned, as the students were required to adapt aspects of the story rather than simply represent them: "By adopting (sic) the excerpts into little non-verbal dramatic scenes we were encouraged to think about and to interpret the excerpts we were given" (Respondent 2011107). This is a technique that also came up, and will be further explored, in the text-based sessions.

In the responses to session 7 (drama), differences can immediately be noticed regarding the coding. Firstly, there was no code at all included for any negatively connoted comments, making this generally the most positively regarded of all the non-verbal sessions under examination for question 2. One comment openly identified this as the best session they had experienced so far: "I think this was the best session so far to understand the literature and the meaning of the wardrobe" (Respondent 0301684). In contrast to the codings for the other two sessions, this set (Table 2.3) shows a clearly dominant response type, 'Character or situation identification', with 10 comments out of a session total of 28 coded comments. This underlines the perhaps expected bias of drama exercises applied to the literary genre of drama, written, after all, to be performed. Many of the comments emphasized this correlation, e.g. "The focus on the

gestures and the facial expressions helped a lot to feel like the characters" (Respondent 0308291); "Right from the start, non-verbal activities led one into the mindset of being trapped (or respectively saved) in a closet, which was the core sub-message of today's literature" (Respondent 2802087). In this regard, the use of exclusively non-verbal exercises, as would be common in an actual rehearsal process for dramatic performance, was perceived to be inherently advantageous, in contrast to the more peripheral use of such exercises identified in the sessions on poetry and prose: "It was very helpful, as the stressing (sic) on non-verbal exercises increased the understanding of certain aspects. For example, one could focus much more on the feelings of a person" (Respondent 0908925); "We had to focus on the main emotions in a limited space and could somehow put ourselves into the positions of the characters in the play" (Respondent 0901364); "It definitely helped to identify more intensely with the text and to understand the actual circumstances of the scene" (Respondent 2011107). In addition to this most frequent aspect of character identification, a high number of comments made reference to the deeper level of exploration /understanding of the literature that was developed by the exercises: "The session strongly helped to explore and understand the literature. A lot of aspects that are covered in the scene were used to be explored in the drama exercises. The exercises were not isolated from the overall meaning of the text" (Respondent 2011107). The latter part of this comment is also enlightening - that the exercises were not 'isolated' from the meaning of the text. Again, this could be seen as confirmation of the natural alignment of drama exercises applied to dramatic text, as opposed to drama exercises feeling more disconnected when applied to non-dramatic text. The complete absence of negative comments in the set could be read as further confirmation of this. There was an additional perception that the exercises were not merely useful to reinforce the meaning of the literature, but to go further and allow students to bring their own creativity to the fore: "The subsequent activities then helped one to explore beyond that (the main message/meaning)" (Respondent 2802087). In methodological terms, such comments were often positively contrasted with what students often identified as 'traditional approaches' to the teaching of literature (the second most frequent response type): "The session has shown me that a written text (in this case a drama) does not necessarily have to be analysed/interpreted with the aid of only written exercises" (Respondent 0510319); "Exploring literature can be really boring, especially for students in High School. When interpreting a text with several exercises of the session in which the students do not have to write anything down but create something on their own they pay most likely more attention and have fun doing so" (Respondent 0707766). This 'fun' element is a key aspect of the methodological attraction of drama techniques, and is explored more extensively in the analysis of question 3 (*Lehramt*). An additional angle on this response type was the interesting observation that drama work, as an embodied, interactive pedagogy, could go some distance in alleviating students' desensitization towards emotionally charged material: "When just reading about people hiding in a closet out of fear it sometimes can be difficult

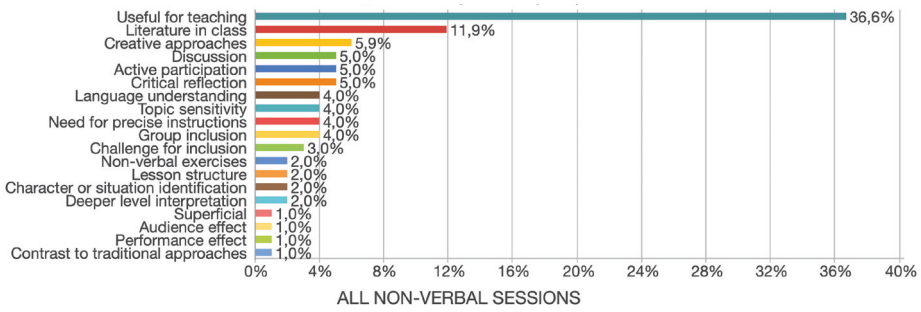
to actually realize how the characters feel and what their situation must be like. Especially nowadays many people are reading thrillers and crime fiction all the time and might have gotten used to such scenes" (Respondent 0604589). Aspects also noticed in the other sessions were the need to pre-teach the literature for the drama exercises to be effective – "To create our own ending it was important get the characters right, which would be not possible without a good understanding of the drama" (Respondent 2210576); "To complete the tasks like the ones today, one has to carefully deal with the texts in order to get an idea of the characters' personalities and features. Moreover, one has to know what happened in the past, which period/century it is, which characters appear and so forth" (Respondent 1508476), as well as the concept of drama utilized for the consolidation, rather than the creation, of knowledge: "I did like the session very much as it focused on one specific aspect of the third scene of the drama, namely the wardrobe. If they would do some of those exercises in class, they would more likely draw attention to what they want to teach" (Respondent 0707766). In this last comment, an overlap with aspect of teacher training can be noticed, and indeed 'Useful for teaching' was represented in three comments in the set. So it appears that students were also thinking about this aspect during the session. This is more extensively explored in section 6.2.1.3 below.

In general then, when dealing with the responses to question 2 (literature exploration/understanding) across the non-verbal sessions (1, 4 and 7), certain trends can already be perceived. There seems to be a general split between comments based on a deeper personal engagement with and understanding of the literature, and those that focus on the practicalities of organizing and exploring the literature with others (e.g. as the teacher of a class). The aspect of personal engagement under exploration here can further be perceived in terms of positively connoted comments (e.g. 'Character identification' in the session on drama) and negatively connoted comments (e.g. 'Not useful for literature' in the prose session). And here the genre distinction does seem to be valid – the session on drama was the most overwhelmingly positive in terms of response type, with the non-verbal exercises being seen as very helpful for identification with character and situation as well as for deeper-level thematic exploration, while several comments from the other sessions touched on the fact that the drama exercises were useful 'only' in terms of exchanging and expressing individual interpretations, rather than deepening them. Perhaps this is evidence of the 'natural' correlation between the literary genre of drama and drama-based exercises in class. Especially in the session on poetry, the so-called 'audience effect' was very strong (as also noticed in section 6.2.1.1): drama as a communicative tool to share alternative interpretations in a larger (e.g. class) group. 'Discussion' again featured prominently, often in terms of a perceived need to pre-teach literature before drama work could be effective. This raises the aspect of drama exercises as applied to the consolidation of pre-established, pre-taught or pre-discussed meanings – as a deepening effect; rather than used in more literally creative ways, such as in the creation of meaning in improvisational theatre, for example.

6.2.1.3 *Lehramt*

Question 3 on the Moodle platform asked respondents to *Comment on the session in terms of useful ideas for future teaching.* The item was only to be answered by those students enrolled in the teaching degree programme at the department (Lehramt). This section explores responses to this item from the non-verbal sessions (sessions 1, 4 and 7). Firstly, the responses across all three sessions are considered together; then the codings from each of the three sessions (poetry, prose, drama) are examined individually.

Table 3: Question 3 (Lehramt) responses for all non-verbal sessions



N=101

Table 3 displays the codes that emerged from responses to question 3 across all of the non-verbal sessions.

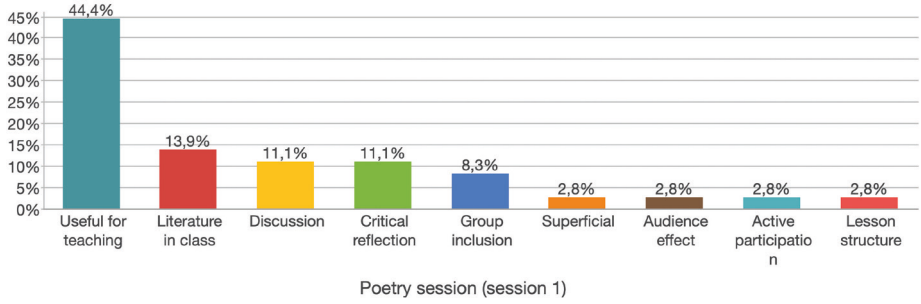
In comparison to the corresponding tables from the previous questions (Table 1 and Table 2 above), it is immediately apparent that question 3 generated a much wider range of response types, most of them at very low frequency rates. A total of 101 comments were coded across the three relevant sessions. However, by contrast, the top two response types, and in particular the most frequent type ('Useful for teaching') dominated the set to a much greater degree than the corresponding top responses to the other questions. Another noteworthy aspect is the fact that there are no correspondingly negative counterparts to the most frequent response type (i.e. 'Not useful for teaching'). This stands in stark contrast to the sets for questions 1 and 2, both of which included such opposingly negative response types. This would suggest at first glance a generally positive attitude to the question 3.

Regarding the top responses, 'Useful for teaching' dominated the set (37 coded comments), with responses positively highlighting the benefit of the sessions in terms of generating ideas for exercises and approaches that could be used in the students' future planned careers as schoolteachers of English. Interesting to note perhaps is the fact that the comments coded as the second most frequent response type, 'Literature in class', often occurred in close proximity to, or even overlapping with, comments of the 'Useful for teaching' type. This strongly suggests that students were mostly considering

the application of drama to the teaching of literature rather than language, despite this aspect not specifically being pointed to in the question. The response type 'Language understanding' covers comments that focussed on the teaching of language aspects, but these occurred at a much lower frequency (4 comments out of 101). 'Discussion', which occurred as a high frequency code in questions 1 and 2, also featured at higher frequency for question 3, but these responses were often paired with a second type, 'Critical reflection', a type that was not coded for in either of the previous questions. In question 3, these latter comments often pointed to the specifically teaching-related nature of the discussion, with reflection on, for example, age-appropriate use of the exercises in school: "In (sic) the end of the session we even had a short discussion whether or not this kind of drama activity can be used in every grade. Some students argued that it can only be used for either very young or older students, as the grades 7-9 are difficult to work with" (Respondent 2902947); or thematic appropriateness: "The introduction of the theme of death in literature was very interesting and I liked the discussion about when to start with this topic in school" (Respondent 1712078). It could be inferred that as teacher trainees, the students are more willing to engage in such career-related discussion in *Sprachpraxis* classes, rather than focus on more general/random themes. This is further explored in the discussion section below. Another interesting trend in the set is the opposing, and in some cases complimentary pairs of response types. The combination of 'Literature in class' and 'Language understanding' has already been mentioned and will be explored further below, but we can also notice 'Audience effect' and 'Performance effect' (the latter being coded for the very first time in the data); 'Deeper level interpretation' and 'Superficial'; 'Group inclusion' (positive) and 'Challenge for inclusion'; as well as the response type 'Topic sensitivity', which includes both positively and negatively connoted comments. This phenomenon in the data again underlines the range of response types to this question; but it also accentuates the lack of uniformity of opinion on drama-in-education in this context, as well as the richness of the discussion generated, which itself could again indicate a high degree of interest in the subject among the students. Several other response types reinforce the notion that the students were working and thinking together as future teachers. 'Group inclusion' covered responses that emphasized the collective benefit of such methods, mentioning that drama work "can be very helpful to strengthen the class sense of community since you have to be able to relay (sic) on the others and furthermore you get in contact with other students you may have never interacted with" (Respondent 1712078). Connected to this were responses covering 'Active participation', pointing to the benefits of drama work which ensures students "do not have to sit on their chairs all the time, get bored and maybe miss important excerpts of the text" (Respondent 0510319). An additional benefit to group inclusion was the observation that "maybe weaker students are encouraged to participate more actively" (Respondent 0908925), although this aspect of inclusion was also more critically dealt with (see below). In terms of 'Lesson structure', students mentioned the drama methods as con-

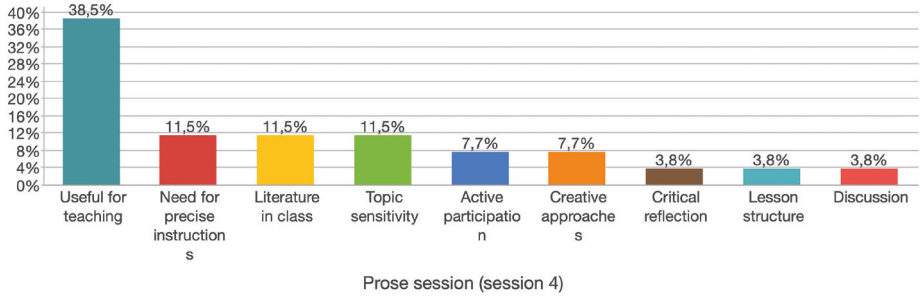
stituting an organizing impulse over the class session, noticing "a gradual development in the level of the three exercises" (Respondent 2011107), which "gave the impression of an overall continuity" (Respondent 0604589). A final initial impulse in the overall set for question 3, which again did not occur in the previous two questions, was the notion of the non-verbal exercises themselves being a good introduction to this kind of drama-based work: by engaging in exercises without spoken language, "students have time to focus on their expression and body language without having to keep in mind their text as well" (Respondent 0908925).

Table 3.1: Question 3 responses for non-verbal poetry session



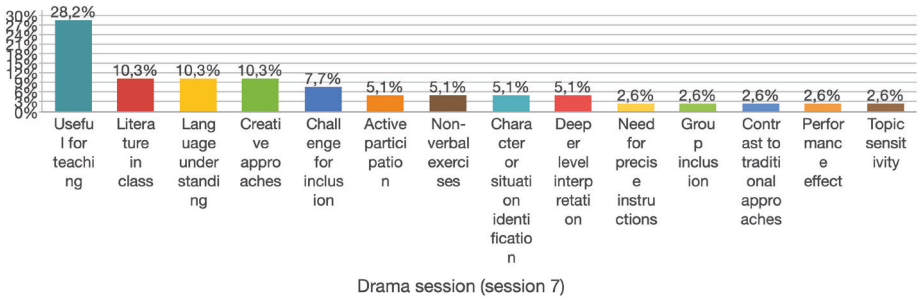
N=36

Table 3.2: Question 3 responses for non-verbal prose session



N=26

Table 3.3: Question 3 responses for non-verbal drama session



N=39

The first impression gained from the codings of responses to question 3 from session 1 (poetry) alone (Table 3.1) is again the dominance of the first response type, 'Useful for teaching', at just under half of all coded comments (16 out of a total of 36 for the session). A major implication throughout these comments was that pupils in school required help to approach and understand poetry: "Especially for students, the topic of poetry is often really difficult, but I think such exercises really help" (Respondent 1907754); "I guess that it's a way that gets the students actively more involved and as consequence they could become more interested in poetry" (Respondent 2005303). Such sentiments seem to back up the general apathy shown towards poetry as a genre compared to prose and drama (see Section 6.1.2). Not that the entire genre was dismissed out of hand during the session – on the contrary: after discussion, the class consensus was that "poetry is applicable in all classes depending on the chosen work" (Respondent 0301742). Of interest here is also the fact that the response type 'Audience effect' was only noticed for question 3 in the poetry session, albeit in one single comment. In responses to question 2 (literature), 'Audience effect' comments were also only noticed in the session on poetry; and indeed, for question 3, the sense of watching others' interpretative performances as an aid to forming and challenging one's own ideas, as seen in question 2 responses, resurfaced again. A sense arises of the benefit of specifically non-verbal drama work in expressing the difficult-to-express-in-words, using representational physical drama to achieve "a more abstract level for the motifs of the frozen pictures" (Respondent 2711031), for example. Once again, however, as seen in Section 6.2.1.2, such work was seen as adjunct to, or complimentary of, traditional methods of analysis: "I can see myself employing those methods, only to allow students to empathize with a protagonist or understand a theme, but not for the entire analysis" (Respondent 1007669).

In Table 3.2, the codings for the session on prose (session 4) reveal the same two most dominant response types as the poetry session ('Useful for teaching' and 'Literature in class', often connected). 'Useful for teaching' comments occurred at a similar frequency level here as in the poetry session (10 out of 26 comments in the set). 'Liter-

ature in class', however, was equalled in frequency by a new response coding, 'Need for precise instructions'. These comments occurred only three times in the set, but they were much less frequent in the session on drama (only once), and were entirely absent in the poetry session. While this effect may have been exclusive to the particular presentation group that week, important issues were raised, particularly the importance of clear guidelines as a means of best utilizing time available: "…it took a lot of time and the task (e.g. not to look at each other's picture at the beginning) was not made clear and transparent" (Respondent 0908925); "Especially students in school need precise instructions in order to avoid losing time" (Respondent 0604589). Another aspect was the need to perhaps tailor even the task instructions (and not just the tasks themselves) to the particular age group involved: "Still, with younger students you have to narrow the task by giving more instructions" (Respondent 0301684). Second equal in terms of frequency in this set was also 'Topic sensitivity'. These comments highlighted the need to deal responsibly with potentially challenging topics, although in comments from the prose session the focus was more on dealing with such material in general: "I think one should be careful with the chosen topic. 'Death in literature' is a deep (sic) issue and can be touching (sic). Love will maybe be to embarrassing for students" (Respondent 2711031). In the session on drama, one comment touched on the same issue, but with the focus more set on the drama teaching methods: "As a teacher you could use it (i.e. non-verbal exercises) for difficult drama with many strong emotions or stories to get to know the play and get in the right state of mind" (Respondent 0901364). Here again we see the notion of non-verbal drama being used to ease into something: in the poetry session, it was perhaps interpreting the abstract meaning of the work; with the prose literature the focus was more thematic.

A glance at Table 3.3 reveals the session on drama (session 7) as having the most disparate set of responses of all sessions in the data for question 3. 'Useful for teaching' once again topped the set in terms of frequency, but not at as dominant a rate as the other two sessions (11 out of 39 comments coded). Of particular interest are the categories in second place in terms of frequency – in this position, 'Literature in class' appears, similar to the other two sessions, but is joined by 'Language understanding'. All four of these latter comments occurred in the set for the drama session. The comments were connected to the literature-based performance exercises, but focused on the linguistic aspects of those: "I think it (the session) helped me to understand why also non-verbal tasks, which I actually don't prefer, can be useful to understand the language. Especially the last task showed me that the comprehension of the text is very important" (Respondent 0308291). This highlighted another important aspect of the 'Performance effect'/'Audience effect' dichotomy, and indeed some comments stated this explicitly: "The performing students indeed had to concentrate in order to be able to perform the drama's text correctly. In my opinion, this constitutes an alternative listening comprehension task. On the one hand, students obviously have to listen carefully to a text and on the other hand, they can be active" (Respondent 0510319). Indeed, this 'Performance effect' was only coded onto this one comment, not being found anywhere

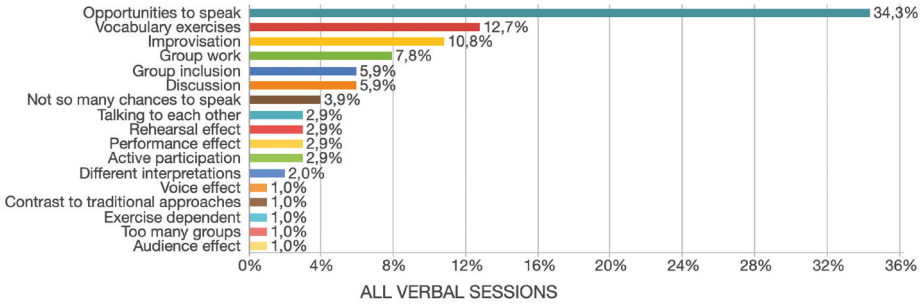
else in the data so far. The response type 'Character or situation identification', found at the highest frequency position in the drama session set for question 2, was found in only two comments out of a total of 39 for the question 3 set. The emphasis, however, was the same, placing importance on the drama work as an aid to exploring the dramatic text: "As the students have to deal with the given text in detail to get an idea of the play, it helps them both in reading and analyzing the given extract, and in terms of being creative and putting oneself in the position of a character" (Respondent 1508476); "The relationship to the protagonists becomes very intense and inspiring when the students have to „be" a protagonist" (Respondent 0301684). Another aspect of this active performance method was expressed under the response type 'Challenge for inclusion', a category coded onto three comments. They pointed to the issue of inclusion within specific exercises ("When you, as a teacher, really want to implement this exercise, you should be aware of the challenge that you have to find a task for those pupils who are not performing" (Respondent 0510319)) as well as in drama work more generally: "Overall, these exercises can, in my opinion, provide great fun for students, yet you have to be careful and keep in mind that certainly not everybody likes it" (Respondent 0301742). This latter point, regarding the suitability and appropriateness of drama work concerning context and participants is a key issue to be explored in further discussion below. 'Group inclusion' as a positively connoted aspect was only mentioned once, in the suggestion of a project-based drama model, in which "each group has to interpret a scene and then everything is cut together - maybe as a project, someone could do the music and so on" (Respondent 0908925). Additional to this comment, four other comments (coded under 'Creative approaches' highlighted the benefits of the week's exercises in terms of promoting creativity in the students, e.g. "I can take away a lot of (sic) this session, it was very coherent in total, the exercises were fun and required creativity" (Respondent 1207638); "The second last exercise encourages (sic) to be creative and think about the situation of the scene in more depth and to diagnose which alternatives could happen at the end" (Respondent 2011107).

In general, then, we see a large, diverse set of response types to question 3 (*Lehramt)* for the non-verbal sessions, characterized by several opposing sets of types (e.g. 'Group inclusion'/'Challenge for inclusion'), and the significant dominance of the most frequent type, 'Useful for teaching'. When also considering the often-overlapping response types of 'Discussion' and 'Critical reflection', a picture emerges of a generally positive attitude towards the potential of drama-based work in the classroom, and a readiness to discussing such techniques in the *Sprachpraxis* classroom. Another interesting attitude is the primary emphasis on drama exercises applied to the teaching of literature (in particular the 'difficult' genre of poetry), as opposed to language, although this was also mentioned to a lesser extent. Once again the 'Audience effect' was emphasized, again mostly in connection to poetry and the need to express the abstract, ambiguous themes often dealt with – although in this set we see the complimentary 'Performance effect' also making an appearance in the data.

6.2.2 Verbal exercises (sessions 2, 5 and 8)

The category of verbal drama exercises is wide, ranging from highly structured, pre-scripted role-plays of various lengths to completely free improvisational forms (see examples from early in the semester under section 4.4). An important and obvious pre-requisite is that the students should be speaking out loud, in contrast to the non-verbal exercises that rather emphasize physical theatre techniques and communication. However any exercise involving students planning and writing their own texts comes under the category of text-based exercises, to be discussed in Section 6.2.3 below. The sessions involving verbal exercises were sessions 2 (poetry), 5 (prose), and 8 (drama). The Moodle questionnaire for session 2 was completed by 15 of the 27 class participants; that of session 5 by 16 of the participants; and that of session 8 by 13 of the participants.

Table 4: Question 1 (oral communication) responses for all verbal sessions



N=102

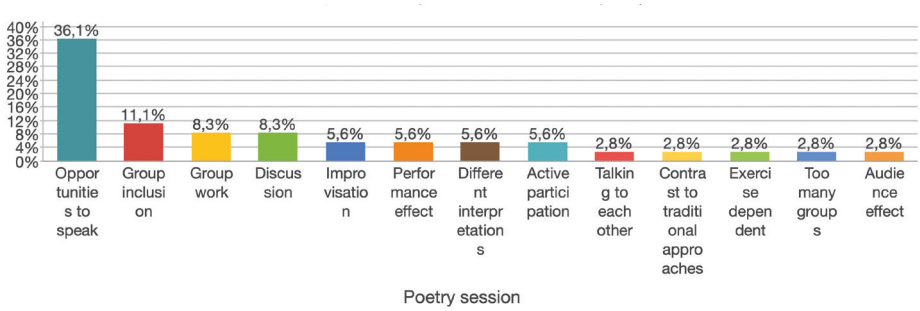
6.2.2.1 Oral communication

Question 1 on the Moodle platform asked students to comment on the session in terms of practice of oral communication. This section explores responses to this item from the verbal sessions (sessions 2, 5 and 8). Firstly, the responses across all three sessions are considered when coded together; then the codes from each of the three sessions (poetry, prose, drama) are examined individually.

Table 4 displays the codings for responses to question 1 across all three verbal sessions, taken together. A total of 102 comments exist for the set. In contrast to responses to the same question for the non-verbal sessions (Section 6.2.1), one might expect verbal drama exercises to generate more positive responses in terms of practice of oral communication, due to the natural correlation between verbal drama and oral communication. And indeed, this does seem to be the case, given the dominance of the top response group, 'Opportunities to speak', in over a third of all coded responses. Various responses highlighted the versatility of verbal work in terms of both language practice and drama aspects: "This verbal session was a (sic) good practice of speaking and acting. We would talk, discuss, ask, act out. Everything that you can do with a verbal ses-

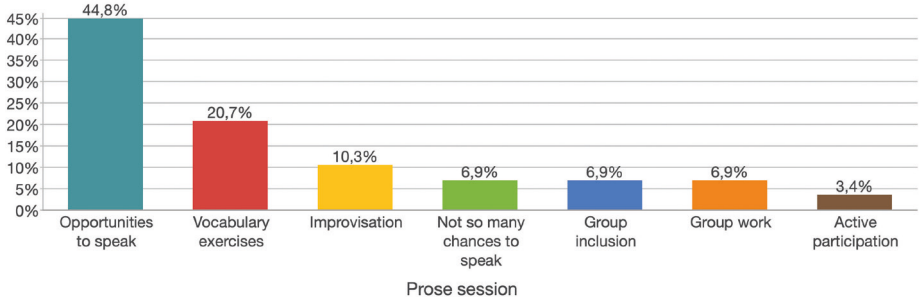
sion" (Respondent 0901364); "…there was a lot of speaking not only in the discussion sections but also within the actual exercises" (Respondent 2011107). The next two most frequent response types explore examples of these practice opportunities, one being specifically lexical ('Vocabulary exercises'); the other emphasizing free, open communication ('Improvisation'). Only four comments carried the criticism that there were 'Not so many chances to speak'; this was far less frequently mentioned than the same response group for question 1 in the non-verbal sessions (19 of 91 comments), and the comments tended to focus on aspects which are arguably relevant only for the specific session being dealt with: "…I did not really have the feeling of practicing my oral communication. For the warm up activity, we just had to say a single number. Both in the *Taboo* and the impromptu task, I could rarely talk. We finished the tasks with only a few sentences" (Respondent 1508476); "I did not practice oral communication very much. The only time when I spoke English was in the taboo game and the impromptu drama exercise. Both times, I did not say much" (Respondent 0301684). One possible explanation may lie in the way the exercises were actually handled and presented by the group leaders that week. It also raises the question, especially in improvisational forms of drama where there are no 'rules' and no pre-written texts to be distributed, of whether some personality types are more willing to get involved in drama in the first place, and are therefore more likely to reap any possible benefits in oral communication practice. Another possible question is raised on the subject of the game of *Taboo* mentioned in the above comments. In this game, participants have to guess a particular word based on descriptions of it given by another player, who in the version played were not allowed to mention the word in question, or any other derivations of it. This leads to the question to what extent can this exercise be considered as drama-in-education? And indeed, what characteristics must an exercise or method display to be considered 'dramatic', as opposed to 'only' being a vocabulary game, for example? This will be further discussed in chapter 7. 'Group work' and 'Discussion' also feature in the data (8 and 6 comments respectively), but not at the high levels seen in responses to question 1 in the non-verbal sessions. This discrepancy, discussed in section 6.2.1.1, probably reflects the necessity of general class discussion during sessions focussed on non-verbal exercises, whereas for the present data set, responses tend to be connected to the efficacy of the actual verbal exercises themselves, as discussed above. There were also two new response types of interest in the educational context. The response group 'Voice effect' included one comment that praised the presenters for "…tasks chosen for the focus on voice, (that) were very good" (Respondent 0308291), raising the very pragmatic, yet vital, role that drama exercises can play in vocal development and voice awareness for trainee teachers. And, in addition to 'Audience effect' and 'Performance effect', 'Rehearsal effect' was added as a third dramatic meta-level communicative code: "I liked that we had some time to prepare our imagined scene and also that we had time to talk a little the dialogue through" (Respondent 2711031).

Table 4.1: Question 1 responses for verbal poetry session



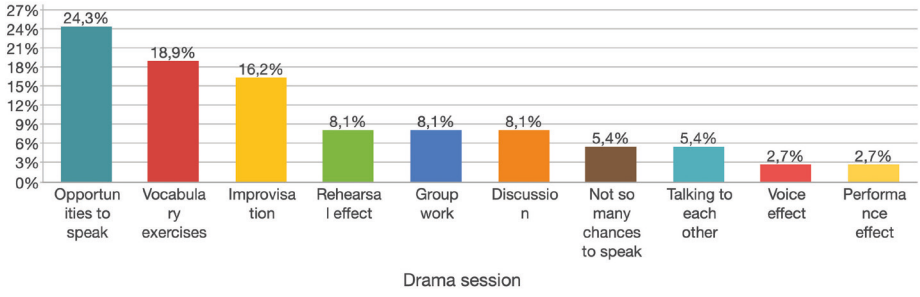
N=36

Table 4.2: Question 1 responses for verbal prose session



N=29

Table 4.3: Question 1 responses for verbal drama session



N=37

Table 4.1 displays the response types coded in the poetry session alone (session 2). At first glance, it is clear that the range of responses is the most diverse of all three sessions concerned. There are also far more response types compared to the equivalent poetry session in the non-verbal category (see Table 1.1). As in the other two verbal sessions (prose and drama), the response type 'Opportunities to speak' dominates the set; in the case of the poetry session this accounts for 13 of a total of 36 coded comments. The second most frequent response type, 'Group inclusion', is higher placed here than in the other two verbal session sets, but still only comprises 4 out of 36 comments. The response type 'Not so many chances to speak', which occurs in both the prose and drama session data sets, was entirely absent from the data of the poetry session – however the response type 'Exercise dependent' was only found in the poetry session data, in a single comment that highlights the variability of oral communication practice opportunities depending on the role and emotions required by the exercise: "The first exercise with the two customers and the barkeepers were for some people with the more talkative emotions good for practice (to talk spontaneously etc.) for others, however, who were for example sad or tired, there was only little practice of verbal language, but more of how to express ourselves emotionally" (Respondent 0707766). This raises the issue of certain exercises being better suited to verbal communication (perhaps those involving positive emotions), and others more appropriate for non-verbal expressiveness (perhaps more internalized, introverted feelings). Another comment was coded under 'Too many groups', again unique to the poetry session, which pointed to the dangers of overdoing the performance phase at the expense of due discussion and reflection: "…there are too many groups performing and we cannot remember precisely every emotion for later discussion" (Respondent 1506908). Responses dealing with 'Improvisation' highlighted the already-known effects of improvisational forms in terms of encouraging free, open communication: "Even during the drama exercises, we could talk and improve our oral communication skills because we did a lot of improvisation and therefore also learned to talk freely without thinking too much if it's right or wrong" (Respondent 1907754). At the same level of frequency (2 out of 36 comments) came responses covering 'Different interpretations' (the most frequent response type in the non-verbal session on poetry concerning question 2), 'Performance effect', and 'Active participation' (which cropped up in the data for the question 3 responses in the non-verbal sessions).

Of the three sessions under consideration here, the session on prose (session 5) had the least number of coded categories at only 7 response types, compared to 10 for drama and 13 for poetry. This phenomenon can also be observed in the data codings for question 1 in the non-verbal sessions – the prose session there had only 5 coded response types. In the set for the verbal sessions (Table 4.2), 'Opportunities to speak' again dominates, at 13 comments of a total of 29 coded. This is followed by 'Vocabulary exercises' and 'Improvisation', which is mirrored exactly in the data set for the session on drama. 'Not so many chances to speak' comes in at the highest frequency rate of any

verbal session considered for question 1, but still at only two comments; this is a very different rate for this response type than that for question 1 in the non-verbal prose session – which was coded in 4 comments of a total of 17. At the same rate of frequency as 'Not so many chances to speak' come the response types 'Group inclusion' and 'Group work'. In the other two sessions, 'Group work' occurs very closely with 'Discussion': a response type entirely absent from the prose session data set. And in fact, some comments emphasized the perceived advantage of smaller group communication over larger forms: "I think it was especially useful when we were in smaller groups, in the game of taboo, for instance. When we had to think of an „unfortunately/fortunately" story in the big group, I think it was a lot of listening only" (Respondent 1007669). This underlines the importance of scene/smaller group drama work, especially in classes with high student numbers.

Response types to question 1 for session 8 (verbal exercises and drama) can be recognized as the most evenly spread of all three verbal sessions (Table 4.3), especially when regarding the first three most frequent types: which are the same as those for the prose session ('Opportunities to speak'; 'Vocabulary exercises'; 'Improvisation'). Regarding vocabulary, an important point was raised about tailoring difficulty level carefully: "Since „forbidden" words during the game were listed the level of difficulty was raised which made it more challenging/interesting to apply our advanced knowledge. Here you could vary a lot to adjust your exercises to students" (Respondent 2711031). This is a clear pointer that such exercises are not simply applicable to lower-level learners, but depending on adjustments, can be made just as useful for university learners. In fourth equal frequency position, with 3 comments out of a total of 37 for this set, is the new code 'Rehearsal effect', only found in the drama session data. This response type, also mentioned briefly above, focused on the pre-performance communication situation, as well as the repetition of the scene in advance of the 'final version': "I liked that we had some time to prepare our imagined scene and also that we had time to talk a little the dialogue through" (Respondent 2711031). This code in a sense completes the 'dramatic trio' of rehearsal, performance, and audience reception (the latter two having already been seen in the data), and could help to construct a sense of drama work being an immersive, comprehensive class project, covering various communicative situations in a task-based learning scheme, where rehearsal comprises the pre-task phase, performance and audience reception the task itself, and the post-performance exchange of views and interpretations the post-task phase (see chapter 7). On a pragmatic dramatic level, rehearsal of course also helps students prepare for the demands of performance, especially those less experienced performers, for whom playing the scene may pose a particular challenge: "This (i.e. rehearsal) decreases anxiety and allows students to be on stage with less pressure" (Respondent 2711031). Another new response type, 'Voice effect', occurred when one student commented that "the tasks chosen for the focus on voice, were very good" (Respondent 0308291), highlighting the potential for dramatic

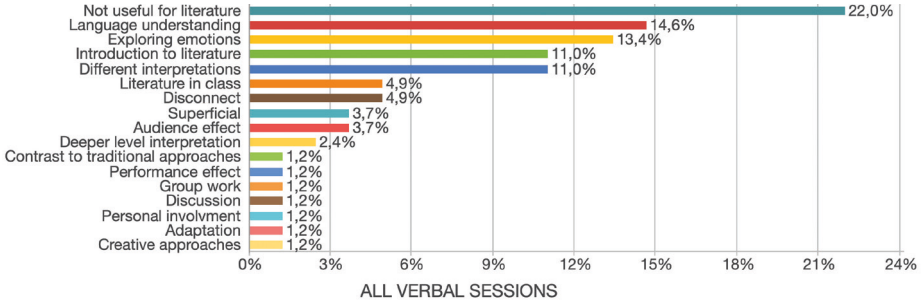
work in voice awareness and development for teacher trainees, as mentioned already above. The point has already been raised in terms of how exactly an exercises or method might count as truly 'dramatic'. One comment raised the possibility of combining a word game/non-drama method such as the game of taboo in this case, with an exercise more clearly involving drama techniques: "The Taboo game was a nice exercise to practice oral com because we had to explain the different words/terms to our groups and then had to come up with a scene which includes the terms from the game" (Respondent 2906560). This suggests that verbal games might not always be dramatic in nature but there is clearly potential to use them in combination with drama exercises for further consolidation of their pedagogical effects.

All in all then, the response types to question 1 (oral communication) across the verbal-based sessions (2, 5 and 8) were generally more positive than those for the non-verbal-based sessions. This is perhaps to be expected, and is borne out by the overwhelming dominance of the top response type, 'Opportunities to speak'. This could be further categorized into lexically-oriented exercises ('Vocabulary exercises') – a category which raises the question of what constitutes a truly dramatic method, as opposed to simply a word practice game, and also generated comments on the possibility of tailoring such lexically-focused exercises to any learning level, including university students; and spontaneous, performative exercises ('Improvisation'). The performance focus of the latter response type can be connected to a new response type, 'Rehearsal effect', comments under which emphasized not only the oral communicative benefits of this stage, but also the dramatic benefits of performance security and a reduction in pressure. On a related note, some other comments raised the question of drama exercises being suited particularly, or perhaps even exclusively, to certain students with an aptitude for, or experience of, drama work. 'Voice work' added the notion of drama exercises being applied to vocal development and maintenance for teacher trainees.

6.2.2.2 Literature

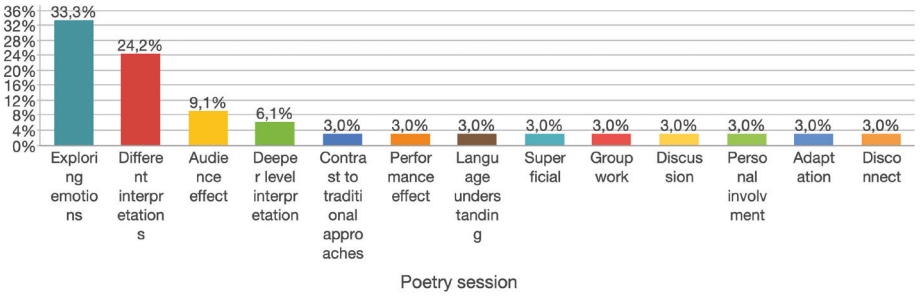
Question 2 on the Moodle platform was as follows: Comment on the session in terms of helping you to explore/understand the literature. This section explores responses to this item from the verbal sessions (sessions 2, 5 and 8). Firstly, the responses across all three sessions are considered together; then the codings from each of the three sessions (poetry, prose, drama) are examined individually.

Table 5: Question 2 (literature) responses for all verbal sessions



N=82

Table 5.1: Question 2 responses for verbal poetry session

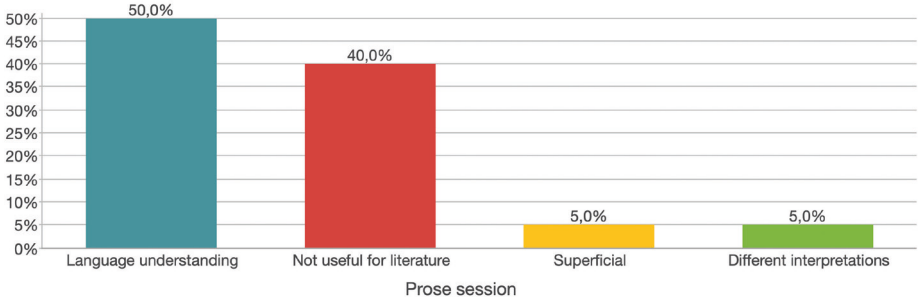


N=33

Table 5 displays responses to question 2 across all verbal sessions. It is noteworthy that only 82 comments were coded across all of the sessions – compared for example to 93 for the same question across the non-verbal sessions (see section 6.2.1.2), and 102 for responses to question 1 (oral communication) across the verbal sessions (see section 6.2.2.1 above). At first glance, of course, the glaring dominance of the most frequent type 'Not useful for literature' is immediately clear, at 18 comments out of 82. This is in stark contrast with the same response type to question 2 in the non-verbal sessions, which was coded for in only 4 comments out of 93. This requires explanation – and to a large extent these comments are not as entirely negative as might be imagined, being rather connected to session-specific elements discussed below. The following two response types are indeed also connected to specific sessions, and refer to the exercises as having had more relevance to language than literary aspects ('Language understanding') and a new observation on the emotional content of the literature as well as students' emotional connection and reaction to it ('Exploring emotions' and 'Personal involvement'). Some pedagogical observations were also made ('Introduction to literature' and 'Literature in class'), response types that also to an extent mitigated the negativity

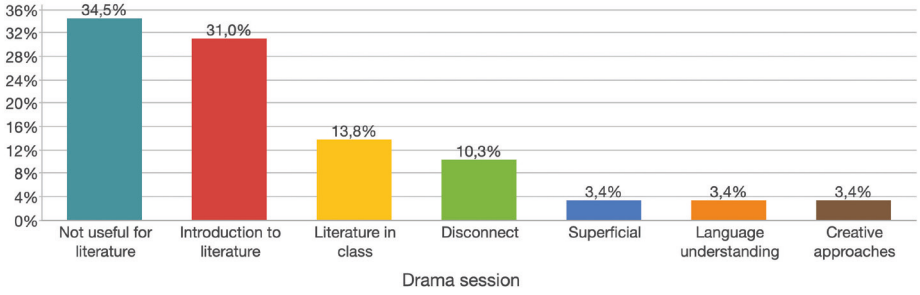
of comments suggesting that the exercises had not necessarily affected understanding of the literature itself. The response type 'Different interpretations', which topped the set for the non-verbal sessions, put in a significant appearance in the verbal sessions as well, in 9 comments.

Table 5.2: Question 2 responses for verbal prose session



N=20

Table 5.3: Question 2 responses for verbal drama session



N=29

Table 5.1 displays response types coded for question 2 in the poetry session alone (session 2). Responses were clearly more diverse than those for the prose and drama sessions, and 33 of the overall 82 comments for the verbal set were coded in this session's data. A second noteworthy aspect is the absence of the response type 'Not useful for literature', which occurs in the top frequency position for the drama session, and second position for the prose session data. Indeed, responses were overwhelmingly positive in the poetry session data (e.g. "In my opinion this week's session was excellent in terms of exploring and understanding the poems we dealt with" (Respondent 2902947)), and tended to focus instead on the ways in which the session was regarded as useful for exploring/understanding the given literature. To this end, the most frequent

response was new in the data: 'Exploring emotions'. This emotional aspect seemed to appear in three main guises. Firstly, personal emotional reaction to the literature: "I was deeply touched by the sad group of Attention Seeking (the title of one of the poems). It explores the reason of (sic) the kid's behaviour, which is rather sad and moving" (Respondent 1506908). This is connected to another response type, 'Personal involvement', which appeared in one comment: "For me, it (the drama exercise) really helped me to get involved with the two poems" (Respondent 1907754). A further connected aspect was 'Audience effect' – the performance of the poetry-inspired scenes created an emotional response in the students who watched them: "I really liked the way they (the performance group) showed the impact of different versions based on different emotions!" (Respondent 0908925). This effect was not restricted to emotional response, however; the audience effect was also perceived as beneficial to interpretation, a comment type involving overlap with the second response type, 'Different interpretations': "…although I had read the second poem before and thought about it's meaning, I was very surprised by how much my perspective on the poem changed after seeing the different group presentations (performances) about (sic) it" (Respondent 2902947). The second dimension of 'Exploring emotions' was a more internalized 'reader' response to the emotional content of the poems, triggered by the drama exercises: "It (the drama exercise) showed me, that trying to discover and express different emotions within the poem is a great way to find new perspectives and interpretations" (Respondent 2902947); "Great way to look at the poems through different emotions. It really opened up new perspectives of looking at the works" (Respondent 0301742). And thirdly, there were comments concerning the emotional involvement and interpretative benefit of actually performing the drama exercises: "It was helpful for understanding the literature, because we analysed the given literature by acting it out with different emotions" (Respondent 2506633). One possible drawback commented on was the exclusive focus on the emotional: "I personally would have liked to explore the poems more than the actual emotion, but that's of course just another approach" (Respondent 1007996).

The data set for the prose session (Table 5.2) reveals a very different pattern. Firstly, with only four coded response types (across 20 comments), this set is the least diverse of the data so far seen. Half of the comments pointed to the benefits of the session in terms of language ('Language understanding'), and 8 out of the 20 comments suggested that the session was not beneficial for literary understanding ('Not useful for literature'). It should perhaps be emphasized however that these two response types were linked, and many interesting comments suggested that the particular exercises that week were useful for a specific linguistic focus on the literature: "The literature was not the main focus of the session, but a medium for the vocabulary. That was a legit approach, and it functioned very well" (Respondent 2802087). The same respondent went on to say that "the activities, as mentioned above, were specifically designed for the use of vocabulary, and the vocabulary was in turn taken from the literature", suggesting the imbedding of vocabulary work within a literature context may be a fruitful avenue for drama meth-

ods. Others however expressed this linguistic focus more negatively: "The exercises were not really related to the content or form of the short story itself… they did not help to explore or understand the literary text" (Respondent 2011107). Other comments focused on the need for preparing certain aspects in advance in order for the approach to be fully functional: "Actually we did not really work with the literature, as we did not have the possibility to read the text in advance" (Respondent 1712078); "Might be helpful for students if they learned new vocab, practiced it, and thus will have had help (sic) to understand the story with the given new learned vocabulary" (Respondent 1207638). This again suggests the concept, seen above in section 6.2.1.2 on question 2 responses in the non-verbal session, of drama work being applied to the consolidation of pre-established knowledge or skills. Nevertheless, another respondent focused on the value of dramatic approaches in establishing general knowledge, which could in fact be used in a pre-teaching stage: "…the exercises were a great help for an overview but not for a classic interpretation of the short story" (Respondent 0604589). A further take on this was expressed by one student who admitted to not having read the story in advance, but who experienced some benefits from having done so after engaging in the drama exercises: "I read the text after the session and in my opinion the exercises and the session in general helped me to understand the text better. Also because I became more interested in reading the short story" (Respondent 2005303).

Interestingly a similar pattern can be discerned in the data set for session 8 (verbal/drama). In this set (Table 5.3), 'Not useful for literature' tops the response types at 10 of 29 comments; but in a similar way to the prose session data, these comments were often linked to positively connoted expressions that pointed to the potential usefulness of the drama methods to introduce and otherwise teach the literature in class ('Introduction to literature' and 'Literature in class'). As one respondent put it, "the exercises did not lead into (sic) an understanding of the literature as they did not really deal with the actual plot or scene of the play"; going on however to say that "the exercises functioned as an introduction to the play as they put out (sic) certain ideas from the scene to explore them independently. However, this raised interest in how Holcroft might developed (sic) her ideas in the play" (Respondent 2011107). Be that as it may, some students saw the lack of connection between the drama work and significant, plot-related aspects of the literature to be a failure ('Disconnect'): "There have been (sic) only two parts during the session (where we had to explain the words to each other and the part where we had to invent our own story with the words) where we actually worked with the story. There was no real connection to the drama" (Respondent 0612869). However, the idea of introducing the literature to the group through the drama exercises was widely perceived not as a failure but as being connected to teaching the literature, creating an interesting link between the students as literary scholars and as future English teachers: "…the group aimed for (sic) introducing the literature to us as if we were students who did not know the play yet" (Respondent 0301684): this raises the concept of the use of drama as a modelling methodology for potential classroom situ-

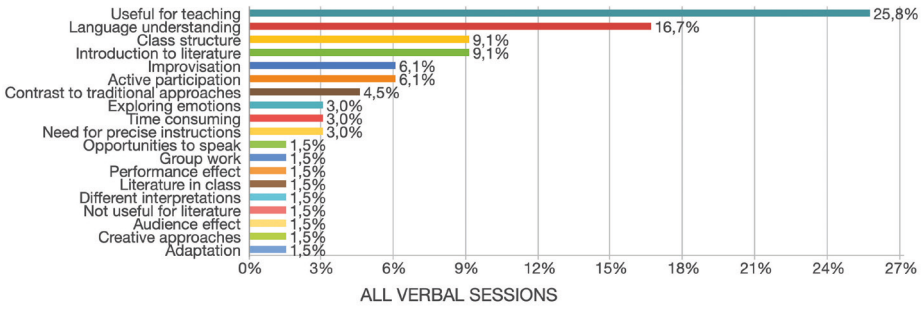
ations in teacher training. Another pedagogical angle was raised in a comment under 'Language understanding': "From the game taboo the students had another input in regard to vocabulary and its range of meaning which might deepen the first thoughts to the introduced literature" (Respondent 2711031). Here we see language being extracted as a means of introducing the main ideas of the literature before a deeper exploration, perhaps. Nevertheless, pre-knowledge of the literature was occasionally viewed as a prerequisite, similar to responses seen in the prose session data set above: "If I had not known before what the play was about I would not have understood the session" (Respondent 0301684). One intriguing comment suggested that the verbal nature of the exercises had an effect on the emotionality involved: "This time we looked at the same drama but with a very different focus. Since we could talk, the emotions got (sic) a bit more in the background" (Respondent 0901364); the same respondent also emphasized the creative freedoms allowed by such a session, praising the fact that "we could get creative and come up with our own dialogue which was a fun exercise".

In conclusion then, the data set for responses to question 2 (literature) across the verbal sessions was at first glance dominated by a negative response type suggesting that such approaches were not necessarily of great use to literary understanding. These comments were however in most cases connected to qualifying statements that tended to shift the focus away from classic literary interpretation and understanding, and onto certain connected concepts. The most frequent of these concepts mentioned emotional responses to the literature, generated by the drama exercises and further sub-categorized into personal emotional reactions as readers and as audience members, as well as emotional engagement as drama performers. This category chimes in well with the Aristotelian concept of catharsis as evidenced in his Poetics; a concept ironically developed well before the modern distinction between applied drama and other forms of drama (see section 3.1). Another connected concept was the pedagogical use of the exercises in order to introduce and otherwise teach the literature in class. To this end, it was also noted that drama work could be deployed in either a pre- or post-teaching manner, as an introductory and/or consolidatory device, and not necessarily as a replacement of more traditional teaching methods (see also section 6.2.1.2). With these impulses, an image emerges of students in *Sprachpraxis* classes as simultaneously literary scholars and future teachers of literature (and language), suggesting the possible role that drama methods might have in consolidating and reinforcing links between the two.

6.2.2.3 *Lehramt*

Question 3 on the Moodle platform asked respondents to Comment on the session in terms of useful ideas for future teaching. The item was only to be answered by those students enrolled in the teaching degree programme at the department (*Lehramt)*. This section explores responses to this item from the verbal sessions (sessions 2, 5 and 8). Firstly, the responses across all three sessions are considered together; then the codings from each of the three sessions (poetry, prose, drama) are examined individually.

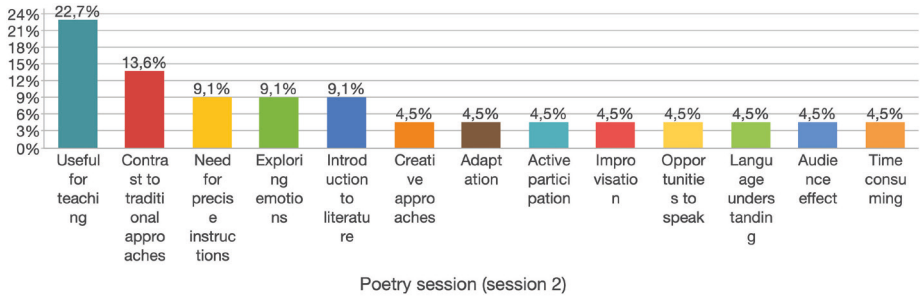
Table 6: Question 3 (Lehramt) responses for all verbal sessions



N=66

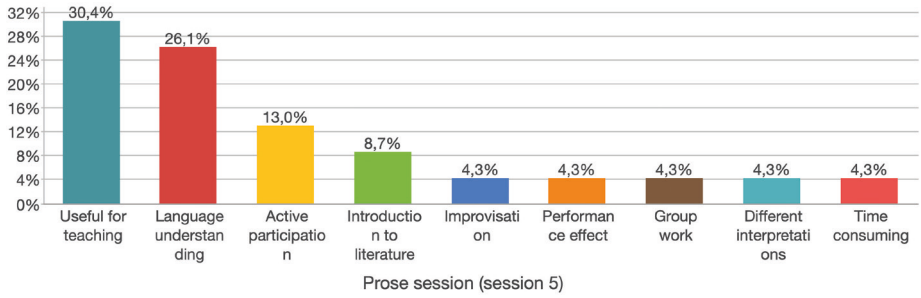
Table 6 displays responses to question 3 across all the verbal sessions. Only 66 comments were coded in this set, the fewest of any set in the Moodle-based data so far. The coded comments were however fairly equally spread among the three sessions (22 comments in the poetry session set; 23 comments in the prose session set; 21 comments in the drama session set). Regarding the general response type trend, it is worthwhile to compare Table 6 to Table 3 (section 6.2.1.3 above), which presents the results for the same question across the non-verbal sessions. The top response type is identical between the two ('Useful for teaching'), albeit at a slightly lower frequency level in Table 6 (17 out of 66 comments). At a quarter of all responses, however, it has to be regarded that the general attitude to the session was positive in terms of usefulness for the respondents' future careers. The second response type, however ('Language understanding'), appeared much further down in the corresponding data for the non-verbal sessions (Table 3). The second response type for the non-verbal sessions set was 'Literature in class', a type only occurring in a single comment for the verbal sessions. This discrepancy will be investigated further below, although it is worth pointing out from the start that the comments based on language understanding displayed in Table 6 were often tied to language embedded in, or taken from, the literature being dealt with; and a more common response type focused on the benefit of the drama exercises for introducing the literature in a more general way, rather than for facilitating any in-depth analysis ('Introduction to literature'). The next response type, 'Class structure', is new to the data and included some interesting comments regarding the use of drama exercises as general/structural elements in a lesson, adaptable to different lesson types and age groups – this will also be further explored below. Similar response types did occur in the data for question 3 across the non-verbal sessions ('Lesson structure'), but only in 2 comments of 101, and they focused on the conditions particular to that specific lesson. 'Class structure' responses in fact only occurred in the drama set of the verbal sessions (Table 6.3), constituting just under a third of all session responses, and as mentioned above, tended to be of a more general nature. Another difference here to the corresponding data set across the non-verbal sessions was the generally

Table 6.1: Question 3 responses for verbal poetry session



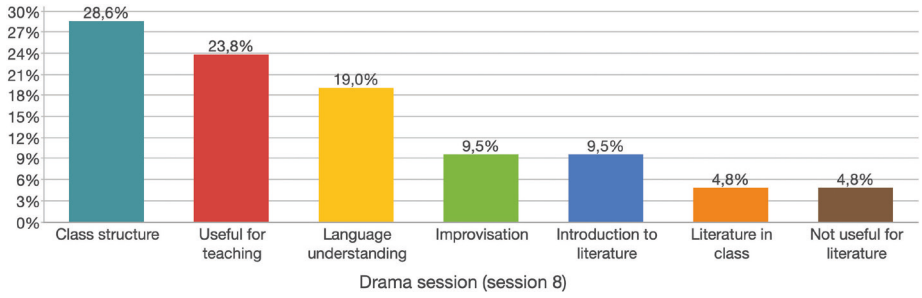
N=22

Table 6.2: Question 3 responses for verbal prose session



N=23

Table 6.3: Question 3 responses for verbal drama session



N=21

positive connotation of most responses (despite 'Not useful for literature' occurring in a single comment). Contrastingly, in the data set for the non-verbal sessions, a pattern was observed of opposing pairs in the data, where the same element was responded to

both positively and critically. This effect is absent from the data displayed in Table 6. 'Exploring emotions', a new type first seen in the responses to question 2 above (section 6.2.2.2), also occurs here in the question 3 data set.

The data set for the poetry session (session 2) is displayed in table 6.1. In this set, no single response type is highly dominant, although the positively connoted 'Useful for teaching' comes in first place in the frequency ranking, at 5 of the 22 comments coded for the session. These comments often occurred in overlap with the response type 'Contrast to traditional approaches', which occurred three times. Similar to data taken from the poetry sessions already analysed in previous sections, there is a trend in the data here that seems to underline the perceived difficult, unpopular status that poetry analysis has among students: "I also liked the idea of performing the poems, because this constitutes a totally different approach to poetry. This is an alternative for students who do not like analysing poems in the common way (metre, rhythm...)" (Respondent 0510319); "The session is really useful because most students at school don't seem to enjoy learning about poetry. When combining poetry with verbal exercises, they might find an easier access to the world of poetry and even might enjoy it" (Respondent 1907754). Other comments focused on the drama exercises are being a useful way of initially approaching the poetry ('Introduction to literature'): "It's interesting to know how to lead pupil's interpretation in a specific direction or how to awaken their interest with terms of emotions (sic)" (Respondent 1508476). This concept was also combined with the 'Audience effect' seen often in the data thus far: "The performance of the poem also makes one overthink the poem and one gets a better understanding of the poem" (Respondent 1712078). The emotional aspect, seen already in the data for question 2 (see section 6.2.2.2) came up again in the set for the verbal poetry session ('Exploring emotions'): "To me, trying to discover emotions in a poem through verbal drama activities does definitely seem like a useful idea for future teaching. It really opens up new perspectives and it is very interesting to see how creative the students get with expressing the different emotions of the poems in little scenes" (Respondent 2902947). This was also connected to an increased likelihood of personal involvement in the session ("This (the emotional aspect) and the drama exercises in general (e.g. adopting (sic) the poem into a play) are certainly useful for teaching at school because pupils become actively involved in the classroom" (Respondent 2011107)). Some comments also pointed out the option, or even necessity, to adapt verbal drama exercises according to learner level or teaching purpose: "Depending on the language level, verbal exercises can be easily adapted and varied. I think that the focus of (sic) feelings was an overall suitable aim and could be adapted to nearly every language level" (Respondent 0901364). The same respondent also observed that "The improvisation exercises are maybe more adequate (sic) for higher grades/levels of English", reinforcing the usefulness of improvisational forms in authentic speaking practice with higher-level students (see chapters 7 and 8). Finally, some students again emphasized the essential importance of clarity when working with drama methods: "Although they already had

clear instructions on the powerpoint including time and what to do, I did not always completely understand what I was supposed to do. This showed me that you have to be very specific in your instructions and also, to explain them COMPLETELY beforehand" (Respondent 0908925). This underlines a peculiarity of drama work – that even the most carefully considered written instructions are often insufficient in terms of clarity, and that a physical demonstration of the required exercises often works best.

The initial pattern in responses to the prose session (Table 6.2) is similar. Again, 'Useful for teaching' tops the ranking, in this case at around a third of the 23 coded responses for the session. However, many of the perceived benefits are connected to specific language aspects ('Language understanding') in 6 comments. One aspect of drama work in vocabulary acquisition is the potential to embed the usage in something close to a 'real life' situation, as observed by Respondent 2011107: "All of the exercises are useful for vocabulary teaching. As we also figured out in the discussion, it makes a lot of sense to teach new words so that they are used in a particular context or situation rather than teaching them isolated". Other students commented on the benefit of language work in the specifically literary context, seen previously in the data pertaining to the non-verbal drama session for question 3 responses (section 6.2.1.3): "In my opinion the exercises were very effective in terms of dealing with new vocabulary and showing how to deal with vocabulary in texts that is (sic) unknown to you" (Respondent 2005303). Finally, one comment presented a very interesting observation of the parallel performance/audience effects in drama work focused on vocabulary: "I like the method the group used (giving students assessed words which they don't know but have to work on through the lesson). Even though they might not know the meaning of their words before, it becomes clear to them by retelling their words over and over again, especially as they are embedded in a specific context. The same holds true for the words of their classmates as they hear those words many times as well" (Respondent 0301684); here we see drama functioning as a two-way process, both sides of which can be seen as potentially beneficial for vocabulary practice, while being "embedded in a specific context". The performance effect is raised in several other comments, both positively and negatively connoted. One negative aspect is the pressure that is exerted on students as they perform: "I think that speaking front of everyone and having to come up with a good story immediately may also evoke anxiety in (esp. weaker) students" (Respondent 1007669). This again poses the question of whether drama work is more effective with certain students, most pertinently those with previous experience (as discussed in section 6.2.2.1). Other comments portray the classroom, contrastingly, as a 'safe' performance space, free from the pressures of the stage: "I liked the main activity, where we could step into a developing scene whenever we liked. It was fast paced and fun and it really animated everybody to add something - without the feeling of any kind of force, to do so" (Respondent 2802087). A good point was raised that actually, classroom-based performance might even be less pressured than everyday, spontaneous communication, if some language support is included in the

exercise: "Given words can strengthen their self-confidence because they do not have to come up with something on their own. This is really helpful for those students who are not yet confident enough to speak in a foreign language but get extra practice to do so in order to face their fears" (Respondent 0604589). Critical comments in this data set included the time element again: "In general I think that the warm-up activity was a very good thing for school, but it took too long until everything was set up and ready" (Respondent 2506633), as well as the ever-present need to consider the size of the group as appropriate to the chosen exercises: "You could use the continuing story game in your class, but I don´t know if I would do it with such a big group (sic) we were" (Respondent 1712078); "I'd personally prefer smaller groups because I think that speaking front of everyone and having to come up with a good story immediately may also evoke anxiety in (esp. weaker) students" (Respondent 1007669).

Table 6.3 displays the response types for question 3 in the drama-based verbal session. This set features the fewest overall codings (7) as well as the fewest number of coded comments (21). Although the codings are more evenly spread than those of the poetry and prose sessions (especially the first three response types), a new response type tops the frequency rank, 'Class structure'. These comments focus on the drama exercises' functional role in shaping the overall framework of the lesson. This was true for the start of the lesson ("The warm-up exercises can be used as warm-up rituals in class. They help to get focused and to mentally arrive in class" (Respondent 2011107)) as well as the end of the lesson ("I think the last task with counting down from ten to one can be used to calm the students down" (Respondent 0308291)). Some comments creatively re-imagined the exercises at other points of the session, taking on a different functional role: "…for future teaching I think I would like to place the counting down in front of the improvised theatre scene since it represents a beginning of a holliwood (sic) movie/ in the cinema" (Respondent 2711031). Many such comments overlapped with those of the second response type, 'Useful for teaching' – but in this set the comments focused more on the structural elements discussed above rather than literary aspects, for example. That said, four out of the 21 comments focused on 'Language understanding' – this was associated with language-in-literature ("… I would use the taboo game and the impromptu exercise in school to work with literature or vocabularies (sic) in general" (Respondent 1508476)) as well as more general communicative skill acquisition ("The taboo game and the impromptu theatre are good ways to practice speaking (in front of a group) skills, presentation skills, vocabulary, and general language skills" (Respondent 2011107)). Again the question is raised to what extent games such as taboo can be considered truly 'dramatic' (see section 6.2.2.1 for example). Despite this ambiguity, many again pointed to the flexibility of such exercises/games: "…I would use Taboo in almost every grade because you are very flexible with the difficulty of the words" (Respondent 2906560). The drama exercises were once again seen as useful for introducing students to literature: "If you want to dive into a drama with your pupils maybe a session like this where the pupils can get creative and think about what scenario could

happen in a wardrobe is quite fun for them" (Respondent 0901364); however this aspect also appeared with the proviso that the drama exercises be combined with other methods in order to avoid superficial treatment: "The presenting group might have aroused interest in the novel but they left the students behind without knowing more about the novel. In my opinion, it is crucial that the students compare their results to the actual play in order to develop an understanding for it" (Respondent 0301684).

In conclusion then, the data set for question 3 across the verbal sessions (sessions 2, 5 and 8) featured a dominance of positive responses, also when compared to the same question responses in the non-verbal sessions. The usefulness of the exercises was extended from practice of everyday language and communicative confidence, to language that was embedded in the literature being worked with. Interestingly in this data set, more functional considerations emerged, such as the simultaneously positive and negative aspects of the performance effect, raising once again the question of whether drama exercises are indeed most useful for certain personality types and/or levels of experience. The exercises were also considered in terms of their adaptability for different ages and grades, with improvisational forms being considered more appropriate for higher-level learners, for example. Dramatic methods were also, once again, viewed in contrast to, and as partly compatible with, more traditional forms of literary pedagogy. And finally, the drama exercises' effectiveness as class session structural elements (e.g. as warm-ups, cool-downs or focus exercises) once again pointed out the flexibility and usability of such methods.

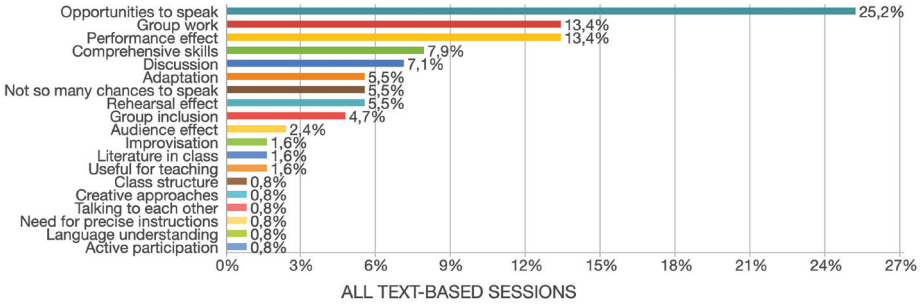
6.2.3 Text-based exercises (sessions 3, 6 and 9)

Text-based drama exercises differ from verbal exercises in so far as they involve given text (as opposed to spontaneous improvisation, for example). The given text may take the form of a pre-published play or scene that is assigned to the students; or it may involve the students generating their own written text. Dramatic adaptation, where one form of text is adapted to another (e.g. a poem being adapted into a dramatic monologue), is also included in the text-based category. Improvisation can be used in these exercises, but only as a response to the text being handled. The text-based sessions were session 3 (poetry), session 6 (prose) and session 9 (drama). The Moodle questionnaire for session 3 was completed by 19 of the 27 class participants; for session 6 by 18 participants; and for session 9 by 13 participants.

6.2.3.1 Oral communication

Question 1 on the Moodle platform asked students to Comment on the session in terms of practice of oral communication. This section explores responses to this item from the text-based sessions (sessions 3, 6 and 9). Firstly, the responses across all three sessions are considered when coded together; then the codes from each of the three sessions (poetry, prose, drama) are examined individually.

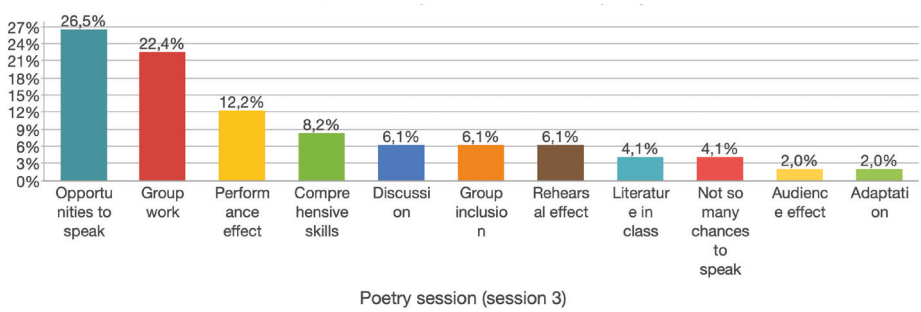
Table 7: Question 1 (oral communication) responses for all text-based sessions



N=127

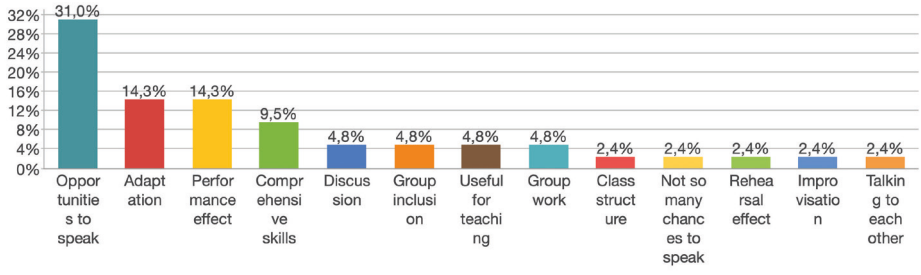
Table 7 displays the response types coded for question 1 (oral communication) across all three text-based sessions. A total of 127 comments were coded – the highest number in the data so far. This is comprised of 49 comments for the poetry session, 42 for the prose session, and 36 for the drama session. At first glance, the codings ranking has more in common with the corresponding ranking for question 1 in the verbal sessions (see Table 4). The non-verbal session codings for the same question displayed a different pattern, with extraneous discussion and group work being emphasized as the main vehicles of oral communication rather than the preparation of, or, predictably, the presentation of the non-verbal exercises themselves (Table 1). In Table 7 we see, similar to Table 4, the dominance of 'Opportunities to speak' at a quarter of all coded comments (in the verbal sessions this response type constituted over a third of all comments). Several other key frequent response types are also shared between the verbal and text-based sets, including 'Group work', 'Group inclusion' and 'Discussion'. A data trend more characteristic of the present set is the relative frequency of the dramatic process response types: 'Rehearsal effect', 'Performance effect' and 'Audience effect'. 'Performance effect' is particularly frequent here, with 17 out of 127 comments, the second-equal most frequent response type in the set. Taken together, however, in the context of the text-based exercises, these three response types seem to form more of a cohesive whole, an effect further discussed below. The new response type 'Comprehensive skills' also occurs relatively frequently, and codes comments that evaluate the exercises' effectiveness at practicing many different language skills, both productive and receptive, at once. This type is also further explored below. Also interesting to note perhaps are the three educationally oriented response types: 'Literature in class', 'Useful for teaching' and 'Class structure'. These are absent in the data set for the same question in the verbal sessions (Table 4), suggesting that the more comprehensive practice of various language skills (see below) inspired a greater consideration of the potential of text-based drama exercises in the language classroom.

Table 7.1: Question 1 responses for text-based poetry session



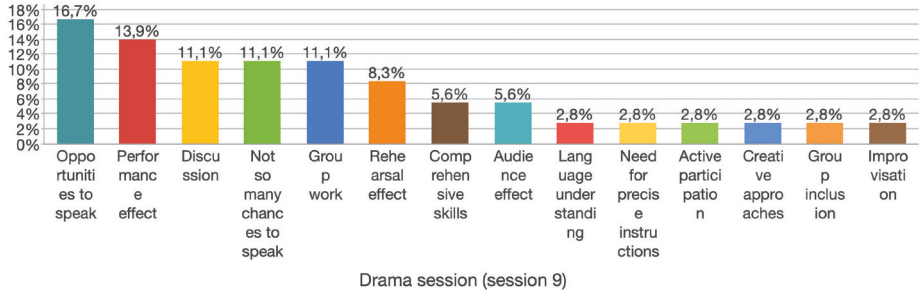
N=49

Table 7.2: Question 1 responses for text-based prose session



N=42

Table 7.3: Question 1 responses for text-based drama session



N=36

Table 7.1 displays the response types generated from comments on the poetry session (session 3). As with all three sessions, 'Opportunities to speak' tops the frequency rankings; 'Not so many chances to speak' occurred in only two comments out of the 49 for the poetry session. 'Opportunities to speak' comments were often qualified or expanded upon with regard to the effectiveness of 'Group work': "Especially during the group work we were able to practice our oral communication. We discussed the poem and tried to come up with an ending. Because we were working with just two other students it was easy to feel comfortable" (Respondent 2005303). Connected to this effect was the observation of the potential benefits for less extroverted students: "…the group activities gave everyone the chance (even those who are too shy to speak in front of the whole class) to talk" (Respondent 1712078). The small group effect and chances for everyone to contribute were combined in comments coded under 'Group inclusion', a response type also seen at high frequency for the poetry session data set in the verbal category (Table 4.1). 'Performance effect' and 'audience effect', already seen frequently in other data sets, reappeared, and sometimes combined in a single comment: "We had the chance to act out our extended poem which was very interesting since we got to hear what the other groups had thought of" (Respondent 0901364). Here again we see educational drama being portrayed as a two-way process, both sides of which can be beneficial to learning. Added to this was the 'Rehearsal effect', which appeared in three comments, such as the observation of Respondent 0707766 that "Talking in groups how to proceed (sic) the texts we had to write was nice to keep talking, having to speak out ideas". Four comments in the poetry data set were coded under a new response type, 'Comprehensive skills'. These comments focused on the combined language skills demanded by the exercises. Respondent 2711031 mentioned that "we applied not only reading skills, but also speaking and writing skills", an approach that another student claimed "offered a great variety of different approaches that made the class talking (sic) and also dealing (sic) with different sorts of texts" (Respondent 0908925). The language educational aspect was more explicitly expressed by Respondent 0901364 when she claimed that the session "combined the writing with the speaking. So it combined two components which are very important for learning a language and learning something new over all (sic)". Interestingly, even dramatic performance skills were included in this effect, an aspect which is further addressed in the prose and drama session sets below: "We also had the possibility to practice nearly every important skill from written skills to performance skills" (Respondent 0510319). A negative aspect regarding oral communication was raised however by one student, who missed the authentic and free speaking allowed by more improvisational forms of drama: "The spontaneity of communicating and the free speaking were missing, which are usually a significant aspect of practicing oral skills" (Respondent 1307009).

Table 7.2 presents the codings for question 1 of the prose text-based session. Again we can see 'Opportunities to speak' dominating the set at around a third of responses. Some comments made the observation, seen in the poetry data also, that the more

prescribed language exercises were not as good for oral communication practice as more free dramatic forms would be: "Especially the last exercise (improvisation-based) helped to practice oral comm, the first two not so much since the words were already given" (Respondent 1007669); Respondent 2005303 pointed out that "As we already knew our text before the performance was more about pronunciation and acting than improvisation". This touches on the possibility of drama methods being used not only for free, spontaneous communication, but also (perhaps in more structured exercises) for micro-level skills such as pronunciation. The same respondent (2005303) also explicitly distinguished between oral communication and the text-based work, suggesting their incompatibility: "In this session we did not focus so much on oral communication as the group worked with text-based exercises". However others saw the same aspects as positive for oral communication: "This week's group did a good job to create a main exercise that enabled everybody to practice his/her oral communication skills. Especially, since everybody had an opportunity to perform „on stage"" (Respondent 2802087). The idea of performance skills did indeed come up in the data, as it did in the poetry and drama sets also. Respondent 0308291 commented: "It was very entertaining today. I think the first exercise helped to feel comfortable on stage". Other students identified the textual exercises as beneficial for group inclusion, an aspect not necessarily guaranteed with improvisational forms which tend to be based on voluntary contribution, and are therefore prone to being dominated by more confident participants: "I liked that everybody had to participate in oral communication at some point" (Respondent 1207638);"I really liked the exercise „working with lines", since it was based on the text and every student had the opportunity to talk and furthermore saying the line one got to everybody (sic), changing pitch, tone, volume, and mode" (Respondent 1712078). The latter student also made reference to the development of drama skills: "The second exercise was the performance of a text passage, which we had to turn into a dramatic text and then act out. Here we got another opportunity to not only act but speak". This textual adaptation aspect was mentioned in six comments, such as that of Respondent 0301684 who observed that "We had to write our own short drama. Here, we had to rewrite a short in (sic) given text in a dialogue and perform it. To me, this was a lot of fun and a good way to practice oral communication". The response type 'Comprehensive skills', seen also in the poetry data set, emerged four times in the prose session data, such as Respondent 2506633 who commented that the session "was an interesting mixture between verbal, non-verbal and textual-based exercises".

The drama session data set was the most diversely coded of all three sessions, with 14 coded response types. At the same time the session comprised only 36 coded comments in total, the smallest number of the three session sets. This would suggest a lack of conformity of opinion in the class in this session. 'Opportunities to speak' tops the rankings as with the other session sets, but to a much lesser extent (only 6 out of 36 comments), closely followed by 'Performance effect' (5 comments). Contrastingly, the response type 'Not so many chances to speak', seen in four comments, was the highest

placed of all three sessions: "Interaction within one's group and performance of a short scene were the only real possibilities to practice oral communication" (Respondent 0301742). Here again we see the implicit assumption that text-based exercises offer less scope for the authentic practice of oral communication, a point more explicitly stated by Respondent 2005303 who stated: "As this session focused on the text based activities we had not so much the opportunity (sic) to practice our oral communication". It is important to emphasize however that the distinction between text-based exercises and improvisation need not be made too strongly; the two are often combined both in theatre and educational contexts, a point raised by Respondent 1712078 when she commented that "since we did not have much time to write down our dialogue and memorize it we had to improvise what (sic) I liked very much because it is very helpful for creating an authentic scene". Comments pertaining to rehearsal, performance, and audience effect again emphasized the communicative opportunities offered by these three dramatic phases of work. Respondent 2011107 commented: "In the session were (sic) a lot of situations in which oral communication was practiced. Especially when working in the group for the short scene, the actual scene play, and the discussion gave space for speaking and communicating with others in English". Here one gets a notion of drama work being a comprehensive, multi-phase process: the language classroom as a drama workshop, where the language learning benefits are framed within a task-based-learning scheme. Indeed, classes consisting purely of performance preparation, with a final performative goal, have been taught in this way. Respondent 1007669 emphasized vocabulary learning as a particular benefit of text-based methods when she observed that: "Especially useful for practicing oral communication was the discussion in groups about how we could end the scene. I think writing down our scene also helped to think about useful phrases etc.", once again highlighting the multi-skill angle arguably exclusive to the text-based exercises ('Comprehensive skills'). The presenting group also added their own ideas in order to make full use of the 'Audience affect' on vocabulary acquisition, after having watched each scene: "Since every group had different endings, students were confronted with different vocabulary concerning the ending, covered by a „quiz" game to name the new invention" (Respondent 2711031). Such flexibility and creativity of approach on behalf of the teachers is perhaps an aspect maximised in the text-based work.

All in all then, the first of the text-based session data sets generated positive responses. Many of the response types overlapped with those for the same question (question 1) across the verbal sessions (section 6.2.2.1). There were however some key differences. A new response type, 'Comprehensive skills', focused on the multi-skill nature of the text-based exercises, with practice not only of speaking and listening, but also of reading and writing. This process also covered the specific task of literary adaptation, in which one text type (e.g. poetry) was transposed to a type more appropriate for oral performance (e.g. dramatic monologue). These effects together generated many comments explicitly highlighting the educational potential of the methods, response

types that were absent from the corresponding question set in the verbal session data. The stages of dramatic performance, seen in previous sets, emerged once more (i.e. 'Rehearsal effect', 'Performance effect' and 'Audience effect'). Combined with the aspect of 'Comprehensive skills', this suggests the running of an entire dramatic project in the language classroom, where all language skills are activated, in a task-based-learning environment. The question of the necessity (or not) of a final performative goal is discussed elsewhere (see section 3.2.2). Separate comments actually pointed to the development of drama/acting skills and confidence 'on stage' as a distinct advantage of the exercises, raising the question of drama as a skill relevant to language acquisition, as well as drama as an aesthetic aim in its own right.

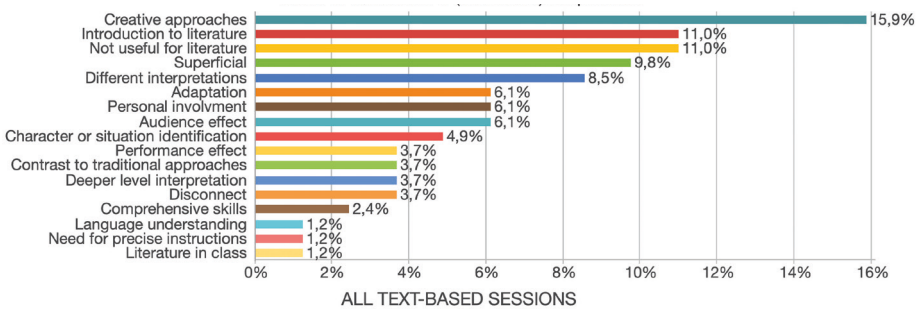
6.2.3.2 Literature

Question 2 on the Moodle platform was as follows: Comment on the session in terms of helping you to explore/understand the literature. This section explores responses to this item from the text-based sessions (sessions 3, 6 and 9). Firstly, the responses across all three sessions are considered together; then the codings from each of the three sessions (poetry, prose, drama) are examined individually.

Table 8 displays all coded response types to question 2 (literature) across the text-based sessions. A total of 82 comments were coded (the same number as the set for the same question across the verbal sessions, as displayed in Table 5). There were 35 coded comments in the poetry session data, 29 in the prose session data and 18 in the drama session data. Although there are some similarities to the data pattern for the corresponding set for the verbal sessions, there are also some key differences. Firstly, the most frequent response type, 'Creative approaches' occurred far less frequently in the verbal session data (occurring only once in 82 coded comments). In the text-based session data displayed here, this type occurred in 13 comments out of 82. Despite being the most frequent response type in the set, however, it does not dominate to the same extent as the top response types in the other two data sets for question 2 responses – 'Not useful for literature' topped the verbal sessions data at 18 of 82 comments; 'Different interpretations' was the most frequent type in the non-verbal sessions data at 17 of 93 comments. The data here in Table 8 is also characterized by a more even frequency spread, with some seemingly contradictory pairs occurring next to each other, or even at the exact same frequency level (e.g. 'Not useful for literature' and 'Introduction to literature'; 'Superficial' and 'Different interpretations'; 'Deeper level interpretation' and 'Disconnect'). This has several explanations. Firstly, the response type 'Not useful for literature' featured comments that were qualified by explanations, often those that overlapped with another response type. Many students, for example, felt that the particular text-based exercises involved were not so helpful for interpretative or technical analysis of the literature, but were indeed useful for introducing students to the main themes of the work ('Introduction to literature'). Others felt perhaps that despite the lack of connection between the exercises and the given literature ('Disconnect'), the tasks were

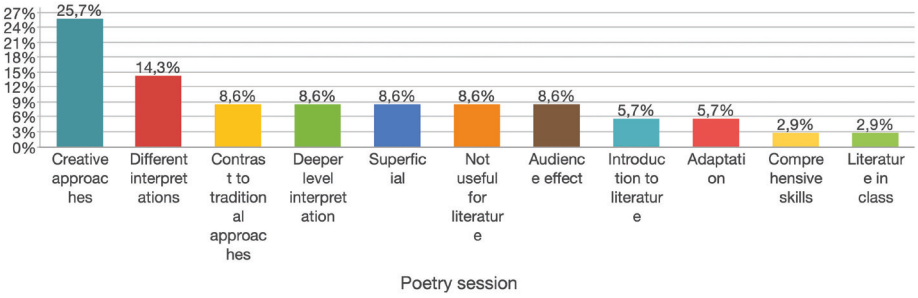
still of use to other relevant language skills ('Comprehensive skills'). Secondly, within a single response type (e.g. 'Creative approaches') there were comments coded that suggested the benefit of the exercises to, for example, students' own creativity, rather than a deeper level of literary understanding. These effects will be further explored below.

Table 8: Question 2 (literature) responses for all text-based sessions



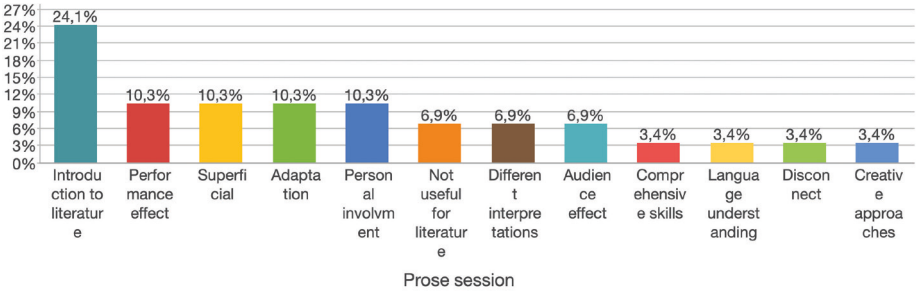
N=82

Table 8.1: Question 2 responses for text-based poetry session



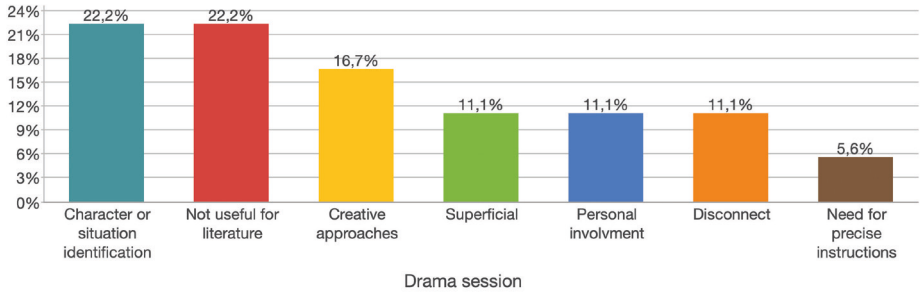
N=35

Table 8.2: Question 2 responses for text-based prose session



N=29

Table 8.3: Question 2 responses for text-based drama session



N=18

Table 8.1 shows the data generated by the 35 comments coded for the poetry-based session. Here, the response type 'Creative approaches' dominates the set at a quarter of all comments coded. Respondent 1712078 observed that "since we had to write our own ending of the poem our creativity was asked (sic) and therefore we were asked to think about the poem first". Here we see the implication that a pre-knowledge of the literature is crucial for this kind of approach to be successful. The same respondent goes on to highlight the unpopularity of poetry as a genre among students, already observed in previous sets: "Poetry many times is not very popular and bores students. But through the different methods/tasks it became more interesting and the students were motivated". Here we see the perceived benefit of a new approach to such literature in order to activate increased interest ('Contrast to traditional approaches'). Respondent 1508476 for example, concurred: "Today's exercises were quite new for me because we tried new methods to explore poetry. I really like the first exercises which I think can arise (sic) pupils' interest. I have never experienced such an approach to poetry and I really liked it". This same student also made reference to the need to pre-teach/read the works in question: "Since we had to write 4 more lines to (sic) the first part of the poem, we first had to understand and interpret the given part first. As the exercises were exciting, the interpretation/understand (sic) part of the beginning was not a big issue". So here we can perceive a combination of the forementioned effects: pre-reading which is more motivated and possibly even more effective by the 'aim' of leading to the creative drama-based exercise. As well as pre-reading, however, some respondents emphasized the equal importance of a post-exercise discussion or interpretation phase to consolidate any learning gains made: "I would have loved to also talk more about the original poem after the drama exercises and not merely focus on our own interpretations, but work a little bit more with the actual text" (Respondent 1907754). The issue of interpretation came up frequently in the data for this session, coded under the response types 'Different interpretations' (5 comments) and 'Deeper level interpretation' (3 comments). Respondent 1307009 commented that "by working

with the literature and including own ideas (sic) in written form, as well as by means of acting, close reading is required, which then leads to a deeper understanding of the literature". Here again we see the concept of drama work including more traditional skills (e.g. close reading) and preparing the way for interpretative goals. Others also recognized this effect, but in some cases only for a more basic level of understanding of the poetry, such as Respondent 0901364, who commented: "We had to add the end of the poem afterwards. This really got us into a creative way of thinking and all groups came up with different ideas. It was also very interesting to see how the poem really ended. It did not really help to understand the poem better but it was a good way of leading us to the point of understanding" ('Superficial' and 'Introduction to literature'). This comment also includes the idea of 'performing' interpretations rather than simply presenting them orally. As usual the complimentary effect was also present in the data ('Audience effect'): "It was very interesting to see how the different groups interpreted the beginning of the poem differently and how they interpreted the ending. For me personally, it was very helpful to explore the poem, as you could get a broad spectrum of interpretations" (Respondent 2210576). The visualisation offered by dramatic performance seemed to be viewed by some as an additional benefit: "I realized again, how differently people view words, when every group had the same beginning of the poem, the reenactment still looked different in each presenting group" (Respondent 1207638). This effect was not always seen positively however: "…the performances were all similar to each other whereas the actual poem was heading into another direction. I would have liked to discuss a bit more about the actual ending since all groups chose love or death as their main topic and the actual ending included a not so common ending for poems" (Respondent 0604589). The same student also pointed to the need for a post-work discussion phase: "This discrepance [sic] seemed interesting and therefore I expected a discussion about this". One interesting observation pointed to dramatic performance as a means of highlighting the creative process behind literature, as well as the inevitably subjective nature of interpretation: "The session helped to explore literature because it showed that each person would create literature differently. I think, this is a really important feature when dealing with literature, to make clear that literature is produced and read individually. I think the group presented this very clearly" (Respondent 0707766). Respondent 0604589 thought along similar lines: "I really liked their approach to the poem because we were asked to be creative on ourselves (sic) but also were given space to go in any direction we wanted to. Not only the first task, writing an own end, but also the second one, transferring (sic) it into a dramatic text, deepened my understanding of the poem". Interestingly however, this creative aspect was not always seen so positively. Respondent 1506908 observed that "This session focuses more on the creativity of students their own (sic), which results in less exploration in (sic) the original poem". Respondent 2005303 concurred by saying "I think this session was more about being creative and having fun with poems than understanding the poems", before going on to concede that "the focus was more on how to

arouse our/the students interest", overlapping with the response type 'Introduction to literature'. Respondent 0612869 commented on the risk in drama-based teaching of the focus being pulled onto the exercises themselves, rather than being on the content and material supposedly under investigation: "Despite the fact that I liked and enjoyed the exercises I had the feeling that we not really worked (sic) with the poem. It was more about the exercises than about the poem in general (plot, theme...)".

Table 8.2 displays the coded response types with their frequency to question 2 in the prose-based session (session 6). Similar to the poetry session, there is a dominant most frequent response type which is significantly higher in frequency than the subsequent types. In the case of the prose session, this is 'Introduction to literature', at just below a quarter of coded comments (7 of 29). Using an apt metaphor, Respondent 2506633 observed that "the session really arose (sic) the interest of going further into the literature. It was more or less like an appetiser and made me curios (sic) how the story proceeds". Respondent 1307009 concurred with the sentiment, commenting that "the session had an educational focus and was more of an introduction to the text". The same respondent continued however by pointing out that "since we didn't work with the text much, it did not help me understand it any better". She instead iterated that "what the session did, however was to teach a broader understanding of literature in general". Some comments often went further in viewing the drama exercises as insubstantial for deeper level analysis: "…the exercises only work as introductions to the story - but do not help to understand or interpret the story as a whole" (Respondent 2011107) ('Superficial'). Here again, similar to responses seen for the poetry session above, we can see the drama exercises being conceptualized as methods in a larger framework: as compliments to other pedagogical approaches, rather than as replacements. As well as a pre-reading phase, a post-exercise discussion period seems also to be crucial to this concept of drama-based pedagogy. As Respondent 0612869 had it: "I liked the idea the group worked with the text (sic) but I would have find (sic) it better when we actually would have (sic) talked about the whole text together (at least in the end when we had to act out our scenes of the story)". Comments on 'Adaptation' occurred at the same frequency level as 'Superficial' (3 of 29). Respondent 1307009 claimed that "transforming prose into drama was a great task to work on the understanding on (sic) literature"; while Respondent 2005303 reported that "in last exercise we had to re-write a text passage. In my opinion it was really helpful because before you start rewriting a text you really need to understand it". Here, the pre-reading phase is seen as a precursor to the 'main' drama exercise (e.g. adaptation), functioning simultaneously as close reading and dramatic rehearsal/preparation. This effect was also discussed in the context of the poetry session set above. Comments connected to 'Performance effect' also came up 3 times, in some cases overlapping with 'Audience effect'. Respondent 1506908 said: "The part of whispering, performing and listening to different versions of one simple sentence is very creative and helpful for reading literature from various perspectives". Here again we see the two-way potential of the performance phase – of benefit to both

productive and receptive skills, and emphasizing students' personal investment in the process ('Personal involvement'). The personal connection to the literature seems again to be a particular feature of the performance approach: "the acting out of a text passage is always very helpful since the student get (sic) to experience and feel the literature in a totally different way" (Respondent 1712078). One comment mentioned the 'positive pressure' aspect of performance: "…at least speaking for myself, you try to understand the given text better as you have to perform it later and do not want to make any mistakes" (Respondent 2210576). Another comment made reference to the already-seen 'Comprehensive skills' nature of the text-based exercises: "The exploration of the literature was conducted with a broad variety of methods. Thus, the process of exploration this week was engaging" (Respondent 2802087).

The data set for the drama session (session 9) was rather dissimilar from the other two sessions, at least at the level of frequency trends. The total number of coded comments (18) was the fewest of the three, as well as the overall number of response types – 7 for this session, compared to 11 for the poetry session and 12 for the prose session. Table 8.3 displays the top two response types on equal frequency footing, at 4 comments each of the 18 total coded. The first of these, 'Character or situation identification' did not occur at all in either the poetry or prose data set. This pattern is identical for the same question across the non-verbal sessions data, where 'Character or situational identification' was coded in 10 of the 28 comments for the drama session set (Table 2.3), but was absent in both the poetry (Table 2.1) and prose (Table 2.2) sessions data. Indeed this effect is perhaps most pertinent in dramatic literature, where the text serves as a gateway into the mindsets and experiences of the characters portrayed – arguably in a more direct way than with either poetry or prose. An angle on this response type not seen before, however, was the idea that the drama exercises allowed the students to more closely identify with the specific historical context of the scene, rather than the psychological inner life of the characters. Respondent 0301684 commented: "When I read the scene where the kids find a banana for the first time I found it funny. My first thought was how silly these kids are and how stupid (sic) they react to the banana. But when we as a group were given the example of a light bulb as a new invention I changed my mind. Experiencing artificial light for the first time must be incredible. The examples of the other groups also showed that inventions we regard as normal are actually milestones in human history. So, after playing and seeing our own short plays, my opinion changed and I developed a better understanding for the „wardrobe"." This quote perfectly encapsulates the aim of Process Drama (see O'Neill 1995; Bowell and Heap 2017) – the students experiencing as closely as possible the effects and contexts being portrayed in a particular piece of literature, for example, rather than simply reading them from an objective distance. One intriguing comment even suggested that the sentiments experienced and explored by the exercises could be extended into other (personal?) realms, rendering an effect in the direction of drama therapy: "The session helped me to realise that the main problem of a given text (in this case a drama) can be transferred to

similar problematic situations" (Respondent 0510319). On a more basic level however, the exercises allowed access to the historical context of the drama: "…today`s class was very helpful in order to get a cultural and social understanding of this period. Thus, it helped to get access to this special part of literature" (Respondent 0908925). Respondent 1007669 pointed out the dangers, mentioned above, of seeing the drama methods too much in isolation, and not combined with other approaches: "I would have loved to get to know what the story was actually about and why the banana appeared in the wardrobe at all" ('Superficial'). Respondent 0612869 expressed this in starker terms: "I did not really get the connection between our task of inventing a new thing and their text. Of course the text was about a new thing - the banana- as well but we actually did not really work with the text". This presumably highlights the importance of a pre-exercise reading and analysis phase, and also a post-exercise discussion, for the drama work to be fully effective in terms of literary exploration. Respondent 2005303 expressed the same sentiments, albeit more positively, with an emphasis on what the exercises could indeed be useful for: "In my opinion it's a nice way to work with literature but only if there is already a basic understanding of the text. So it was not really about understanding the literature but more about exploring it and being creative" ('Creative approaches'). Some viewed the methods as useful for overview purposes: "I think the different performances of the „inventions" summed up very good (sic), what the literature was about and so it focused on the main facts of the plot" (Respondent 1712078); while others complained that the opposite was the case – that the drama work was over-focused on just one textual passage: "The session activities were only very little (sic) connected to the overall idea of the play. Rather, it was one aspect of one particular scene that was examined through the exercises. This is quite useful when working on a scene like this but not when one aims to explore the whole play or literature" (Respondent 2011107).

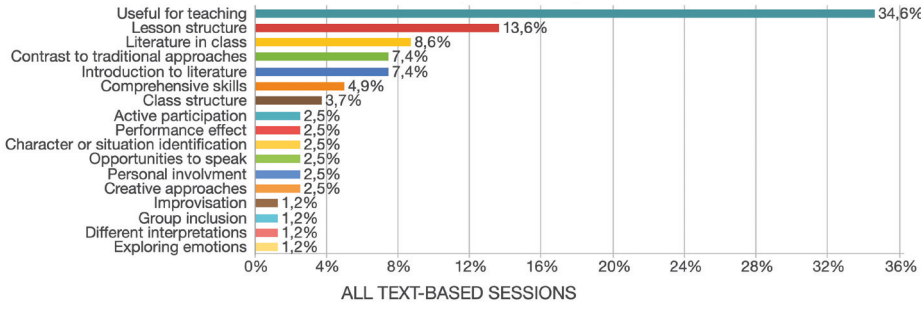
The text-based sessions data for question 2 (literature) then, was indeed characterized by contradictory impulses and not as clear dominant trends as seen in previous sets. That said, many comments focused on the creativity required in the sessions (e.g. textual adaptation), and the benefits and drawbacks that such an approach entails. On the positive side, creative exercises were judged to be good in terms of personal identification with the characters and their historical contexts (especially in the drama session data), as well as encouraging students to think about the creative process of the production of literature itself. On the other hand, many students equated such approaches with a superficial handling of the literature itself and a lack of interpretative depth, citing the best use of creative approaches as an 'appetizer' for more traditional analytical methods. This involved a recognition of the importance of a pre-exercise reading phase, as well as a post-exercise discussion/de-briefing. Here we see a revisiting of the notion, seen before in the data, of drama methods being complimentary to other, more traditional teaching methods, as simply another 'tool in the box', rather than as a total methodological approach; as well as being useful for the consolidation and exploration of knowledge rather than for its creation. The benefit of drama on various language

skills (e.g. writing and reading) rather than on oral communication exclusively, came up again, seemingly a consistent feature of the text-based exercise type. And again the notion of drama as a complete method, involving not only performance, but rehearsal and audience involvement as well, made another convincing appearance.

6.2.3.3 *Lehramt*

Question 3 on the Moodle platform asked respondents to Comment on the session in terms of useful ideas for future teaching. The item was only to be answered by those students enrolled in the teaching degree programme at the department (*Lehramt)*. This section explores responses to this item from the text-based sessions (sessions 3, 6 and 9). Firstly, the responses across all three sessions are considered together; then the codings from each of the three sessions (poetry, prose, drama) are examined individually.

Table 9: Question 3 (Lehramt) responses for all text-based sessions

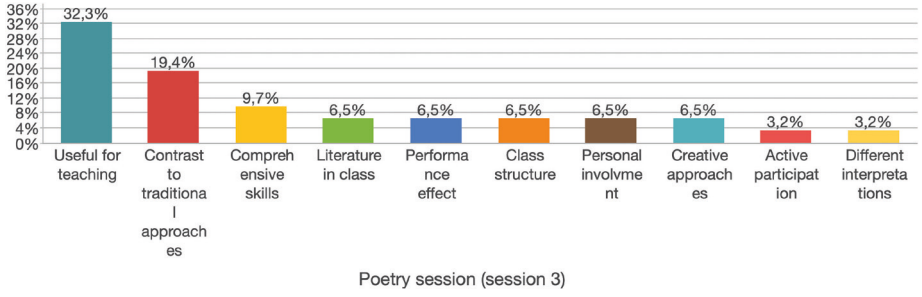


N=81

Table 9 displays response types to question 3 across all the text-based sessions. 81 comments were coded across the three relevant sessions: 31 in the poetry session data (completed by 15 respondents); 28 in the prose session data (completed by 15 respondents) and 22 in the drama session data (completed by 13 respondents). Firstly, the top response type was, identical to the question 3 response data generated across both the non-verbal sessions (Table 3) and the verbal sessions (Table 6), 'Useful for teaching'. At just over a third of all coded comments, the dominance of this type was second only to the rate of this type in the non-verbal sessions, where it constituted 36.6% of coded responses (37 of 101 comments). Interestingly, comments pertaining to language benefits ('Language understanding') are completely absent from the data displayed in Table 9. Contrastingly, this response type was the second most frequent in the question 3 response data for the verbal sessions, shown in Table 6 (11 of 66 comments); it also appeared in the data for the same question across the non-verbal sessions (Table 3) albeit at a lower rate (4 out of 101 comments). On the other hand, response types pertaining to literature ('Literature in class' and 'Introduction to literature') did appear in

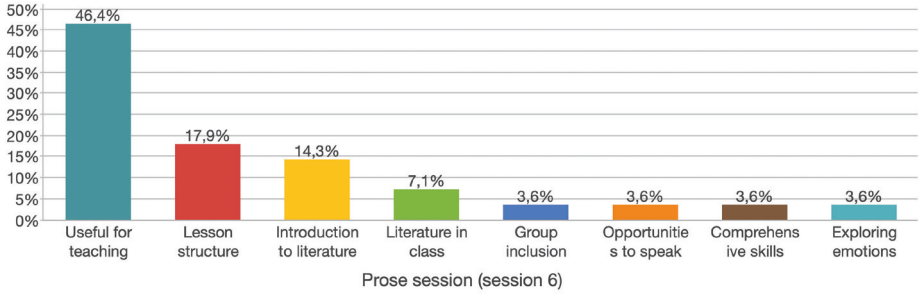
the data (7 and 6 comments respectively); these responses are discussed in greater detail for the individual sessions below. Comments on the importance of the drama exercises to class organizational issues ('Lesson structure' and 'Class structure') also featured significantly (11 and 3 comments respectively), with 'Class structure' being the most frequent response type in the drama session data set (see Table 9.3), at 6 out of 22 coded comments. Interestingly 'Class structure' was also the most frequent response type in the data set for the drama session across the verbal sessions (Table 6.3), at 6 of 21 coded comments. As a final observation for the general data set, the response type 'Comprehensive skills', seen in the data sets for the other questions across the text-based sessions, was again present in the question 3 data – in 4 comments. This response type was not found at all in the question 3 data for either the verbal or non-verbal sessions, suggesting that this element is indeed a feature of responses to the text-based sessions alone.

Table 9.1: Question 3 responses for text-based poetry session



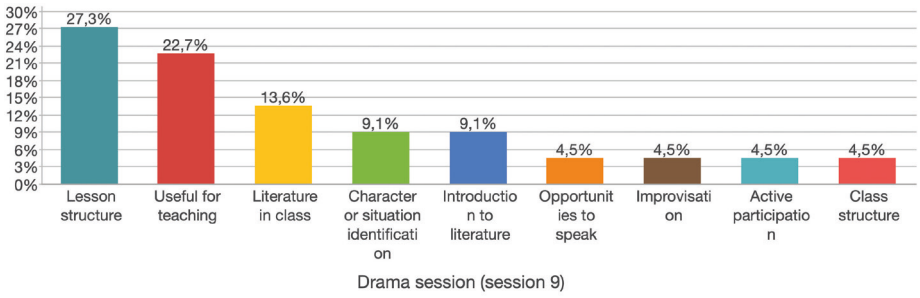
N=31

Table 9.2: Question 3 responses for text-based prose session



N=28

Table 9.3: Question 3 responses for text-based drama session



N=22

The common response type 'Useful for teaching' was coded in a third of the comments gathered for the poetry session (Table 9.1): 10 of a total of 31 comments for this session. Some students noticed the potential to adapt the exercises to various levels: "I think that you could use this exercise with many different grade levels since you can adapt it very easily" (Respondent 0901364). The same student went on to suggest a specific alteration for early grades: "For lower levels you could just tell the pupils to fill in the gaps or just write two lines instead of four or five". Respondent 1907754 concurred, mentioning that "it was fun to see all the different results and it would probably work for teaching poetry in different classes." This was in response to the exercise in which students had to write and perform their own endings to the given poem, without having read the original in its entirety. This aspect was also occasionally recognized as a challenging approach appropriate for more advanced learners: "I would always make my students perform a poem and especially when the topics are more complex, of course this would be in the upper grades" (Respondent 1712078). The second response type, coded in 6 comments, was 'Contrast to traditional approaches'. This type only appears here in the data set for the poetry session; but it occurred in the question 3 codings for the poetry session in the verbal data set as well, also as the second most frequent response type (see Table 6.1). Similar to the data from the verbal sessions, the responses coded here for the text-based session data once again seem to assume the unpopular reputation of poetry in the classroom, emphasizing the potential of drama exercises as additional motivation and encouragement. Respondent 1712078 commented that "through the performance of poems poetry gets more interesting and vivid and real"; while Respondent 0612869 observed: "I think this is a very good way to motivate the students and get them to work with passion. They get an impression how wide ranged poetry can be and that working with poetry does not have to be boring." The idea was also expanded to the creative approach in general, once again in contrast to the perceived dullness of traditional approaches: "I think that children probably like creative and "non- conventional" exercises like that. It is not just about analysing a poem in

a boring way as many teachers use (sic) to do it in school" (Respondent 1508476). A novel element of the poetry session data for the text-based sessions was the inclusion of material perceived as highly relevant and interesting to the students. Respondent 2802087 commented: "I liked the integration of popular culture - namely Star Wars. That was something new and I'll definitely use it in the classroom"; Respondent 2711031 praised "the input of Star Wars and its application to literature. I was so stunned about the early modern English poem in Shakespearean style Doescher made out of that short clip from Star Wars. In my opinion, this is how you catch students in class." These comments not only cover the addition of elements from popular culture (e.g. Star Wars), but also the utilization of alternative media forms such as video clips. The combination of such media with more 'traditional' performative drama methods in class is indeed a question of growing interest (see Anderson et al 2009). Once again, the concept of drama as one possible educational tool, to be used in combination with other media and approaches, was emphasized: "Playing the scene then really helps to strengthen everything. (In teaching a class, I would, of course, offer a closer look into the original poem and its ending, which we did not do in class)" (Respondent 1907754). The 'of course' might suggest either learned acquiescence towards the traditional method of close reading, or else the personal opinion that the drama exercise alone could not fulfil all of the comprehension requirements of an analytical approach to poetry. Either way, we arrive once more at the idea of drama techniques being used for the consolidation and deepening of pre-established knowledge. The 'Comprehensive skills' set by now typical of the text-based sessions was coded for in 3 comments. Respondent 1712078 noted that "Having to write one´s own lines is also a very good idea since it promotes the students creativity and also writing competence"; interestingly, in another comment, drama skills themselves were implicitly included as a relevant competence in the language classroom: "With the aid of the methods we (and therefore potential pupils) are able to practice nearly every skills (sic) (spoken, written and performance) that is of central significance in the English classroom" (Respondent 0510319). This effect was already noted in other text-based sessions, and also in connection to the response type 'Comprehensive skills' (see section 6.2.3.1).

Table 9.2 displays the codings for the responses to question 3 in the prose text-based session (session 6). Of initial note is the top response type, which is again 'Useful for teaching'. Here the type accounts for 13 of the 28 comments coded for the session, and due to having the lowest number of overall codings (8), the prose session is dominated by this coding to the greatest extent of any of the text-based sets for question 3. Respondent 2906560 noted the "good mixture between having fun and learning", while Respondent 0308291 appreciated the "focus on the teaching methodology" which "created a lot of transparency". This notion of transparency and usefulness was perceived as being underpinned by the presenting group's encouragement of class involvement: "The presenting group reflected on every method they used and also invited us to discuss about them" (Respondent 0301684). The focus on methodology seemed to be

widely appreciated, understandably perhaps given the percentage of teacher trainees in the class – "As it was a session based on education it was very helpful. I especially liked the references to the Fachdidaktik terms" (Respondent 0612869). This is a clear indication of a possible link between the drama methods employed in the class and the Fachdidaktik element of the students' degrees, an aspect that is discussed further in chapter 7. A related aspect was identified by Respondent 0604589 who appreciated that "the group buil(t) the lesson according to a lesson they would teach in class", going on to mention that she "especially liked the idea of experiencing the exercises in the role of a student but then put it (sic) to the meta-level to reflect on it". This comment combines the usefulness of drama in modelling classroom situations (see chapter 7) with the appreciation of post-exercises discussion and reflection seen throughout the Moodle data thus far. Observations focusing on 'Lesson structure' also featured in the set, in 5 comments. Respondent 0510319 believed that the first (warm-up) exercise "could serve as a help to wake up pupils before the main lesson. This increases undoubtedly (sic) the students' ability to concentrate" – an idea shared by others, expressed variously as a means "to help ones pupils to loosen up" (Respondent 2802087) as well as an encouragement of pupils "to move and get more concentrated" (Respondent 2005303). Similar to drama being used as a knowledge consolidation technique, noticed previously, here we see the drama exercises being slotted into potential lesson plans as a functional, rather than content-focused, aid. A second 'functional' benefit noticed was the response type 'Group inclusion' (see also sections 6.2.1.3 and 6.2.2.1). Respondent 0301684 stated her intention to use an exercise in her future role as teacher, as it "arises (sic) the interest of the students and because of the special atmosphere in which every student is equal": this 'democratising' effect of drama methods in the class has also been observed in previous sections. The arousal of interest stated here was connected to the literature being dealt with by the group – and indeed the literary pedagogical element in the prose session data under 'Introduction to literature' (4 comments) and 'Literature in class' (2 comments). Some such comments simply reiterated the evaluation of the exercises' effectiveness in first approaching the literature ("I think it is a totally new way to introduce literature and very promising, since it definitely raises the students interests" Respondent 1712078); another focused on the specifically emotional, personal involvement that such an approach involves ("The second (exercise) creates a strong atmosphere and emotions that raise the interest in the story" Respondent 2011107). Respondent 2711031 expressed the opinion that the exercise used "raises awareness onto (sic) special sentences and lets you think more independely (sic) about statements in the book", coming back to the notion of personal involvement and engagement with the literature seen in previous sections. Respondent 2906560 returned to the 'Comprehensive skills' coding present in all the text-based sets, noting specifically that "the weaker students can help creating (sic) a scene and play more and stronger students can write the scene". Leaving aside the assumptions of the skills favoured by 'weaker' and 'stronger' students, this suggests a belief in the usefulness of drama methods to

involve all students in the task (thus increasing group cohesion) and practice the various language skills relevant to the class aims.

Table 9.3 presents the codings for the drama-based session (session 9). Of all three sessions in the text-based set, this data is the most evenly spread, with the largest difference between coding frequencies only 9.1%. The second striking difference is the most frequent response type, which in contrast to the other two session sets (in which 'Useful for teaching' had a clear dominance) appears as 'Lesson structure'. Comments coded under this type fall generally into one of three subtypes. Firstly, there are comments that define the drama exercises as useful in establishing a general classroom rhythm: "I think the introductory part (first drama exercise) could be made as a ritual for school sessions" (Respondent 2506633). Then there are observations of the usefulness of the exercises in calming and relaxing students; Respondent 2906560 for example noted: "I would definetly (sic) use the warm up exercise at school. It was very relaxing and helped me to calm down and to concentrate on the session", while Respondent 0612869 mentioned the exercises as constituting "a good way to calm the students down at the beginning of a lesson and make them concentrate". Finally some students noted the motivational effect the drama exercises had, often in correspondence with dealing with the literature, such as Respondent 0510319 who noted the usefulness of the drama work to "really arouse the students' interest in discovering new texts". Some respondents noted the danger inherent in whole-class activities of becoming unfocussed and even turbulent: Respondent 2005303 conceded that one particular exercise "would probably also work in school", while warning however that "it was a little bit chaotic". Respondent 2906560 went even further, concluding that she would not use the exercise in a class herself "because it was very chaotic and confusing", an opinion shared by Respondent who also concluded "I wouldn't use the second one (exercise) in class, because it is just too chaotic". These shared views point out the essential importance of pre-planning and selection of drama exercises for particular classroom contexts and educational needs, if full use is to be made of them. Some students noticed the need to question and if necessary change exercises somewhat in order to avoid such a breakdown in cohesion – Respondent 0908925 for instance, who remarked that "all the games and activities can be used in a classroom, although in my opinion some of them would need some alteration or adaption or at least a proper leading through the activities". This 'leading through' has been addressed in previous data sets, in the form of pre-discussion, or ideally demonstration of the exercises before they are fully run with the students. After 'Useful for teaching', three response types relevant to literature appear: 'Literature in class', 'Character or situation identification' and 'Introduction to literature'. The notion of the exercises being used to generate initial interest in the literature has been seen throughout the Moodle data so far, as well as in a comment already quoted above for this current session data. One student emphasized the need to ensure a logical link between the literature and the chosen drama work: "I realised that it's important to link exercises with the literature so that they actually have sense"

(Respondent 1007669). Respondent 0301684 introduced an idea seen for the first time with her belief that drama work could represent "a good method to introduce students to older literature as they might find it boring and irrelevant"; this comment chimes in with the extensive literature on practical methodology in the teaching of Shakespeare, for instance (see section 3.3.3). Either way, another student expressed a positive view of the validity of such an approach at higher education level, a view not always extensively supported in the literature: "I still think it's a great way to work with literature, at university as well as at school" (Respondent 2005303). Character and situational identification has been seen as an effect primarily in the sessions dealing with drama: this is perhaps to be expected, given the 'natural fit' between dramatic teaching methods and the literary genre of drama. Such comments in this set covered both identification with objects referred to ("…rise (sic) the awareness how (sic) we got used to things that once were a big step of progress" Respondent 2711031) as well as characters ("…to make them (the students) understand the characters they have to take over their roles and develop an understanding for the way of live (sic) in the past decades and centuries. If they „are" the characters and have to think about what they would say, think and feel, they can approach the literature much easier" Respondent 0301684). Finally, Respondent 1712078 made lone reference to the development of confidence and oral communication skills in the session: "the fact that one had to improvise what one would say during the performance (it) was very good to create an authentic atmosphere…I think it is very helpful for students to do improtheater because it has a positive effect on their language fluency and helps them to become more confident when they have to talk".

All in all then, the responses to question 3 (*Lehramt*) across the three text-based sessions were overwhelmingly positive, with over a third of all coded comments falling under the response type 'Useful for teaching'. This included a particular appreciation for the involvement of teaching methodological and Fachdidaktik terms, as well as techniques deemed otherwise useful for teacher training (e.g. the modelling of classroom situations through drama techniques). This opens the door for the potential inclusion of drama methods in the more vocationally focused area of studies for the teacher trainee students in particular. The response type 'Comprehensive skills' was once again seen in the set, having appeared in the data for the other questions in the text-based sessions. The fact that this response type is completely absent from both the verbal and non-verbal data sets allows the assumption that this perception is indeed a characteristic of the text-based exercise type. Many responses, most especially in the drama session data set, pointed to the usefulness of the exercises in lesson structure – in terms of establishing a regularizing class 'ritual'; in terms of relaxing and calming the students; and in terms of motivating them. A proviso was added that such large-group exercises require close control if chaos is to be avoided. Finally, it was striking that there was an absence of responses pertaining to language pedagogy, in favour of an overwhelming focus on teaching literature. This is in contrast to the question 3 data for the verbal and non-verbal sessions. Remarks were made that such exercises serve

as motivational inspiration to delve into the literature (especially regarding poetry it seems); that the exercises were well adaptable for different levels of learner (including higher education); and that, again, drama work allowed students the chance to more personally identify with characters and situations – an added aspect in this data set being the potential to apply the exercises to older literature that may otherwise be less accessible and/or relevant to pupils today.

6.3 Literary genres and drama exercises (Moodle question 4)

Question 4 on the Moodle platform asked 'How effective did you find the specific combination of poetry with non-verbal drama exercises?'; the specific literary genre and drama type changed with each session, of course. Question 2 also asked about literature ('Comment on the session in terms of helping you to explore/understand the literature'); this question, however, was more intended to illicit ideas on the specific session under focus, and how the drama exercises used were effective (or not) in dealing with the particular literature chosen by the presenting group for that week (see section 6.2). Question 4, in contrast, aims at generating ideas on the overall effectiveness of combining a literary genre (e.g. poetry) and a drama exercise type (e.g. non-verbal exercises). Therefore it was felt appropriate to analyse responses to this question separately. In section 6.2, responses to questions 1-3 (on oral communication, literary understanding and teaching-related aspects) were analysed in groups corresponding to the drama exercise type (non-verbal, verbal and text-based) in order to best ascertain any differences between these. As question 4 focuses on literary genre however, the analysis will be ordered accordingly – firstly, looking at the three sessions dealing with poetry (sessions 1, 2 and 3); then the sessions dealing with prose (sessions 4, 5 and 6); and finally the sessions dealing with drama (sessions 7, 8 and 9). As with section 6.2, responses to question 4 were analysed using MaxQDA software. The questionnaire for session 1 was completed by 22 of the participants; session 2 by 17 participants; and session 3 by 19 participants.

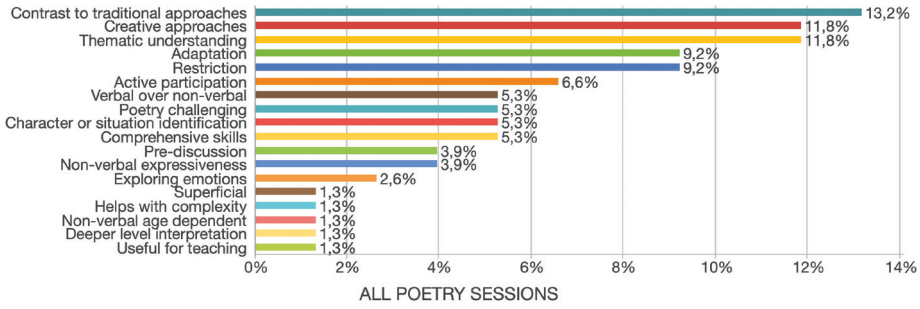
6.3.1 Poetry

This section analyses responses to question 4 from across the three sessions dealing with poetry: session 1 (poetry and non-verbal exercises), session 2 (poetry and verbal exercises) and session 3 (poetry and text-based exercises).

Table 10 displays the coded response types for question 4 across all three sessions involving poetry. Most frequent were comments highlighting the positive impression of active drama exercises as a contrast to more traditional approaches to teaching literature (10 comments of 76 coded); these comments often overlapped or were combined

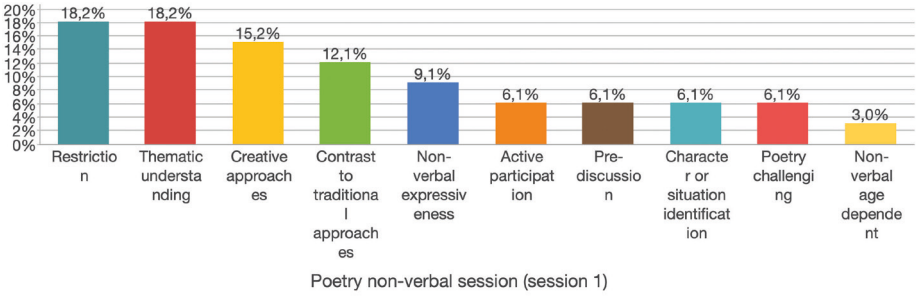
with those making explicit reference to the reputation or experience of poetry being 'difficult' ('Poetry challenging'; 4 comments). Also closely related in terms of the educational benefits of the drama exercises were comments on the 'Creative approaches' used (9 comments), the students' 'Active participation' (5 comments), or engagement in 'Character or situation identification' (4 comments). Within the different types of exercise, there were comments on the perceived advantages of 'Verbal over non-verbal' exercises (4 comments); the 'Non-verbal expressiveness' afforded by the silent exercises used (3 comments); and one single comment which highlighted a perceived age dependency of the different exercises ('Non-verbal age dependent'). The individual session responses will now be explored in more detail.

Table 10: Question 4 responses for all poetry sessions



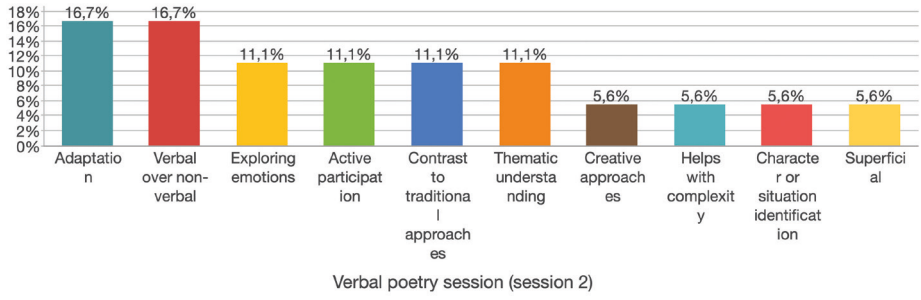
N=76

Table 10.1: Question 4 responses for non-verbal poetry session



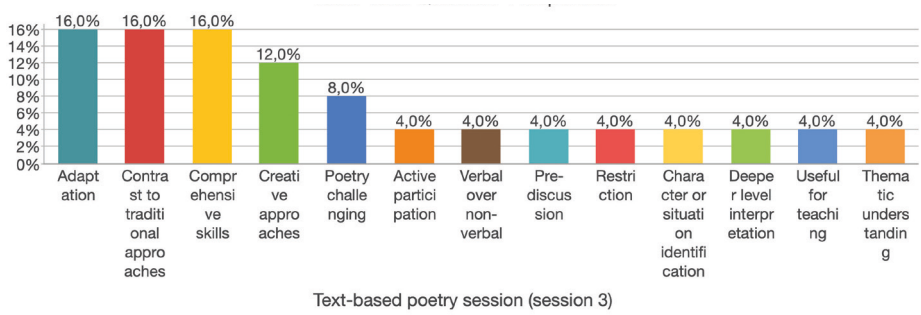
N=33

Table 10.2: Question 4 responses for verbal poetry session



N=18

Table 10.3: Question 4 responses for text-based poetry session



N=25

At first glance it is noticeable the extent to which no single response type dominates the data sets here, in contrast for example to some of the sets explored for questions 1-3 above. The exception to this is perhaps the data for the text-based session (Table 10.3) in which the first 4 most frequent coded response types make up almost a half of the overall coded responses for the set (which features 13 coded types in total, 8 of which feature only a single comment each).

Table 10.1 displays the response types from the non-verbal poetry session (session 1). The two most frequent comments, at 6 each out of 33 comments coded for the set, were a positively connoted type ('Thematic understanding'), and a more critical type ('Restriction'). Some comments highlighted understanding of a specific aspect ("I liked how nonverbal exercises allow us to understand a given theme in more depth", Respondent 1007669), in this case the theme of nature (see section 4.4.1), while others emphasized a more general understanding ("…the non- verbal exercises chosen increased the understanding of the poems and supported the general idea one had after reading the poem",

Respondent 0604589). One student also highlighted the performance/audience element frequently encountered in the earlier data sets: "…with the help of others' performance, the poetry seems more multilevel" (Respondent 1606908). Comments coded under 'Restriction' highlighted both the perceived drawbacks of non-verbal work (negative) as well as the focus afforded by the approach (positive). Respondent 0604589 commented: "…in some cases I felt limited by only doing frozen pictures since movement could have included some complexity"; Respondent 0908925 pointed out the need to vary exercises even within one category (e.g. non-verbal): "…freezing [sic] pictures are already a classical [sic], so it was a save [sic] combination that, however, did not include a lot of new aspects". Others, such as Respondent 0901364, took a more positive view of the restrictions involved: "With non-verbal exercises, especially frozen pictures, you have to be very precise and narrow down your thoughts about the poem. First this can be a bit limiting but on the other hand it also helps with better understanding the very meaning of the poem"; a view shared by Respondent 2005303: "Using just your body means that you really have to understand the poem". Respondent 0510319 made an explicit link between the abstract nature of much poetry and the non-verbal exercises: "Poems oftentimes commit to paper what you (spontaneously) feel. When words are insufficient, non-verbal exercises could help you to express the inexpressible". These sentiments were also contained in comments coded under 'Creative approaches' (5 of 33 comments). Respondent 1508476 commented: "This combination is more creative because we were free to do anything we wanted. We made frozen pictures of anything that came in [sic] our mind when we thought of nature"; Respondent 2312874 linked this creative aspect to the notion of the drama exercises being a break from the 'normal' approach to poetry ('Contrast to traditional approaches'): "Their exercises were good since we had to be creative (creating frozen pictures) - I saw that with poetry you can do more than just reading or acting scenes out - the exercise made the poem more accesable [sic]" – a notion shared by Respondent 1508476 with reference to the physicality of the drama exercises, albeit without verbal expression: "…as we moved instead of just sitting and talking, we were more awake than in other lectures". Respondent 1606908 again emphasized the link between the particular abstraction of poetry as a genre, with its intendant reputation as 'difficult', with the experiential nature of the exercises: "What is more, it is effective to combine the abstract poetry with the concrete performance. The class becomes quite lively". Others returned to the idea of poetry being challenging ("I think that poems aren't as effective as other genres, because they have not such a clear plot", Respondent 0308291; "Poems very often tend to express what the author is feeling without directly saying it", Respondent 1712078). Both these respondents however continued with positive comments on the helpfulness of the drama exercises in this regard. Two comments also highlighted 'Character or situation identification'. Respondent 0707766 felt that such a personal connection helped with the overall understanding: "I liked it because when talking in groups about how to present the poem, we also discussed about the different feelings the lyrical I might have. With the

exercise preceding that one in which we had to show our own feelings when dealing with nature even improved the understanding of the other exercise".
Table 10.2 displays the response types coded for the verbal drama exercise session on poetry. The response type 'Active participation', coded twice in the 18 coded comments for the session, again emphasized the physical and motivational nature of the work: Respondent 1712078 commented that the drama work "makes one live the poem and feel it. And it gets even interesting for people who are not that into poetry". This comment was also coded under 'Character or situation identification', given the notion of 'feeling' and 'living' the poem. The response type 'Contrast to traditional approaches' was also coded in this set (2 comments): Respondent 0510319 stated that she "liked the combination of poetry with verbal drama exercises. It is another approach to poetry. You do not have to deal with the common strategies (metre, rhythm...) in order to interpret a poem". The specifically adaptive nature of the exercises used (see section 4.4.2) were also commented on as motivationally positive: "We transformed the poem into various lively dramatic scenes, which made poetry less abstract and more interesting" (Respondent 1506908). Such comments ('Adaption') were the equal most frequently coded type (3 of 18 comments), along with comments explicitly favouring the effectiveness of verbal over non-verbal exercises. Respondent 2011107 commented for example: "I think that the verbal element is quite important for poems in general. Obviously, it then also makes sense to combine poetry with verbal exercises". Respondent 1307009 shared the sentiment, with an additional emphasis on the necessity to share interpretations as a stage in the creation of meaning (given the perceived 'difficulty' of poetry): "In my eyes, it is essential to apply verbal tasks in order to understand poetry completely, as there are many ways of interpretation one has to communicate with another". The response type 'Exploring emotions' was coded in two comments, having not occurred at all in the non-verbal session. Although this largely was connected to the presenters' focus on emotions during the session, this aspect was also viewed as a general approach to poetry, in combination with applied drama: Respondent 1007996 appreciated "the idea of capturing the entire tone of the poem by having to act out an emotion (but only to base your acting out on the poem, not to be strictly tied to it)". Despite the mostly positive responses coded, one student pointed to the need to combine drama work with other approaches (e.g. discussion) for full effect: "I really enjoyed the exercises but I don't think that they helped me to understand the poem better. I would have wished a discussion of the poems first before starting to work with them" (Respondent 0612869).

Table 10.3 presents the coded response types to question 4 in the text-based drama session on poetry. Here the first three response types dominate the set to a greater extent that the other two session sets. 'Adaptation', 'Contrast to traditional approaches', and, uniquely to the three sessions dealt with here, 'Comprehensive skills' (which also appears in the text-based session sets for questions 1-3, dealt with in section 6.2). These top three response types, at 4 comments each of 25 in total for the set, make up almost half of the coded types. This set also displays the highest number of single-comment

response types of all poetry-based sessions. Adaptation was regarded as largely positive, especially from an educational perspective: "In my opinion the combination of poetry with textual drama exercises was very good and gave ideas for future poetry teaching. It became clear that you can always transfer poetry into drama and vice versa" (Respondent 1712078). One student however also highlighted the potential for such an approach to become confusing: "It is by all means helpful to combine poems with textual drama exercises, which makes poem much more interesting. However, the focus could be confusing, when it comes to the understanding of a poem, therefore, maybe we could combine the original poem with the one we create, when we perform the scene" (Respondent 1506908). Under 'Contrast to traditional approaches', similar sentiments were expressed as already seen in the previous two sets. Respondent 0901364 felt that the drama work "made us think a bit „outside the box"", encouraging the participants "to be creative and have an open mind". Here also was the notion that the exercises were useful in overcoming the natural aversion to poetry that emerged frequently in the data ('Poetry challenging'): "…even the people who are not so keen on poetry liked the exercises and got interested, therefore I would say that the combination of poetry with textual drama exercises are a good way to deal with poetry" (Respondent 0612869). Under 'Comprehensive skills', Respondent 2711031 commented that "the text-based approach added another level to the verbal tasks so that one was obliged to get properly engaged with the poem". Respondent 1307009 concurred, mentioning: "Having students finish a poem using their own words and imagination practices close reading and the appropriate continuation in terms of vocabulary, syntax, style as well as writing skills". Other students touched on the benefits of 'Creative approaches': "It was easy to act out scenes since we wrote them ourselves it didn't feel artificial" (Respondent 2312874). One respondent touched on the perceived advantages of the exercises over the non-verbal techniques used in session 1: "I think that the combination of poetry with textual drama exercises is as well [sic] as the combination of poetry with verbal drama exercises. However, I do not think that the combination of poetry with non-verbal exercises is as effective as the verbal/textual ones" (Respondent 1508476). This stands in contrast to the view encountered in the non-verbal session data that silent exercises allow participants to "express the inexpressible"; but perhaps for more concrete language teaching aims, verbal, and in this case text-based exercises, have more to offer.

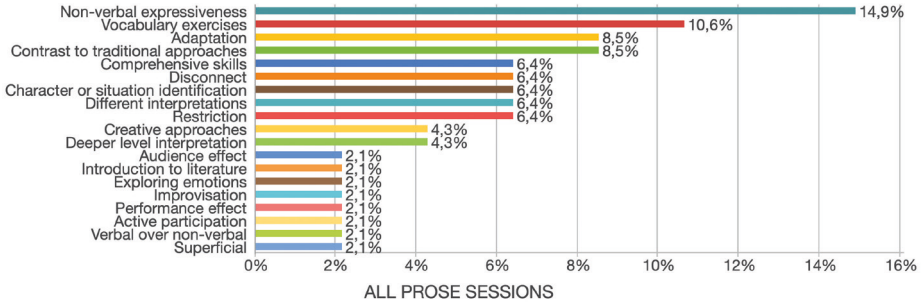
Generally then, the sentiment encountered in the data for questions 1-3 (see section 6.2) as well as in the results of the pre-course questionnaire (see section 6.1) are confirmed here in the responses to question 4: of all three literary genres, poetry is regarded as being the most difficult to approach, challenging, and unpopular. The many comments coded under 'Contrast to traditional approaches' perhaps highlight as much a desire for alternative pedagogical methods as satisfaction with the drama exercises actually used: such comments were often made in combination with those coded under 'Poetry difficult'. Nonetheless, a range of benefits of the drama exercises were highlighted – the chance for the students to get creative and active; to 'personalize' the

material; and to adapt the poetry to other text types, thus deploying the advantages of 'Comprehensive skills' (especially in the text-based session). Between exercise types, it seems that most advantages were seen in the verbal and text-based sessions; although an interesting point was made that non-verbal exercises, with their rather ephemeral, non-concrete nature, could actually help with the often slippery, challenging job of poetry interpretation.

6.3.2 Prose

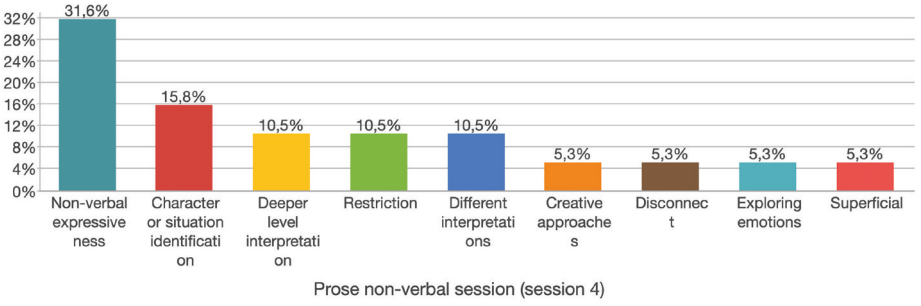
This section analyses responses to question 4 from across the three sessions dealing with prose: session 4 (prose and non-verbal exercises), session 5 (prose and verbal exercises) and session 6 (prose and text-based exercises). The questionnaire was completed by 14 participants for session 4; 16 participants for session 5; and 18 participants for session 6.

Table 11: Question 4 responses for all prose sessions



N=47

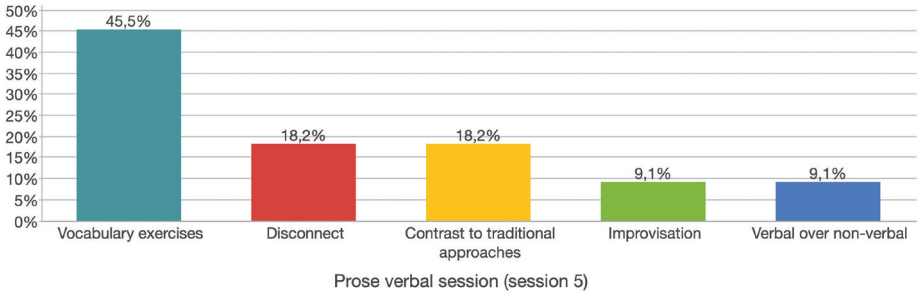
Table 11.1: Question 4 responses for non-verbal prose session



N=19

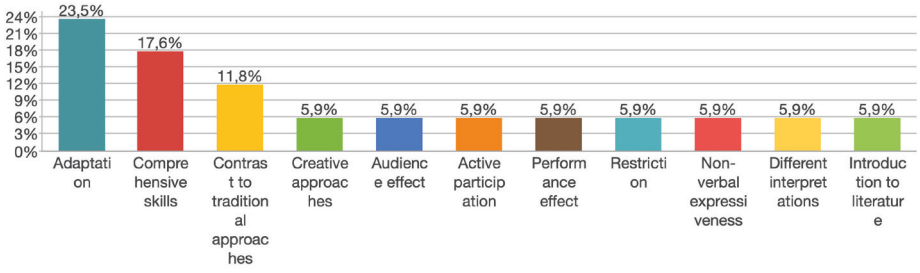
Table 11 displays the coded response types for question 4 across all the sessions dealing with prose literature. Interestingly this set only features 47 coded comments (19 for the non-verbal session; 11 for the verbal session; and 17 for the text-based session), in contrast to the 76 coded comments for the poetry sessions (see section 6.3.1). One reason for this is fact that many responses, especially in the non-verbal session, expressed the view that the exercises had been more effective in the corresponding session using poetry ('Non-verbal expressiveness'). Indeed, this kind of evaluative/comparative comment was relatively frequent, accounting for the type being top of the frequency table (7 comments). Other comments, especially those taken from the verbal session, felt that the exercises had not been well combined with or focused on the literature being dealt with ('Disconnect').

Table 11.2: Question 4 responses for verbal prose session



N=11

Table 11.3: Question 4 responses for text-based prose session



N=17

Table 11.1 shows the question 4 responses from the non-verbal prose-based session (session 4). The most frequent response type, 'Non-verbal expressiveness' dominates the data at just under a third of responses (6 of 19 coded comments). Some comments

under this type stated that the exercises used were useful for the prose session: "I think prose works very good [sic] with non-verbal drama exercises. However, I think, it is not as challenging as working with poetry. The poems and the poetic language often was more challenging to adopt into drama exercises" (Respondent 2011107); "First I felt that prose and non-verbal exercises do not go along with each other well. Still, the combination worked surprisingly well as the short story was highly interpretable and emotional" (Respondent 0301684). More common, however, were comments under the same response type that expressed the opinion that the non-verbal exercises were more effective in the session using poetry. Respondent 0612869 said "it seems to be easier to me to use those non-verbal-exercises for shorter literature e.g poems because even though the story was not long it is (compared to poems) harder to focus on one specific theme or the plot". Respondent 1508476 concurred, saying "In my opinion, I do not think that the combination of prose and non-verbal exercises is effective. I prefer poems in combination with non-verbal exercises". Respondent 2711031 "actually preffered [sic] the combination of lyric [i.e. poetry] and non- verbal exercises as there was more to interpret and act out. Those meanings had gone beyond the text" – the phrase 'beyond the text' is strongly reminiscent of the positive comment made in the poetry session data on the non-verbal exercises 'expressing the inexpressible'. The same student however (2711031) went on to say that "Non-verbal exercises in combination with prose might help deepening [sic] the understanding of each character and might help completing its characterisation, in relation to his co-character". Respondent 2802087 felt similarly, commenting positively on "the exploration of the short story without being able to express the various motives verbally. It deepened ones understanding for little emotions and how they affect the relationships between characters". This was a sentiment expressed in 3 comments in total for the set ('Character or situation identification'), and is also found in connection to the question 2 data for the non-verbal drama-based session especially (see Table 2.3, section 6.2.1.2). Comments were also made regarding the perceived deeper understanding afforded by the exercises ('Deeper level interpretation', 2 comments), in one case combined with an interesting reference to the 'audience effect' seen in the data in section 6.2: "I like the combination, as a deeper understanding in the text is required to act it out. Also, it allows to see [sic] different interpretations which lead [sic] to interesting discussions" (Respondent 1307009). Here we see an understanding of the text as a prerequisite to the acting-out process, by which interpretations are given and received – drama as consolidation, rather than as an initial means of learning, as seen in the previous data sets. A further comment highlighted the perceived non-verbal restrictions of the exercises, while focusing more on the potential for creative motivation: Respondent 0604589 said "although one can get the feeling that he cannot express more complex scenes without talking, it increases the motivation to be creative".

The data set for the verbal-based prose session (Table 11.2) features only 11 coded comments, the fewest of all three prose sessions. There was a significant cross-section

of comments to the effect that the session was not perceived as having been effective in terms of exploring the literature, but rather for oral communication skills ("I liked the exercises, but I did not quite get it on how this session should help us understanding [sic] prose. However, it improved our spontaneous use of English and took away some anxiety talking in a foreign language in front of the class", Respondent 0707766); improvisation skills ("Acting and reacting spontaneously was challenging, yet rewarding in these exercises", Respondent 0301742); and multi-skills ("…using verbal exercises combined with prose worked well in this case and served the purpose of practicing oral communication as well as working with literature and drama exercises", Respondent 0604589). Comments that explicitly pointed out the lack of connection with the literature were coded under 'Disconnect', such as the comment of Respondent 2210576 in which she expressed the wish for "a closer connection between the prose and the class". The majority of comments of this nature however highlighted the benefit of the exercises for learning vocabulary (5 of 11 comments coded). Respondent 1712078 said: "It was good that we got a chance to work with the different terms included in the short story"; Respondent 1007669 "liked how we could really learn to deal with our assigned words"; Respondent 2011107 commented that the focus on vocabulary "[made] the exercises more challenging and effective in terms of teaching and learning". Finally, two comments focused on the techniques used as a departure from the tried and tested approaches ('Contrast to traditional approaches'). Respondent 2005303 commented that "you normally would just read the text and by doing these exercises we worked with it in a totally different way", and Respondent 0510319 concurred: "The exercises have shown us that you can approach a prose text without the common text-based exercises. Instead, you can pick key words from it and do alternative verbal drama exercises which constitute an option [sic] to reading comprehension tasks".

The data for question 4 in the text-based prose session generated 17 coded responses across 11 response types (the greatest number of types of all three prose-based sessions). Over half of the coded responses cluster in the first three most frequent types; the 8 subsequent response types comprise a single comment each – again, the greatest number of single-comment types of the three sessions being dealt with here. Contrastingly to the verbal prose session, the responses to the text-based session were mostly positive. Respondent 0510319 reported that she was "convinced that the combination of prose with textual drama exercises was successful"; Respondent 1207638 described the combination as "especially suitable"; Respondent 2802087 as "highly effective". The top three most frequent response types were identical to the top three coded for the same session type (text-based) using poetry (see section 6.3.1): 'Adaptation', 'Comprehensive skills' and 'Contrast to traditional approaches'. The comments on comprehensive skills linked up with similar responses across questions 1-4 on text-based exercises. Respondent 2802087 commented that "…the text was used as a vehicle to carry and develop different textual exercises", going on to observe that "since one can focus on so many different things, it is never repetitive", raising the issue of variety in drama-based

teaching. Under 'Adaptation', most comments were positive, with Respondent 2011107 for example describing it as "a process of creativity and engagement with the text". One proviso, mentioned twice, was the need to plan in enough time for the adaptation process, which can be challenging, especially in an additional language situation: "The only thing that I find problematic is the time you have got to write down your ideas. (This is not specific for this group, rather in general. I find it fairly difficult to write down a complete dialogue within 10 Minutes)" (Respondent 2210576); "…we did not have enough time to write down our script so we just improvised a lot. So for younger students, I guess, one has to plan in a bit more time" (Respondent 1007669). This could have been a specific issue of the presenting group and their planning, of course, but it does highlight the importance of careful time management with drama-based work, with a particular eye on the age and level of the learners involved. On the level of the innovativeness of the techniques used in contrast to expected methods, Respondent 0604589 mentioned that "since I did not know this method before I was motivated to participate"; Respondent 2005303 expressed the view that "dealing with prose in school or in university is always connected to reading and textual drama exercises can help to deepen the understanding of a text", again raising the issue of drama work as consolidation, in order to deepen or fine-tune existing knowledge. Respondent 2711031 also touched on this consolidation aspect with her comment that "you read the story and you need to understand it in order to perform it. You can discuss and interpret several ways and act it out in front of others to share the view with them", simultaneously raising the audience/performance effect already often encountered in the data. On this note, Respondent 1506908 commented that "Textual drama exercises encourage students to explore prose in a more lively way, but it is also possible that during these processes, students will neglect other important factors". Although it is unclear exactly what 'other important factors' are referred to here, the view is clear that drama work can (should?) be combined with other techniques to be most effective.

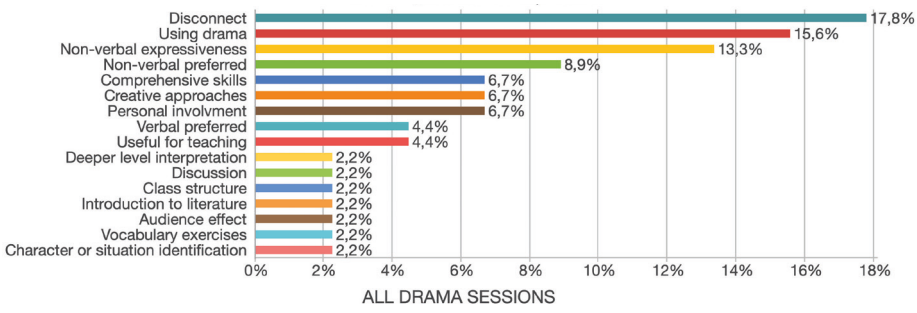
On the whole then, the data for question 4 responses in the prose-based sessions yielded some interesting aspects. On the non-verbal side, opinions were split between the exercises being better for poetry or prose. Some felt that the more abstract, ephemeral nature of poetry made it ideal for the non-verbal techniques, in order to 'express the inexpressible', or go 'beyond the text'. In this way, non-verbal work may help students to develop interpretations from ambiguous material. Others expressed the view that the non-verbal work helped to deepen the understanding of and identification with characters and situations presented in the prose story. The overall perceived effectiveness of the methods used is of course entirely dependent on the individual session and its presenters; but even in cases where there was a perceived disconnect between the material and the exercises, many students pointed to the effectiveness in terms of oral communication, teaching skills or vocabulary acquisition, as already explored in section 6.2. 'Comprehensive skills' were pointed to again, especially in the text-based session, as with the other text-based session data also presented in section 6.2. The concept

of drama as consolidation, rather than generator, of knowledge, was confronted once again – with pre-knowledge of the material an important condition for effectiveness of any subsequent drama work. These comments often occurred in combination with the perceived audience and/or performance effect of drama in order to exchange interpretations. Many comments, again, expressed appreciation for the drama methods as an alternative, or compliment to, traditional methods of literature pedagogy.

6.3.3 Drama

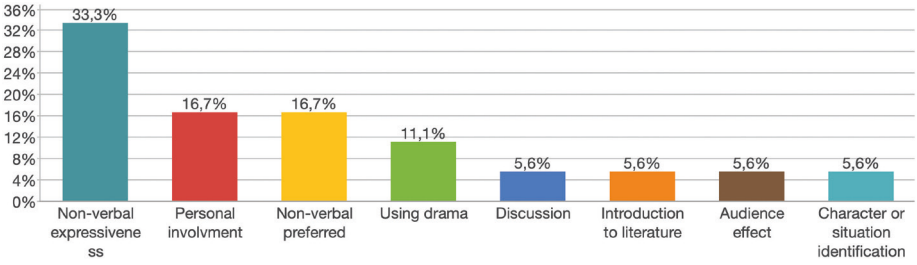
This section analyses responses to question 4 from across the three sessions dealing with drama: session 7 (drama and non-verbal exercises), session 8 (drama and verbal exercises) and session 9 (drama and text-based exercises). The questionnaire was completed by 16 participants for session 7; 13 participants for session 8; and 13 participants for session 9.

Table 12: Question 4 responses for all drama sessions



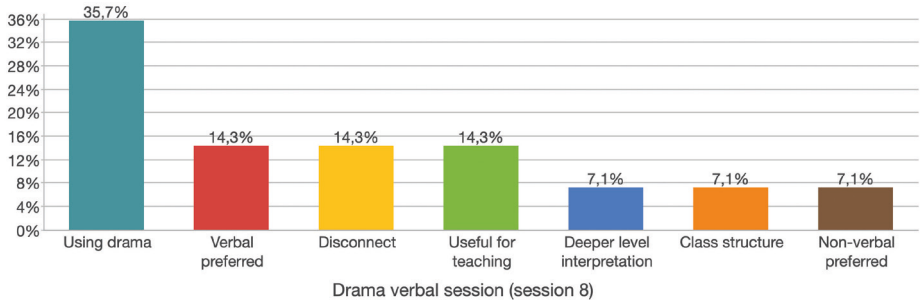
N=45

Table 12.1: Question 4 responses for non-verbal drama session



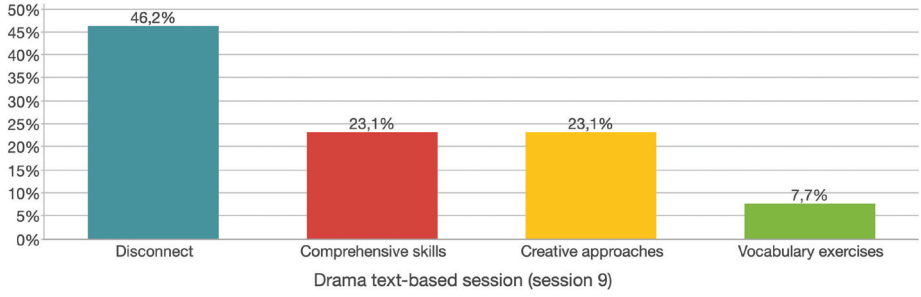
N=18

Table 12.2: Question 4 responses for verbal drama session



N=14

Table 12.3: Question 4 responses for text-based drama session



N=13

Table 12 displays the coded categories for response types to question 4 across all drama-based sessions. A total of 45 comments were coded across all three sessions. The top most frequent response (8 comments) concerned the view that the exercises chosen had not in fact been well combined with the literature being explored ('Disconnect'). This effect was most salient in responses to the text-based session (session 9), seen in table 12.3 below. The next most frequent overall response type, 'Using drama', covered comments that expressed the view that literary drama was somehow the most 'natural' genre in combination with practical drama exercises. Other comments judged the relative effectiveness of the exercise types ('Non-verbal preferred'/'Verbal preferred'/'Comprehensive skills'). Other response types present in the data had already been seen in the previous data sets for question 4.

Table 12.1 displays the response types for question 4 in the non-verbal exercise session. A total of 18 comments were coded for this session, across 8 response types. Exactly a third of all responses occurred in the top category, 'Non-verbal expressiveness'. This type was seen already in the data for the prose non-verbal session (Table 11.1),

where it also comprised around a third of responses as the most frequent type, and lower down the frequency ranking for the poetry non-verbal session (Table 10.1). The concept of 'expressing the inexpressible', encountered in the data for the poetry non-verbal session (section 6.3.1) emerged here again: "Oftentimes, non-verbal performances/ acting can illustrate situations for which our words do not suffice. This is the reason why non- verbal exercises reveal an entirely unknown (and oftentimes underestimated) side of drama" (Respondent 0510319). Respondent 1712078 referred to "the power of setting and context and gestures and facial expressions". A new element specific to this session was the view that non-verbal exercises were a distinct advantage when dealing with stronger or more extreme emotions in a text. Respondent 2711031 said: "Especially as the text was about war, fear, hope, death and pain, non-verbal exercises help understanding [sic] the situation since they are more suitable to interpret emotions and substantial fears", going on to note that "it is easier if you are silent to be attentive of [sic] the reactions from your group members"; Respondent 2210576 concurred, saying that "talking would have made it harder to deliver emotions". The view was also raised by Respondent 0301684 that the non-verbal nature of the work made for more natural, spontaneous playing: "The strong feelings in the play are easier to perform when not saying anything. If you have a given text the performances will always be staged and less spontaneous". Connected to this, Respondent 1508476 commented on the benefit of the exercises for character identification ("Non-verbal ones [i.e. exercises] are enough to put oneself in the position of a role and get an idea of his character by using the own [sic] body and facial expressions which are in my opinion stronger than words"). Three comments expressed the view that the non-verbal exercises were the most effective type in combination with the dramatic literature. Respondent 0908925, for instance, pointed to the primacy of physicality with such techniques: "It was the best combination, because drama (in this instance) includes much more action. The short scenes we had required movements". Others turned this concept around rather, arguing that the dramatic nature of the material made up for the lack of verbality in the exercises: Respondent 0604589 said that "Since the scene was dramatic itself using language was not necessary", believing that the non-verbal work "helped to get into the mood of the scene and feeling inside oneself". Respondent 0901364 expressed this lack of language as a useful introductory strategy for the literature in class: "it was very effective to get us to understand the play without even having read it all". Two comments discussed 'Using drama', both observing the 'natural' partnership of drama exercises with drama-in-education techniques. Respondent 2011107 said: "The combination of drama with non-verbal drama exercises is very effective. Of course it is much more obvious concerning the effectiveness to use actual drama texts rather than poetry or prose (despite they [sic] worked both as well)"; Respondent 1508476 commenting that "Compared to prose and poems, I think the combination of plays and non-verbal exercises is more effective. Since some non-verbal exercises were a kind of acting out scenes of the play, it was a completive [sic] combination". This sense of the 'natural' correlation with literary drama

was also encountered in the data gathered for question 2 in the drama-based sessions (see section 6.2), but the sense of the exercises completing the dramatic literature leave the impression of the dramatic text itself being somehow insufficient without practical work of this kind fulfilling its ultimate purpose. Part of this is also the audience/performance effect, seen in this data set in a single comment: "The non-verbal exercise was very interesting because you could interpret the non-verbal theatre part of the other groups, so everybody had his own interpretation" (Respondent 2906560).

Table 12.2 displays response types coded for the verbal-based drama session. Here, 14 comments were coded across 7 response types. Over a third of responses (5 comments) were coded under 'Using drama', a type that emphasizes the perceived natural relationship between the exercises and literary drama as a genre. Respondent 0901364 commented that "verbal exercises and plays are a classic way to get to understand a literature [sic] better. There [sic] no real restrictions and it is easier that way to get into first touch with drama [sic] literature". The sense of 'completion' expressed in the data for the non-verbal session above re-emerged here as well: Respondent 2011107 said "The performative aspect of drama texts demands somehow that there is either or both verbal or non-verbal performance. In most cases verbal performance is an obvious part of drama performance", while Respondent 2005303 added an educational slant to the same observation: "A drama is meant to be performed and therefore I believe if you are teaching a drama or even if you just want to get a deeper understanding of it acting and especially verbal exercises can really help you with that". This preference of verbal exercises in the performative aspect was shared by Respondent 2906560: "Dramas are easy to perform and act and if you are allowed to talk, this is probably easier than a non-verbal exercise". Respondent 2711031 also expressed the advantages of the verbal exercises: "it does not, as in comparison to non-verbal exercises, focus so much upon emotions or reaction, but on the basic plot and how words are applied, also in a grammatical way"; before going on to suggest a combination of both non-verbal and verbal work: "If you start with a non-verbal exercise this provides a good base to put verbal exercises on top because you got involved with the setting and the feeling and now the students can immerse into the plot, its twists and the meaning of the words. It dives deeper into the drama". Here we see the different types of exercise being employed for different reasons: non-verbal work for a spontaneous, emotional introduction to the general themes, followed by verbal exercises to delve into the details of the plot and language. That said, the view that the non-verbal approach was best with drama was represented in this set also, in a single comment: "In my opinion, the non-verbal exercises are the most effective ones, as gestures and facial expressions are enough and even more impressive than speaking" (Respondent 1508476). Two comments emphasized the perceived lack of connection between the exercises and the literature, although both referred to the specific session and not this combination in general. Another two comments intimated that the exercises could be useful in later teaching situations ('Useful for teaching'). Another comment highlighted the danger of monotony, per-

haps reinforcing the variety of exercise type alluded to above, as well as the need to plan enough time: "I would not use that kind of exercise in all introductory courses as it will get boring after a while…a little more time to prepare for would have been better" (Respondent 0707766).

Table 12.3 displays the response types coded for question 4 in the text-based drama session (13 coded comments across 4 response types). Three comments focused positively on the creative approaches employed in the session: Respondent 1712078 commented that "the combination of drama with textual drama exercises was quite effective, because it showed how creative you can be while working with drama texts in school". Respondent 2906560 believed "it was a really good combination. We were able to talk and to discuss about the given text but had to write our own ending", thus also touching upon the issue of 'Comprehensive skills' seen in other data sets for text-based sessions. Respondent 2011107 also touched on this issue, with the reminder of drama being a 'natural fit' for drama-based educational methods: "Producing your own written scenes is closely related to the drama aspect as written dialogue already has a strong performative aspect". Despite these positively connoted responses to the creative exercises, however, almost half of the coded responses (6 comments) highlighted the perceived disconnect between the literature used and the exercises involved. Respondent 1007669 commented: "I liked writing down our own ending, however, I personally would have liked to have it based more on the literature itself than on our drama exercises". Respondent 0908925 agreed, saying: "There was not a lot of connection to the actual drama or to textual drama exercises, so it is hard to give an opinion", however adding that "one could use today's session as an introduction". Respondent 0301742 commented that "No explanation was given from the presenters. The exercise had little to nothing to do with the given text". This issue of clarity of instruction was also touched upon by Respondent 0612869, who said: "I think it was not a very successful session. The instructions were rather unclear. I did not really get the connection between the things we had to invent for our story and the ending of the text". Some other students expressed this disconnect more positively, focusing instead on what was generated by the exercises. Respondent 0510319 said "The drama text only served as a suggestion how our own performances could proceed. In other words, you could use the given drama excerpt as a source of inspiration for your own performances". This comment ties in with previously seen notions of drama work as an introduction to a theme, as a deepening of pre-established knowledge, or as a motivator in class. Respondent 0301684 touched upon the vocabulary benefits of the chosen exercises: "Being able to talk improved our short plays about the new inventions I think. It was a challenge not to say the word we had to describe which trained our vocabulary and speaking".

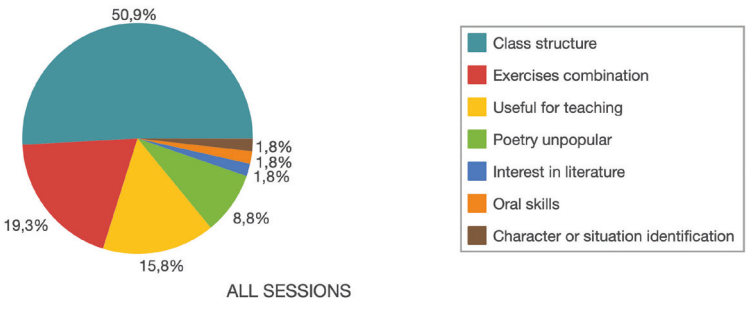
The sense of the 'natural fit' between dramatic literature and drama-based teaching methods was thus again reinforced in the data for the drama-based sessions. Several comments focused on practical approaches to the performative, 'pre-text' nature of dramatic texts as being a positive, even necessary, step when dealing with such texts

in class, in order to 'complete' their ultimate objective (performance). Some felt that non-verbal exercises were best in this regard, especially in cases of texts dealing with strong emotions, or as an introduction to general themes. Verbal exercises were judged better for language work (e.g. vocabulary), and for more detailed plot and character exploration. Non-verbal exercises were also seen to be an advantage with texts involving a lot of scripted action: and indeed many respondents highlighted the possibility of using different exercise types in combination, depending on the pedagogical aims. In the text-based session especially, the issue of comprehensive skills came up once again, but the need was highlighted that planning diverse sessions is essential to avoid confusion and boredom. The opinion that the literature and exercises were not well combined seemed to be most apparent in the text-based session also – this could have been a specific reaction to the particular session and presenting group; although some comments played up the usefulness of the exercises in other ways (e.g. as an introduction or to consolidate vocabulary acquisition).

6.4 Other comments

Question 5 of the Moodle-based questionnaire asked participants Is there anything else you would like to mention which is not covered by these questions? This section analyses responses to this question across all 9 sessions. Due to the open-ended nature of the question, in contrast to questions 1-4, responses are analysed under thematic headings, according to frequency of response type.

Figure 1: Question 5 responses



N=57

Figure 1 displays the response types for question 5 coded across all 9 sessions. There were 57 comments coded in total, half of which cluster in the top most frequent type, 'Class structure'. These comments were focused on some aspect of how the presenters organized the session, and included views on time management, overall aim of the ses-

sion, apparent level of preparation, etc. Many of these comments overlap with those coded in the second response type, 'Exercises combination', comments under which focus on how effectively the drama exercises were combined with, for example, the literature, other methods used, or feedback and discussion.

It is indeed noteworthy that the vast majority of responses here, clustered in the top two most frequent response types, are focused on session management/organization, and to what extent the drama exercises contributed to the perceived success or failure of the particular session. This is perhaps instructional to the research, insofar as none of the other questions explicitly asked about this aspect, despite the fact that it clearly was of interest to the students as future teachers. It suggests that many of the participants were considering whether, and how, they could integrate the drama techniques explored into their own future class sessions in school. Other response types, in descending order of frequency, were: 'Useful for teaching' (9 comments); 'Poetry unpopular' (5 comments); 'Interest in literature', 'Oral skills' and 'Character or situation identification' (1 comment each). Other comments that indicated that the student had no other comments to add, or those that simply indicated a general like or dislike of the session (e.g. 'Very good session!'), were not coded.

6.4.1 Class structure

Under 'Class structure', comments were coded that somehow related to the overall effectiveness of the structure or organisation of the session. These comments did not necessarily mention the drama exercise themselves. The high frequency of these comments (29 of 57 comments coded in total) suggests that such considerations were common among the students, the majority of whom were on the teacher training degree programme (see section 4.1.2).

For session 2, Respondent 1307009 commented that the presenters "had a clear aim for the session and followed it through". Respondent 2506633 commented, for the same session, that she found the presenters "well prepared", a sentiment repeated by Respondent 2902947: "The group prepared it in such a detailed way that it was very easy to follow and understand the aim of the whole session". For session 6, Respondent 2802087 said "This week's group carefully constructed an overarching theme, that remained visible throughout the session, which in turn also helped to locate the individual exercises within the broader context". In session 7, Respondent 0510319 appreciated the "well-structured and reasonable presentation", to which Respondent 0707766 agreed, saying "The whole session was totally structured which I liked because you never felt lost". Respondent 0301742 described the same session as "coherent and well-rounded", before commenting positively on the class participation levels: "The focus was on involving as many people as possible at all times whilst keeping the group members' inputs minimal".

Despite the many positive comments, those that expressed the perceived ineffectiveness or failure of the class organization were also common. For session 3, Respondent 2711031 felt that the presenters were "lacking a clear aim [in terms of] what they were trying to lead us to". Respondent 2711031 highlighted the importance of clear instructions in her comment on session 4: "Today I couldn't follow the aim of this session. I was lacking some instructions or explanation why I should do the exercises and what we want to achieve with it [sic]". Respondent 0301742 commented for the same session that the issue may have been topic choice: "The overall topic (death) was far too broad and unspecific. Confusing structure as it seemed at first that the presentation had a literary focus, but dealt with educational questions at the end". Respondent 1508476 agreed, in reference to the same session: "There was no clear structure or rather central theme in [the] exercises. The first exercise with the emotions was a good connection death [sic], but after this part the exercises did not make sense for me". Other comments ascribed the perceived ineffectiveness of a session to other factors. For session 4, Respondent 0301684 commented "The presenting group did not adapt to what was said but went on with their program without a comment. By doing so, they did not leave any space for a discussion although the short story was very interesting and emotional". For session 5, Respondent 2506633 listed some distracting aspects, including the physical stances of the presenters as well as the arrangement of the classroom for each exercise. She concluded "it just needs a bit more of [sic] preparation when holding a session". For session 9, Respondent 2711031 said "The instructions in class weren't as clear as they should be, which led to confusion in our group. Reducing such instruction problems improve the working on the text [sic] and the aim that drama exercises have in class". Respondent 0301742 agreed, saying "The instructions from the presenters for the group exercises were unclear, we as a group were unsure what to do".

Comments concerning timing of the sessions also featured highly. In session 1, Respondent 1712078 commented that "the one presenter at the end should give the student a little more time when she asks her questions. Especially if she is planning to be a teacher she has to be a bit more patient". Respondent 0510319 agreed, saying "You should give your students enough time to react to your questions". In session 3, Respondent 2711031 said "groups were faster than others which resulted in some unproductive waiting time", although she conceded that this was a general issue, and not the fault of the presenters. Respondent 0908925 felt that session 4 became "a bit boring and long-winded with the interpretations", an aspect touched on by Respondent 0301742 in reference to session 5 who concluded that "less is sometimes more", feeling that the session in question "was not stuffed with content and different tasks, which was a good thing". Finally, for session 1, Respondent 0901364 commented "I thought that this presentation was well structured and we knew all the time what we had to do. I also [liked] how they divided us into groups that was very creative and you got to work with people that you usually do not work with in class". In the same vein of social interaction, Respondent 2711031 said (in reference to session 4): "In my opinion, drama

in class embodies a change of role in classroom. Students will get more included and are leading the session and the teacher should only guide - this time the guide [i.e. the presenter] let the students have only a tiny space [sic] of self-autonomy". This represents a reminder of the power of drama for role-playing in the educational context, and of the need to allow space for this transformation to happen.

6.4.2 Combining the drama exercises

The second most frequent response type for question 5 was 'Exercises combination'. This type concerned comments touching on the perceived success or failure of the group to combine their chosen exercises with other elements relevant to the session, e.g. the literature, or the chosen theme. This response type was coded in 11 of the 57 comments coded overall. In session 1, Respondent 1508476 said that she "liked the alternate combination of nonverbal exercises and discussions/questions/comments". In the same session, Respondent 1907754 commented that "The combination of talking about them [i.e. the poems], and thus doing „oral communication", and [non-verbal] drama exercises where you are not allowed to talk was really exhilarating". Here we can see a similar sentiment as coded for the responses to questions 1-4 under 'Contrast to traditional approaches': in this case, perhaps 'combination with traditional approaches' (e.g. discussion) would be more accurate. For session 3, in which the students used an excerpt of a parodic Shakespearean version of Star Wars (see section 4.4.3), Respondent 0707766 said "I liked the way they combined film-based material with literature". In some cases, the combination element was extended to the academic background material provided by some groups. In session 2, Respondent 2506633 expressed the view that "the balance between theory and exercises was well chosen". Even in cases where similar, or even identical, drama exercises were chosen from another group, combining these with different material made the session different: referring to session 8, Respondent 2711031 said "Although this group applied the same exercises than [sic] another group, I haven't had the feeling that the class was similar. They had different aims. They variated [sic] the way they introduced and carried out the exercises". Of particular interest in terms of teacher training were comments connected to session 6. Respondent 0301684 said: "I really liked the idea to reflect [sic] upon the methods with Fachdidaktik vocabulary!"; Respondent 0510319 commented "I found it brilliant that the group revised important key terms of the English teaching methodology. Since nearly everyone [sic] of our oral communication class intends to become teachers, this recapitulation was absolutely helpful!"

In some cases, of course, the comments on the combination of exercises were more critical. In some cases, even though the exercises were deemed to be fun, and/or useful, it was felt that the stated aims were not met. In connection with session 8, for example, Respondent 1307009 commented: "The tasks were very entertaining and fun! Unfortunately, the combination with the literature did not work out as expected". In other

cases, it was felt that a preparation phase would have made the subsequent drama work more effective: "In my opinion, it would have been useful to discuss the poems in the beginning a little further, in order to have everyone on the same page" (Respondent 1307009, session 2). This feeling was also extended to a perceived need for post-work discussion as well. In session 4, Respondent 2711031 commented: "I would rather preferred [sic] having a discussion after each non-verbally [sic] interpretation of a such [sic] instead of listening to their [i.e. the presenters'] one interpretation. I think it limited the creativity and the spirit of the students". Respondent 1307009 seems to have felt the same, commenting: "If doing these tasks in a classroom I would do a longer discussion to really understand the different interpretations. There was not enough exchange in today's session on the individual interpretations".

6.4.3 Useful for teaching

The third most frequently coded response type, at 9 comments, was 'Useful for teaching'. These comments were less concerned with the pedagogical effectiveness of the session itself (as in the top two most frequent types discussed above), and more focused on the perceived usefulness of the methods used for the future teaching careers of the students. This aspect was covered explicitly by question 3 of the Moodle questionnaire, the responses to which are analysed in section 6.2 above. However the relatively high frequency of such comments in the open-ended question 5 suggests that this is an aspect on many of the students' minds.

In session 2, Respondent 0901364 appreciated the use of drama exercises even for class organization purposes: "I liked how the presenters divided us into groups! It was again very creative and I will be thinking of this when I will do group exercises with my pupils in the future". In session 5, Respondent 0604589 felt that the presenters "gave a great example for an exercise which can be used in school". Session 6 in particular, which focused on educational aspects (see section 4.4.6), generated many such comments. Respondent 2506633 appreciated "a perfect method which can be used in school"; Respondent 1307009 found it "very interesting to think about the beneficial aspects of drama exercises in school"; Respondent 0612869 concluded that the session had been "very helpful for me as future teacher".

In terms of specific educational focus, one comment highlighted the usefulness of the exercises for comprehensive language skills: "All tasks we did in class were not only great to practice speaking skills, but were also very entertaining. I can imagine these tasks are perfectly suitable for teaching in school" (session 5, Respondent 1307009). Other comments focused on the teaching of poetry (discussed further below). In session 3, Respondent 1712078 commented: "The „Poem Improvisation" where we had to fill in the gaps of a poem was also very interesting and gave us another idea of how we could teach poetry"; Respondent 1307009 said of the same exercise: "The last task with the gaps in the poem had great potential in a classroom".

6.4.4 Poetry

Only five comments focused on poetry – no other comments were connected to the two other literary genres (prose and drama). The comments often betrayed a dislike of poetry, or the admission of difficult past experiences with it. In session 1, Respondent 1508476 admitted: "Although I do not like poetry, the group did a great job in presenting this topic as interesting as possible". Respondent 0707766 went into considerable detail on the matter:

> "I liked the presentation a lot, especially the subjective part of dealing with poems. At school, I always felt lost when dealing with poems because I couldn't express my own thoughts when dealing with poems - well, actually, my interpretations were always counted as wrong. With those exercises, it might have been easier to point out what I interpreted and why I was interpreting the poems the way I did. Also, it would have helped to acquire the teachers' perspective in order to analyze the poems."

Here, we have three important elements: firstly, the difficulty of interpreting poetry; secondly, the added pressure to agree with the accepted 'correct' interpretation'; and thirdly the concept of grasping another person's (in this case the teacher's) perspective on a poem. We can firstly perceive the potential of drama as a means of communication ('to point out what I interpreted and why…'); in this case, the idea of drama as knowledge consolidation and/or communication, rather than creation. And secondly, drama in its roleplay guise – the idea of switching perspective from student to teacher: an aspect surely of great value in teacher training contexts. At the root of these effects, of course, lies a willingness on the part of the teacher to accept students' interpretations, even if they differ from those expected or hoped for, an element touched upon by Respondent 1606908 for the same session: "There should not be a standard answer to the interpretation of the poetry, which might restrain [sic] students mind [sic] when they apply their understandings to the drama exercises". The aspect of poetry was continued in responses to question 5 in session 2. Respondent 1508476 commented: "I really liked the poems the group chose, even though I don't like poetry that much. The poems were easy to understand and working with these poems was fun/interesting"; Respondent 0707766 added: "I liked the presentation and especially, I begin to like poems in class again!".

6.5 Post-course questionnaire

The post-course questionnaire was handed out in the final session of the class (see section 5.4 for a full discussion). It was intended to return to areas explored in the pre-course questionnaire (see section 5.1), and against the background of the Moodle data (see sections 6.2-6.4), in order to ascertain whether, and how, students' perspectives had changed throughout the semester. The items were micro-analysed numerically (in

the case of the Likert scale items), and textually (for the open items). 23 of the 27 participants completed the post-course questionnaire.

6.5.1 Questions 1-3: perceived suitability of the drama-based classes

The first three questions asked respondents about the suitability of the class for the three areas under investigation. Respondents were asked to make a cross on a five-point Likert scale representing extent of agreement from *very much* to *not at all* (see Appendix A2). The questions were as follows:

1. How suitable do you think the class was in terms of opportunities to develop confidence and fluency in your spoken English?
2. How suitable do you think the class was in terms of developing topics and ideas relevant to your future career?
3. How suitable do you think the class was in terms of exploring and engaging with the literature we dealt with?

Here, all three questions were open to all respondents, irrespective of degree type or professional training.

Question	**Mean value (Likert scale)**
Spoken English (question1)	1.52
Future career relevance (question 2)	1.21
Engagement with literature (question 3)	1.65

Figure 2: Mean values for questions 1-3

Figure 2 displays the mean values from the Likert scale in questions 1-3. There is a very narrow range of variance, with the highest value being 1.21 (question 2) and the lowest being 1.65 (question 3). The lowest value in the data was a single entry on the fourth point of the five-point scale, entered by Respondent 2011107 for question 3 (literature). The students considered the class most relevant then for career relevance (1.21) followed by spoken English (1.52) followed by literature exploration (1.65).

6.5.2 More detail on the three areas

Question 4a asked respondents to rate the three areas explored in questions 1-3, this time by assigning a numerical value to the three possible items. This was intended to cover the same ground as the previous questions but from a different angle, by using a different wording, and a different numerical scale system, in order to check for consistency (see section 5.4):

Question 4a: Please rate the following areas, in terms of how relevant the class was for each of them:

- Practice of spoken English: _____
- Introduction to career-relevant topic/s: _____
- Exploration of literature: _____

(1=highly relevant, 2=relevant, 3=irrelevant)

Students could use the three numerical values as they wished – there was no obligation in this case to rank the items. The following figure displays the mean values generated by responses to question 4a:

Item	Mean value (Likert scale)
Spoken English	1.35
Career relevance	1.26
Literature	1.63

Figure 3: Mean values for question 4a

The variance range is again very small: even smaller in fact that the range for questions 1-3. The order of how the three elements were rated was identical to that of questions 1-3 (figure 2): career relevance (1.26) followed by spoken English (1.35) followed by literature (1.63). This would suggest that, although the numerical differences are minimal, the general order of the three areas under exploration was stable between the two differently structured items: career relevance in top position, followed by practice of spoken English, followed by exploration of the literature. This is already an interesting result suggesting that, despite the class being ostensibly focused on oral communication, the content relevance of the drama exercises and methods used, of use to future teaching contexts, was seen as more pertinent than either oral communication or literary exploration.

The following sections will now explore the responses to question 4b, which asked students for more detail regarding their choices for question 4a (Now, please explain your choices below). As this is an open-ended item, analysis consisted of the organization of response types into coded categories, as with the similarly open-ended items analysed in the pre-course questionnaire (see section 6.1). Analysis will follow the order of preference displayed in question 4a.

6.5.2.1 Career relevance

27 comments made in responses to question 4b were coded under the area of career relevant skills. The vast majority of these (18 of 27) were concerned with ideas and methods that could be used in future classes when the students were working as teachers themselves. Respondent 1712078 said that the class "contained a lot of teaching methodology

and gave you many ideas and methods you can apply"; Respondent 2011107 described the drama approach as "very useful for school and learning". Some students explicitly linked the concept of useful ideas to literature pedagogy: Respondent 2312874 claimed she had learned "a lot of ideas how to approach literature and how to plan a lesson", while Respondent 1907754 found the class useful for learning "methods of combination of literature with drama exercises". One student also embedded the perceived relevance of the class to the progression of her training: "I think that it was so helpful for me, also in regard of my 'Praxissemester', I'll have in September". This raises the question of the potential embedding of drama-based classes within the teacher training curriculum. Interestingly, the next two most frequent comment types (4 and 3 comments respectively) were those concerning the usefulness of the drama approach to simulate the perspectives of a student and of a teacher in a school class. Again, this is an important insight into the potential of such methods in teacher education at the department. Respondent 0301684 commented: "we had the chance to both be 'students' and 'teachers' to experience ourselves what we will be asking our students to do!". Respondent 0908925 appreciated the chance to experience the "changing perspectives" of student and teacher in class; an effect which according to Respondent 2711031 raised "awareness [sic] what the exercises aim at/should be constructed for". This is perhaps a useful reminder that the drama exercises should be explored with particular educational goals in mind, and not simply randomly. Here the aspect of control offered by role-play exercises can be used to model classroom situations from both perspectives, an aspect that would not perhaps be as effective or vivid as simply sitting discussing potential problems and issues at a distance.

One other student made reference to other skills expected according to educational policy: "[…] it is a way to improve and practice […] other competences that are expected in the curriculum (Bildingsplan)", before also referring to the development of 'soft skills' in both students and teachers: "these exercises are also useful to work on one's self-consciousness and self-awareness which is very beneficial […] for students and teachers (personality)" (Respondent 2011107). Finally, a single comment on this covered a number of interesting points. Respondent 1907754: "So after this class, I plan to use at least some of the games in my own classroom. It gets the student motivated and 'moving', it's something different than the normal class. I came into contact with lots of these exercises before (e.g. in *Theaterpädagogik)*, but now I really know how to use them together with literature." Here we can see two of the effects noticed in the Moodle data (see sections 6.2-6.4): drama exercises as (physical) motivators and the contrast of the approach to more traditional methods. The last part of the comment, however, suggests that for this student the main benefit of the class was the specific combination of drama methods and literature, for use in her future classroom as a teacher.

6.5.2.2 Oral communication

A total of 44 comments occurred under oral communication/spoken English. The top most frequent type was 'opportunities to speak' (13 comments). 7 comments focused on 'group speaking'; 6 comments on 'confidence'; 4 comments on 'spontaneity'; and 3 comments each focused on the development of vocabulary and comfort in speaking. 2 comments focused on natural, authentic speaking situations; 2 others complained that some groups had used German in the exercises; 2 others asserted that the class had offered no more chances to speak than any other 'normal' oral communication class. There was one comment of the multiple modes of expression offered by the drama work, and one on the variety of registers used.

Respondent 0301742 raised the "many possibilities to speak", noting that "even in sessions termed as 'non-verbal', you had to talk to your groups". Respondent 0908925 commented that "we often worked in small groups, so there was enough possibility to speak in general". The same student also noted that "people who are rather shy or insecure would feel more comfortable in smaller groups", pointing to "the feeling of safety in the classroom which grew during the semester". This last comment in particular seems to allude to a 'group building' effect through the drama work, an effect also noticed by Respondent 1907754: "through the exercises, we really got closer together". These effects are well reported in the literature, and the perceived benefits are recognized in the business world where drama is also used to foster a group solidarity (see Monks et al 2001: 415). Respondent 0301684 alluded to the range of different communicative tasks afforded in the class: "we had to improvise, describe terms, act out scenes and give feedback which helped me improve my spoken English". This might suggest a multi-task element to drama in education methods (see chapter 7), as well as touch on the more mutli-sensory approach involved in German *Theaterpädagogik* (see section 3.2.2). Two students positively compared the speaking opportunities with other oral communication formats: Respondent 1907754 said "at first I was a bit afraid to talk because at uni, you often don't get a lot of opportunity to speak English. But this fear was right away overcome". This sentiment was mirrored by another student: "In some classes, you are never able to speak, but here you had to speak at least in the short scenes of drama [sic]". This raises the issue of the 'forced' communication demanded by performance, and the attendant ethical considerations. These aspects are intriguingly explored in the film *Rhythm is it!* (Grube and Sanchez Lansch 2004). Here a group of Berlin schoolchildren, most of whom had had no previous experience of live performance, were directed in a dance production of Igor Strawinsky's *Rite of Spring*. Despite the harsh working discipline demanded by the director Royston Maldoom, the participants reported a significant growth in confidence over the project, despite (and in some cases due to) the pressure of performance (Grube and Sanchez Lansch 2004).

Respondent 2802087 believed that "the class did not bring/create that much [sic] more opportunities, compared with other OC [i.e. oral communication] classes – yet, the given opportunities occurred much more equally distributed throughout each ses-

sion, and so was the quality (it never felt like one must speak but it was always part of an exercises/theatre performance)". This equal distribution is an important aspect, given the format of most other oral communication-based classes required students to hold an assessed presentation once during the semester, but potentially not to have to speak much again throughout the rest of the time. Respondent 250633 seemed to concur: "The practice of spoken English was, at least in my eyes, trained every single week. Not only when we had to do our group presentation, but also when we had to participate in the exercises of the other groups".

Many comments emphasized the increase in confidence that came from the exercises, often in combination with the sense of authentic, spontaneous communication situations. Respondent 1712078 said: "I think this course […] helped us to become more confident while speaking. Especially the performances where we often were asked to improvise were very effective for the oral communication, since we did not perform an 'artificial' written play and speak in an unnatural way, but an authentic scene". This raises the question of the distinction in the student's mind between an 'artificial' scene and an 'authentic' one: in this case the distinction may rest on the difference between performing a pre-written, learned text and simply improvising freely (authentic). Respondent 1907754 continued in this vein, again alluding to the chance to speak freely: "I didn't think about e.g. if I'm using the right words/grammar etc., I just talked and that helped me really much [sic]". Here we see the concept of drama as consolidation rather than originator of knowledge, as encountered in the data in section 6.2. This was underlined by Respondent 1007669 also: "Since the main focus was not so much on perfect articulation, but instead on our drama performances and their analyses, I felt encouraged to 'try out' more difficult sentence structures, idioms etc." She went on to tie this into the group atmosphere: "I also believe that because there was such a comfortable atmosphere in general, I didn't feel like I had to compare my English to that of other speakers in the classroom". This perhaps highlights the collaborative nature of drama, compared to the potentially more competitive format of successive student presentations involving a more traditional presenter/listener format. The potentially pressurized nature of some tasks (e.g. improvisation) was also linked positively to class atmosphere: "…the atmosphere was very confident and helped me to practice my spoken English without any fear in certain tasks (impromptu [sic] etc.)". Respondent 2005303 described oral communication in the class as "a natural thing that just happened". In the above few comments, then, the usefulness of drama as a vehicle for authentic, natural and collaborative language production is apparent, tying in with the progressivist ideas of education discussed in section 3.2.1, which emphasize collaboration and student-centred methods of holistic learning (drama being explicity included in many such accounts).

In addition to the comment above by Respondent 2802087, one other student made reference to the lack of increased communicative opportunities offered by the class (Respondent 1307009): "Compared to the other '*Sprachpraxis*' seminars, and especially

the 'oral comm' classes I have taken so far I can say that I have practiced my spoken English just as much there, as I have in this class". Respondent 2011107 described the class as "very interactive and communicative", highlighting the "variety of English language registers that were spoken and practiced". She also raised an interesting point in terms of drama (especially its spoken component) being the subject of the class itself – "I believe that language (esp. spoken language) was more in the focus of the class than compared to other classes in which theory and academic research is the predominant aspect of discussion"; a reminder perhaps that the core mission of *Sprachpraxis* is well served by a drama based approach which prioritizes language itself as a subject of discussion. Two admirably honest comments served as a useful reminder for the teacher to carefully monitor the language being spoken, even in the preparation phase: "sometimes we spoke in German in our groups and only performed in English, that was kind of sad but otherwise we got enough opportunities (feedback, discussion) to speak in English" (Respondent 2312874); "at some points especially during the exercises we sticked [sic] to German (what [sic] we were not supposed to do I have to admit…)" (Respondent 0612869).

6.5.2.3 Exploration of literature

26 comments were coded that corresponded to exploration of the literature. Ten of these were coded under the response type 'interpretation' – both enacting (as in the previously-mentioned 'performance effect') and receiving (as in 'audience effect') (see section 6.2), as well as developing one's own interpretation further (this ties in with the three comments coded under the response type 'deeper understanding'). Eight comments were coded under 'personal connection' – a feeling of experience of/closeness to the literature. In addition to the three comments on 'deeper understanding', there were three comments under 'no deeper insight', reflecting the opposite view. Finally, two comments focused on 'active involvement' with the literature through the drama exercises.

Many of the comments focused on the freedom of interpretation afforded by the exercises: "The acting showed a variety of interpretations e.g. concerning the same part of a poem. Through drama, there were no restrictions on the thoughts and we (as students) could really use our imagination and so could come up with many interpretations we might not be able to come up [with] in a 'normal' non-drama class" (Respondent 1907754). The concept of 'restrictions on the thoughts' is reminiscent of some of the comments in section 6.4.4, where some students complained about the need in school to correspond to the accepted, 'correct' interpretation of a poem, rather than having the freedom to fully explore their own ideas. Respondent 0707766 took this further, saying "At least, there is no person who could actually criticize you for interpreting/over-interpreting, because you were the one experiencing it [i.e. in performance]". This raises the question of dramatic performance as literary interpretation (see chapter 7). An aspect of the freedom of performance is of course the opportunity to share different views in the class. Respondent 2210576 noted that "The different exercises gave a differ-

ent view on (sometimes the same) topics or pieces of literature you would not have got without acting it out"; Respondent 1307009 agreed that "many different interpretations are shown". Often, comments suggested that interpretations had actually been generated by the exercises, i.e. drama as creation of knowledge (c.f. the concept discussed of drama as consolidation). Respondent 2902947 claimed that "the exercises helped me to find a new approach and interpretation"; Respondent 0301742 that "new angles on the works we dealt with opened up for me". In many cases, poetry was singled out as a particularly fruitful genre for a drama-based approach (see again section 6.4.4 above): "The class offered chances to approach literature in quite new ways, which were fascinating and surprising at the same time, e.g. with poetry" (Respondent 0908925). One proviso was expressed by Respondent 2312874, who although admitting that "Most of the sessions[s] helped to explore the literature and to understand or get different interpretations", complained that "a few session[s] didn't had [sic] a connection to the given literature and it was kind of hard to understand the text they choosed [sic]". This observation was seen often in the data explored in section 6.2, and suggests a need to carefully pair drama work with the literature being dealt with.

Comments regarding 'personal connection' touched upon the feeling that the exercises allowed a closer relationship to the literature than more traditional methods (see 'character and situation identification' response types in section 6.2). These comments in fact were sometimes contrasted with the perceived restrictions of other methods, as in the comment of Respondent 0707766 when she said "I think it is important to feel literature in order to understand it "fully" in your own terms. You will never be able to fully understand the intentions of the author, but sitting on a chair interpreting won't help us very much". Respondent 0301684 commented more in the vein of character identification, seen throughout the Moodle data (section 6.2): "Drama exercises are a very effective way to approach literature as you have to "become" one of the characters and think about their feelings, behaviour etc.". Another response type seen in the Moodle data, that of 'emotions', also emerged in the post-course data: "I perceived the exploration of the literature much more effective than with a usual class setting. It was combined to emotions, self-created approaches and thus it became much more vivid and engaging than the mere reading and discussing of such a source ever could be" (Respondent 2802087). Some comments generally viewed the drama exercises as beneficial to literary understanding: "When we worked with the specific literature in this class it really helped me to understand it better and explore it" (Respondent 2005303); "I was very surprised of [sic] how much more insight you can gain when performing scenes" (Respondent 1007669); "Many exercises helped me to get a deeper understanding of a literature piece [sic] and made working with it more fun" (Respondent 0901364). Some students disagreed, however, putting the emphasis more on oral communication for example: "The drama exercises […] helped to explore certain aspects of the literary text […] but in general the overall literary message was not really at the centre of the exercises. […] The class was highly relevant for spoken English practice

and for teaching ideas. However, it does not substitute an in-depth literary studies class" (Respondent 2011107). This perhaps would suggest the place of drama-based classes as supplementary to, rather than a 'substitute' for, more traditionally oriented literature seminars. Some comments put the emphasis on individual sessions, such as Respondent 0308291, in claiming "in a few cases, the exploration of the literature was neglected", concluding that "it always depended on the presenters". Respondent 1206578 mentioned "I don't think that it was useful to get deeper informations of knowledge [sic] from these exercises". Finally the aspect of active involvement in the learning process was emphasized. Respondent 2711031 said "I feel that I engaged way more with literature than in any other classes when only reading. My body was part of exploring literature, so its an 'ganzheitliches Lernen': body and mind interact".

6.5.2.4 Other aspects

16 comments were coded under response types not immediately covered by the three areas ostensibly under investigation and dealt with in sections 6.5.3.1-6.5.3.3. Six of these other comments mentioned the 'creativity' of the approach. Three comments, occasionally in connection with 'creativity', touched upon an effect seen for the first time in the data: that of the students being unaware of the learning process. This was seen applied to oral communication ("Students are as well not always aware that they are practicing English because it is 'covered' in acting-exercises", Respondent 2711031) as well as literature exploration: Respondent 2902947 noted that "More often than not, I left the class feeling that I had actually analyzed a text, but without purposefully doing so. It simply came along with the different exercises, which was very enjoyable". Respondent 0301684 concurred, noting that "the students really dive into the literature without realizing that they are actually 'working' and 'studying'. I think this approach is much more sustainable". This concept of the learning 'side effect' of drama methods is of particular relevance to language learning, as it can thus be embedded in a more 'natural' communicative context (see chapter 7). Two comments each focused on the 'fun' aspect of the classes, and on the benefit to the 'team spirit' of the group. One comment highlighted the overcoming of initial doubt: "Before this class I was sceptical about the use of drama exercises for various types of literature but I got to know so many different exercises that I am keen on trying in lessons" (Respondent 0604589). Another expressed a view in the universality of the methods: "Before this class, I wouldn't have implemented drama in my classes because I thought it must be taught by 'experts', but now I really believe drama is something everyone can connect with" (Respondent 1007669).

6.5.3 Drama methods in *Sprachpraxis*

Question 5 of the post-course questionnaire asked *How suitable do you think drama-based classes are in the Sprachpraxis curriculum?* In questions 1-4 the emphasis was placed on the three specific areas under exploration; question 5 was an attempt to

generate the students' views on the appropriateness and overall usefulness of the drama-based approach within the *Sprachpraxis* section of the department. As such it was expected that the responses would be more diverse but might still connect to the three areas being investigated.

Firstly, 14 out of the 23 respondents answered that they believed the class format to be highly suitable to *Sprachpraxis* (e.g. "very suitable", Respondent 1712078; "highly suitable", Respondent 2802087), leading some to make suggestions for future integration ("I really think that drama-based classes should be more integrated in *Sprachpraxis* classes", Respondent 0707766). Response types were then subsequently coded under the categories of oral communication; teacher training (*Lehramt*); Literature; and other comments.

6.5.3.1 Oral communication in *Sprachpraxis*

By far the greatest number of coded responses fell under the oral communication category (47 comments). This proportion perhaps partly reflects the specific mention of *Sprachpraxis* in the question, and students' view on the main relevance of these classes being the practice and improvement of their practical English skills (see section 6.1.4).

Under the oral communication category, the most frequently mentioned response type was 'confidence/comfort in speaking' (12 comments). Such comments had already been encountered in responses to question 4b (see section 6.5.2.2), although to a much lesser extent. The inclusion of acting elements in *Sprachpraxis* was in this regard not seen as inappropriate: Respondent 0901364 noted that "since it is called Sprach-PRAXIS [capitalization in original] which actually includes not only theoretical knowledge, more classes could include acting sessions […] even if it is awkward at first [but] in most cases it will make you feel more confident…". The aspect of drama 'forcing' oral communication also came up. Respondent 2005303 felt that "when it comes to *Sprachpraxis*, students shouldn't feel forced to speak and they should feel comfortable while they are speaking. In this class this was really the case […] also because we did a lot of improvisation and activities that helped to calm down and relax". Respondent 2902947 did feel 'forced', but expressed this aspect positively nonetheless: "For me this course has allowed me to practice my spoken English much more than the 'Oral Communication I' course as I was "forced" to speak and act every week whilst in the 'Oral Communication I' class I was in a more passive position whenever I did not have to give my presentation"; this comment underlines the idea of evenly-spaced speaking opportunities touched upon in the responses to question 4b (see section 6.5.2.2 above). Respondent 2210576 also believed that "this class "forced" you to speak a lot", adding that "it also helped to overcome the inhibition level of speaking English in front of everybody, as everybody was speaking and you are/were not the only "weird" person that was speaking". This concept of 'everyone in the same boat', allowing regular, evenly spaced opportunities to speak, stands in stark contrast to the concept of giving your presentation once, then remaining silent for the rest of the semester, as hinted at in previous com-

ments. A related notion was that even shy students, who perhaps would be less inclined to talk regularly if given the choice, are included. Respondent 1712078 mentioned that "also shy student[s] get the opportunity to speak and performing a role is as one would wear a mask and one feels more free to act"; this raises the issue of dramatic communication, with its inherent 'stepping outside oneself', as a tool to develop communicative confidence (see chapter 7). Respondent 0301742 commented that "performing different roles forces you to communicate differently, both verbally and non-verbally. By taking up a role, you have to adapt the register which you use to talk to others". Respondent 1712078 observed that while such an approach "may have been challenging", it "showed us of [sic] what we are capable of and gave us more confidence for speaking". Respondent 2312874 added the element of communicative exchange to this effect, noting that "more opportunities to speak and hear English […] helps to overcome the shyness to talk freely". In one case (Respondent 0308291), the drama work was even mentioned in regard to a fear of speaking: "I am a student who deals with his fear of speaking publicly and in this aspect, it really helped a lot. I could really see myself becoming more comfortable speaking in front of the class".

The second most frequent response type regarding oral communication was 'opportunities for all to speak', with 11 coded comments. Respondent 0301684 commented that the drama methods used "create a broad range of topics to discuss about [sic] and […] teach oral communication in a subconscious way"; the last phrase is again reminiscent of the comments suggesting the students were 'unaware' of the learning process, as encountered in the other comments discussed in section 6.5.2.4 above. Respondent 1007669 judged that "my speaking activity was very high – definitely higher than in any other English class I've had so far". Respondent 2210576 returned to the idea of the even spacing of speaking opportunities with her comment that "in other *Sprachpraxis* classes you have to give speeches or hold a lesson, but you are never going to speak as much as we did (in my opinion)". Respondent 0908925 seemed to concur, saying that "in the traditional approach (i.e. regular presentation-based oral communication classes) there's mostly a presentation and thus, only a certain amount of speaking opportunities per student. In order to increase those '*Redeanteile*', it seems a great idea to implement drama-based activities".

Other response types were connected to opportunities for speaking. Four comments emphasized 'freedom to speak': Respondent 2711031, for example, said "these exercises reduce the fear of speaking a language and invite [sic] to communicate, which is the purpose of a language". The same student appreciated the "shift from passive students/studying to active thinking/participating/speaking". Three students commented on the 'different communicative situations' allowed by the exercises. Respondent 0301684 observed that "they help you adapt different roles and talk in several different ways which normal oral communication classes usually don't". Respondent 2902947 commented similarly, saying "Due to different exercises and also different settings, situations within the exercises [i.e. the dramatic scenes/settings], the students also get to

practice English in different ways". Respondent 2011107 linked this effect to confidence, claiming that "the class helped me to use English more confident [sic] in different situations, esp. communicative situations". From freedom and opportunities to speak also came the notion that the communication involved was somehow natural or authentic. Respondent 1307009 saw the class as "a great way of practicing to speak spontaneously", despite the popular perception that theatre/dramatic communication can be stilted and/or unnatural, a paradox also highlighted by Respondent 2005303: "Although you might think acting is something most people wouldn't consider as "natural" it didn't feel like acting in most cases." One student even compared this favourably with a class that did not involve drama at all: "My oral comm I course was very different than this course. We had to speak in a very staged way about current events […] In this course, I liked that the exercises were less staged" (Respondent 0301684). Although it is unclear exactly what is meant in this case by 'less staged', one might imagine that the student is referring to the many unstructured, improvisational exercises that were involved.

The third most frequent response type, after 'confidence/comfort' and 'opportunities for all to speak', was 'interaction with others' (9 comments). The "interactive setup of the class", as described by Respondent 1307009, seemed to encourage a higher level of group communication. Respondent 2011107 pointed to the "performative aspect" of language focused on in the class, mentioning that "combining language learning with interactivity and theatre makes the learning process much more intensive as compared to just usual presentations (other OC classes). The variable format of the exercises was also commented on, allowing "the chance to work with different people everytime [sic]". (Respondent 0604589). Respondent 0612869 also made reference to the opportunity for shy students to integrate themselves in the group activities, highlighting the inclusive, group-focused nature of much drama work. Two more negatively connoted comments discussed the perceived level of the communication involved. Respondent 0308291 commented that the class was "certainly helpful", but that the exercises "were often only leading to very colloquial conversations", and that she missed "the scientific level". Respondent 2005303 mentioned that the language used was "our everyday language", agreeing that "the difficulty level was not so high". Here again perhaps is a point in favour of using such drama exercises as consolidation, combining them with pre-taught or explored knowledge of literature, for example.

Finally, two comments revisited the effect explored above in section 6.5.2.4: that of the students being unaware of the learning process, or the learning process occurring as a kind of 'side effect'. Respondent 0301684 commented that "the oral communication was basically a side effect of talking about performing literature and I really enjoyed this". Respondent 1508476 concurred with this view of the combination of literature and oral communication: "One can practice his/her spoken English and his/her knowledge of drama at the same time. It's a great opportunity to connect various areas (Literature-*Sprachpraxis*-future teaching) in order to practice more than only the spoken English".

6.5.3.2 *Lehramt* and literature in *Sprachpraxis*

Responses to question 5 that touched upon the other two areas under investigation were far less frequent than those of relevance to oral communication. Only five comments were coded pertaining to teaching skills; and 12 were coded in connection with literature. As discussed in section 6.5.3.1 above, one reason for this huge discrepancy might be the explicit mentioning of *Sprachpraxis* in the question, triggering students' exposure to departmental communication and other *Sprachpraxis* classes where the common aspect is indeed practical language skills.

Three comments mentioned that the class had supplemented their teacher training to some degree. Respondent 2802087 for example said that the class "helped to foster ones understand [sic] for the creation of suitable opportunities for the other students to speak and in turn also challenged oneself to break down complex explanations in a still functional way." Other students mentioned the roleplay element in connection to teacher training: "…it is good to get the chance to play the teacher more often since we only have 2 Fachdidaktik courses where we can do that" (Respondent 2312874); "The connection between drama and oral comm can be very effective as we (students) can be in the role of a teacher and the role of a student" (Respondent 1508476).

On the literature side, four comments focused on the 'exchange of ideas'; a combination of the audience and performance effects seen in the data in section 6.2. Respondent 0604589 mentioned the chance "to exchange various ideas and interpretations about [sic] the literature"; Respondent 2312874 said "you get ideas from the others how they interpret a poem, for example". The collaborative aspect of rehearsal was emphasized by Respondent 0908925 in her comment that "when one has an idea on how a scene could be interpreted, one would have to convince the others, thus he/she would have to argue", and by Respondent 2711031 in her comment that the drama methods "connect students to share ideas and thoughts and appreciate different interpretations". Despite the few comments seen in section 6.5.3.1 above that the drama work led to a superficial level of communication, some comments expressed the opposite view in connection with the literature exploration. Respondent 0612869 commented that "drama-based classes support the creativity of students and make them become more motivated in dealing with literature […] one needs to think more about it what [sic] in the end helps to understand the literature better"; "It is an effective way to learn so much more about texts and get deeper inside the topic" (Respondent 1907754). Respondent 2711031 concurred, adding the element of adaptability of the exercises: "Drama-based exercise [sic] rise awareness to [sic] underlying topics in poems, drama, etc. They focus on understanding and immersing into the literature". Three further comments emphasized the active methods of engaging with the literature, for example: "The groups were able to express their interpretations on two levels, the theoretical and the physical level. The latter increased the understanding of the literature even more and allowed many different approaches" (Respondent 0604589).

6.5.3.3 Other responses to question 5

In addition to the three areas explicitly under investigation (sections 6.5.3.1-6.5.3.2), other response types were coded in 17 comments. Four of these emphasized the fun/enjoyment aspect of the drama approach and the benefit to student motivation. Some of these were combined with the observation that drama was/is not to every student's liking. While Respondent 1307009 reminded us that "it is important to consider that not every student likes acting and performance", she also acknowledged that "not only is it fun to have a drama-based class, but it is also a great way of practicing to speak spontaneously". Respondent 250633 believed that "all students who participated in this class also liked it", drawing attention to the importance of topic choice for students: "I think it would be the best if the University of Tübingen allows [sic] several different typed 'Oral Communication II' classes. For so [sic] the students can pick if they would rather join in an OCII class in which the focus is more on doing a discussion [sic] or if they rather prefer a drama-based course". As well as fun, 'creativity' also featured in some comments. The exercises, said Respondent 1907754 "are good to enlarge [sic] ones own imagination and creativity", an aspect arguably of universal benefit, not exclusive to language education. Respondent 2902947 observed that students in "a course in which the focus is on creativity and not theory […] could be much more likely to actually get to express their thoughts and practice their spoken English". This aspect of creativity links up with the previously seen comments on freedom of expression; comfort in expressing what may not be regarded as the 'correct' interpretation of the literature; and improvisational, free talking forms in which students feel secure enough to try things out in a 'safe' atmosphere. It is also linked to motivation, as in the case of Respondent 0612869 who believed that such classes "support the creativity of students and make them to become [sic] more motivated in dealing with literature as they can see the different possibilities literature offers".

There were several comments dealing with the area of improvisation. Respondent 0604589 regarded improvisation as "an important factor of learning and teaching languages" that "often deepen[s] the understanding of a topic". The potential challenges of such an approach were also raised ("Everything that you do on a more improvised level in speaking a language will at first be a bit more difficult but I think you can benefit more from it than just rehearsing a text", Respondent 0901364). As well as a linguistic challenge, however, improvisation was also seen as a 'break' from the more challenging work on literary text, as a chance to "calm down and relax" (Respondent 2005303). Roleplay, an aspect already seen in connection to the teacher-training area (section 6.5.3.2), also appeared in other guises. Respondent 0301742 observed that "Performing different roles forces you to communicate differently, both verbally and non-verbally"; Respondent 0301684 commented that the drama exercises "help you to adapt [sic] different roles and talk in several different ways which normal oral communication classes usually don't". Finally, one student highlighted the student-centred focus afforded by the drama work, describing the class as "a great alternative to the teacher-centred classes

offered at universities" (Respondent 1307009). In this comment we can see the assumption/observation that university teaching formats are de facto teacher-centred; as well as evidence of the participatory, group-focused pedagogy possible through many drama-based methods.

6.5.4 Final comments

Question 6 of the post-course questionnaire asked *Do you have any other comments?* 20 out of the 23 respondents who completed the questionnaire answered this question. All 20 respondents were positive to very positive about the class; Respondent 0604589 also admitted to "never [having] expected to enjoy this class to such an extend [sic]". Respondent 1206578 said "Until now I had only drama-based classes in literature courses. So, it was interesting for me to take this class in the *Sprachpraxis* curriculum". 14 comments focused on the element of 'fun', or enjoyment of the class generally; 6 comments that the student had 'learned something'. Five comments expressed the view that the class had increased the student's 'confidence' in speaking English (oral communication); 4 comments highlighted the usefulness of the class in the student's future teaching career (*Lehramt*), and one single comment focused on literature. The order of frequency here switches the order of the first two elements as coded in sections 6.5.1 and 6.5.2, with most responses to question 6 dealing with oral communication, specifically confidence in such. This element of course could arguably also be seen as an important career-relevant skill, as expressed in questions 1-4a.

Regarding confidence in communication, Respondent 2711031 commented on "great opportunities to develop English", where "studying gets combined with a feeling of comfort or pleasure which might improve the inner motivation". Respondent 1712078 said that she was able "to overcome [her] nervousity [sic] in regard of acting in front of my classmates and [get] more self-confidence"; Respondent 0707766 reported that the class "took away the fear talking in a foreign language in front of a class". Several comments emphasized the development of spontaneous speech: "It has also helped me to overcome some of my shyness and thus speak more openly and maybe even more fluently in impromptu situations" (Respondent 2902947); "I didn't know how much fun acting can be. I'm a bit shy, but the class helped me to get better in improvising, speaking English and lots more!" (Respondent 1907754). Respondent 2906560 said "I don't think that it improved my language skills a lot but the exercises we used were really really good for my (teacher-) future. Now I feel more free and confortable standing in front of people, speaking about things I never dealt with before", thereby highlighting the 'soft skill' improvement of confident presenting, separate from any specific linguistic improvement. In a similar vein, Respondent 0612869 commented "It was a really nice idea to offer such a course especially as I am a *"Lehramtsstudent"* it helped me a lot and was in many ways useful for a future career as teacher". Respondent 0901364 appreciated the "exercises and methods that I can actually use in my future job", while

Respondent 250633 saw the class as having "helped me to improve my spoken language and […] in terms of becoming a better teacher". The single comment on literature was made my Respondent 2902947, who believed she "was able to engage with the literature much more effectively than in other classes". Two students talked about the general freedom of the atmosphere in class: Respondent 0301742, who commented that "the creative freedom in basically all areas was great"; and Respondent 2802087 who said that "the given freedom really brought the necessary space to develop engaging and yet entertaining exercises".

7 Discussion

In this chapter, key aspects extracted from the data analysis are presented and discussed against the background of the theoretical material presented in chapters 2 and 3. This chapter is intended firstly to offer an alternative view of the data results, opening up new angles of interpretation; and secondly to re-focus the attention back onto the central research questions.

7.1 Intentional and unintentional learning

In the history of the use of drama in educational contexts we have already seen tensions between a more instrumental, pedagogically targeted utilization, and freer, more improvisational forms where teacher/leader impulses are minimized (see section 3.2.2). Arguably this can be seen in a chronological trajectory, where earlier uses of drama in education emphasized performing plays as useful practice in public speaking and literary appreciation; while from the 20th century, the emphasis was more on the development of specific kinds of educational drama (e.g. in the work of Dorothy Heathcote (Bolton and Heathcote 1995; 1999) or Augusto Boal (1979; 1992)) where exercises were specifically tailored with certain educational outcomes in mind. This distinction can be seen not only in the direction of teaching practice, but also in terms of learner perception, and how the kind of drama being used affects their learning process. Many comments that emerged in the data analysis in Chapter 6 concerned this general issue, and will be explored further in this section.

7.1.1 Creation or consolidation of knowledge

A key issue in educational drama is the ways in which drama techniques are actually deployed in the classroom. This can be seen on a spectrum in which at one end drama is used almost as an extra-curricular add-on, to deepen or otherwise offer an extra dimension on existing knowledge; and at the other extreme in which a dramatic pedagogy constitutes the entire teaching approach (see Schewe 2013). The first of these conceptions of drama is probably the most commonly held, and that with the longest history. It is underpinned by the long-established notion of play and playfulness in education, and the humanist ideals of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and others (see Klippel 1980b: 57-77). Perhaps more traditional eyebrows would still have been raised in the past at the mention of fun, enjoyment or play being important elements in educational endeavors, especially in the post-compulsory context with which the present study deals. Some 20th century pioneers of drama in education however continued to buck this trend (see section 3.2.1), with John Dewey bemoaning the "artificial gap" established by the strict separation of a child's educational and non-educational envi-

ronments (1916: 229). Henry Caldwell Cook (1917) subsequently based his own work on educational drama on a dichotomous understanding of the term 'play': firstly the standard meaning of a child enjoying free games, and secondly as regards "bringing into play" such knowledge as one already has into the educational realm (Cook 1917: 26). In this vein, Caldwell Cook regarded drama as a synthetic educational approach, in which students became co-owners of their own knowledge, a view antithetical of course to the prescriptive chairs-and-desks philosophy also criticized by John Dewey and other Progressivists. Here knowledge is consolidated rather than doled out; students are participants rather than passive subjects. Drama has been regarded as perfect for this process due to its improvisational, creative nature. However, more recently attempts have been made to systematize a "performative" language pedagogy based on drama (Schewe 2013: 18), with claims of the benefits of drama as an entire system of instruction, rather than simply an extra tool in the teacher's box, as it were (see Even 2003; 2008). Throughout the data explored in Chapter 6, however, it was apparent that respondents viewed the advantages of the drama exercises as complimentary to, rather than potential replacements of, other, more traditional pedagogical approaches. This trend seems to have been most keenly felt regarding the approach to literature, where arguably the focus is more content based, as opposed to oral communication practice, with a focus on process.

Thus Respondent 1007669 declared herself "not convinced" of the usefulness of drama exercises to develop knowledge of the literature being dealt with, claiming that "most of the literary analysis was done in our group discussion". This respondent however had had no previous experience of educational drama, as reported in the pre-course questionnaire, and had stated a maximal enjoyment of reading in English in question 4 of the same questionnaire. For someone who is perhaps more comfortable reading alone, and not experienced in nor entirely confident with drama, this would be a natural response. However, as a contrast, Respondent 1508476, who had had extensive experience of DiE activities in schools, including with English literature at an upper level (*Oberstufe)*, and only a middling enjoyment of reading (question 4 in the pre-course questionnaire) concurred with the sentiments, admitting that "the exercises did not really help me to understand the literature". Respondent 2011107 developed this idea, agreeing that the exercises had not helped "to explore or understand the literary text", adding that "the exercises were not really related to the content or form of the short story itself". This disconnect was taken even further by Respondent 0612869, commenting that the session "was more about the exercises" than about the literary analysis. Thus participant responses would appear to suggest limitations to dramatic approaches replacing more traditional, in this case literary-analytical, educational approaches, pointing instead towards drama being used as a complement to such approaches.

The dangers of the over-use of drama techniques in the classroom, or perhaps an overly reverential attitude to their potential benefits, are most starkly stated by David Hornbrook (1998; Chapters 1 and 2). He traces the rise of the drama-in-education

movement in the 1970's in the UK, spurred on by the work of Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton, through which, in Hornbrook's view, the drama exercises themselves became the principal educational focus, rather than the content they were supposed to be engaged with – to the detriment of, in Hornbrook's account, high quality literary drama in English classrooms. An alternative model – one of consolidation of existing or developing knowledge, rather than the creation of it from scratch – is implied regularly in the present data set. Drama exercises were thus suggested as a structural element in an overall lesson plan: either "as introductions to the story" (Respondent 2011107) or perhaps for "a broader understanding of literature in general" (Respondent 1307009), in terms for example of how literary drama might function on stage; a sentiment found again in Hornbrook and his implication that classroom drama should at least "equip young people with an understanding of actors, theatres and plays" (Hornbrook 1989: 12). Several students stated the need for a certain level of pre-knowledge before drama work could be effective. For example, Respondent 2005303 was positive about the work, but "only if there is already a basic understanding of the text", claiming that the real benefits of drama were in "exploring" the text rather than "understanding" it. Respondent 2711031, perhaps stating the obvious, but very much in keeping with Hornbrook's analysis, opined that dramatic performance was entirely dependent for its effectiveness on a thorough (pre)understanding of the text. Respondent 2902947 would seem to concur, claiming that "in order to create a frozen picture, it was necessary to discuss and fully understand the poems first". "The class was highly relevant for spoken English practice and for teaching ideas," stated Respondent 2011107, but "it does not substitute an in-depth literary studies class." Arguably, the more literary knowledge gained before the drama activity phase, the better, as expressed by Respondent 1508476, who mentioned that for drama work to be most fruitful "one has to carefully deal with the texts in order to get an idea of the characters' personalities and features […] one has to know what happened in the past, which period/century it is, which characters appear and so forth." Post-reading thematic analysis is also a phase in which drama exercises might seem relevant, according to Respondent 2011107, with "certain ideas" from the literary text being isolated in order to "explore them independently" of the text itself. Even in more thorough drama-based pedagogical systems, there seems to be the concession made that knowledge must be fed into the drama work in order for it be fully successful, reinforcing the idea of drama as consolidation rather than creation of knowledge. Susanne Even, within her system of teaching English grammar through drama, emphasized the need for what she terms "the linguistic phase", in which "explicit examination of the grammar" in a standard, non-drama-based fashion is carried out, a phase which she concedes "consciously interrupts the dramatic flow" (Even 2004: 40-41). This phase happens after an initial drama-based exercise used to raise general awareness of the need for the grammar structure in question (the 'introduction' phase of Respondent 2011107 above), leading to a more "deliberate and purposeful" examination of the grammar rules in more traditional educational circumstances (ibid.). In

Even's account, drama-based methods can then be returned to so as to contextualize and deepen the examined knowledge in the linguistic phase. So it would appear that even in a more extensive and thorough drama-based pedagogy, the requirement to combine the drama work with phases involving other techniques remains.

7.1.2 Rehearsal, performance, audience: theatrical learning

With some notable exceptions, such as at the height of Elizabethan drama in London at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, theatre until the 20th century depended on the fairly strict separation of the people making the drama (normally the actors) and those watching it (the audience). Determining the exact nature of possible spectator involvement in the ancient drama festivals of Athens is a largely speculative enterprise, although it is tempting to think there may have been some. This traditional separation was often connected to the status of actors themselves – these were often viewed as morally suspect, so the 19th century, largely middle-class, audience was supposed to make itself clearly distinct from those on the stage; and then, as they increasingly professionalized, actors also had a reason to uphold a distinction from those that paid to watch them (Wallis and Shepherd 1998: 177). It wasn't until the 20th century that theorists and practitioners began to fully explore the consequences – and potential – of softening the hard boundary. Peter Brook's now famous opening to his seminal *The Empty Space* (1968) took on the ring of a manifesto: "A man walks across [any] empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged" (Brook 1968: 11). Here Brook perhaps states the obvious: that an audience is needed as much as the performers for a performance to happen; but, crucially, he gives them equal billing. The statement puts actors and spectators together, with a democratic ring, as co-creators of the theatrical happening. As previously discussed (see Section 3.1), Augusto Boal was to fully formalize this co-creational relationship in the figure of the "spect-actor" (1992: 274), an observer who could nonetheless get involved in the play and fulfil his "capacity of action in all its fullness" (Boal 1979: 155); and in his participatory form of didactic theatre known as Forum Theatre, used to work on, and hopefully solve, a social conflict point through collective action (Boal 1992: 241-276). Unsurprisingly, Boal's work, depending as it does on the blurring of the lines between performer and spectator, became highly influential in educational forms of drama (see Section 3.2.1). The German *Theaterpädagogik* for example has taken inspiration from the shared objectives and overlapping practices of education and theatre to constitute a training system based on both fields (see Section 3.2.2).

Trends were noticed in the data set for the present study which were coded under three theatrical phrases: rehearsal effect, performance effect and audience effect (see Chapter 6). These were assigned to comments that noted effects specific to each particular phase of the drama work. An important question, however, is to what extent these effects are indeed drama-based? To what extent, if any, is the rehearsal effect different

from simply discussing and practicing a language structure; the performance effect different from simply producing language out loud in the classroom; and the audience effect different from listening to and watching others' language production intently?

On one level, rehearsal means simply repetition: repeating what is going to be played in performance for the purposes of familiarity and reduction of the risk of error. Several comments coded in the data pointed to this effect, conceptualizing the rehearsal phase as "talking in groups how to proceed [sic]…having to speak out ideas" (0707766), or "time to prepare our imagined scene…to talk a little the dialogue through" (Respondent 2711031). It might be argued that this kind of preparation has nothing to it that is intrinsically dramatic – the same practice phase could be incorporated into language work of many kinds. However, some comments did appear to define certain aspects of this process as specifically dramatic. Respondent 2711031 reported that the preparation of the scene "decreases anxiety and allows students to be on stage with less pressure." The aspect of rehearsal in order to lower potential performance anxiety is indeed a key function of this phase in a dramatic context; in other language production contexts, depending on who, and how many, are listening, anxiety levels will presumably remain more stable. In a dramatic exercise or context, however, rehearsal is a phase that occurs among the players themselves, normally unobserved by an audience, in preparation for the performance that is normally very much observed. The pressure exerted by performance is of course double-edged: it can increase anxiety and restrict communicative freedom; however it can also have the opposite effect. Respondent 2210576 for example declared that "you try to understand the given text better as you have to perform it later and do not want to make any mistakes." The issue of performance pressure in an educational context, with both its advantages and disadvantages, is discussed with the example of the film *Rhythm is it!* (Grube and Sanchez Lansch 2004) in Section 6.5.2.2. Rehearsal therefore is a necessarily unpressurized situation that gives players the chance to explore ideas away from the glare of public scrutiny, to determine which ideas will work in performance and which will not. The other key aspect of the comment by Respondent 2711031 above is that it places rehearsal within an overall dramatic system: rehearsal, by definition, only works if there is to be some kind of performance (it "allows students to be on stage"). So logically therefore, a rehearsal effect in a language class is only meaningful if it is followed by a performance stage (see Section 3.2.2 on aspects of performativity in educational drama/theatre).

Regarding the performance effect, many comments simply referred to performance as the phase in which the scenes or exercises were displayed in front of the class, as "a main exercise that enabled everybody to practice his/her oral communication skills" (2802087). Again, there is nothing intrinsically dramatic in this statement – after all, many speaking exercises exist that enable students to practice. Some trends however did emerge in the data that seemed to characterize specifically dramatic aspects of the performance effect on language practice. According to Respondent 1907754, "The acting showed a variety of interpretations e.g. concerning the same part of a poem. Through

drama, there were no restrictions on the thoughts and we (as students) could really use our imagination and so could come up with many interpretations we might not be able to come up [with] in a 'normal' non-drama class." Respondent 2210576 seemed to concur, claiming that the drama exercises "gave a different view" on the literature that "you would not have got without acting it out." Here we can see the true performance effect at work: as actors, students had to commit themselves to an interpretation of the text being performed, with nevertheless no creative barriers imposed on what that might be ("no restrictions on the thoughts"). Through this imaginative freedom, which was not singular but allowed for a "variety" of approaches throughout the class, an interpretative outcome was afforded which it was felt would not necessarily be the case in a "normal" class, "without acting". And here again we see the implication of the dramatic approach as a whole system – each student group performed their own interpretation, but as audience members had the chance to experience the interpretations of other groups as well (see below). In an interesting, related comment, Respondent 0707766 claimed that "At least, there is no person who could actually criticize you for interpreting/over-interpreting, because you were the one experiencing it [i.e. in performance]". This offers some insight into why acting/performing offered something extra to students in terms of expressing their own interpretations of the literature. The key term is "experiencing": acting involves actually physically and mentally representing a character and scene, viewing it from the inside, as it were, rather than from the objective distance of a literary critic. Representing a piece of literature involves standing by your interpretations, offering an empowerment over the learning process that mere reading and text analysis cannot. This connection seems to be felt in the acting profession as well, with leading English stage actor Simon Russell Beale once describing acting as "three-dimensional literary criticism."[38]

The final pillar in the dramatic triumvirate is the audience effect – we have encountered this already above, in comments that alluded to the sharing of interpretations through reciprocal performing/spectating. Similar to both the rehearsal and performance effects, we must try to identify aspects of the audience effect that differ from merely watching and listening to others' language production. In this regard, since none of the groups decided to utilize techniques of direct audience intervention, such as those by Augusto Boal (see above), the audience effect seemed to consist largely of getting a chance to experience other groups' interpretations physically embodied. "We got to hear", commented Respondent 0901364, "what the other groups had thought of." This can involve more than just passive listening, of course, as Respondent 2312874 pointed out, also offering the chance to "get ideas from the others how they interpret a poem, for example." In this account, again, the audience effect is part of a two-way exchange of performance and observation, a process that "connects students to share ideas and

38 https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/features/simon-russell-beale-a-performer-at-his-peak-486512.html (last accessed 28/09/2023)

thoughts and appreciate different interpretations" (Respondent 2711031), rather than an effect functioning in isolation. "The exchange [of] various ideas and interpretations" (Respondent 2312874), indeed, seems to be the main advantage of utilizing the three interconnected stages of rehearsal, performance and observation (audience), an advantage arguably less attainable if any of the effects are attempted in isolation (e.g. only one group performing and the other group constituting the audience). This would seem to support claims for the consistent performative pedagogy suggested by Manfred Schewe (2013), for example.

7.1.3 Scripted drama work and improvisation in education

The present study organized the drama exercises to be used in class under three categories: non-verbal, verbal, and text-based (see Section 4.1.2). I intentionally avoided including improvisation as a separate category, as improvisational exercises can be employed across many different dramatic areas – making it perfectly possibly to engage in improvisation within non-verbal, verbal or text-based drama activities (even though most improvisation would come under the banner of verbal drama). In this way, improvisation should be seen not strictly as a type of dramatic activity, but rather as a mode of playing, which emphasizes a free, unscripted approach to dialogue (and in some cases even dramatic situation), and therefore empowers each individual actor and their sense of creative innovation. At the other end of the spectrum is highly scripted drama work, based for example on stylized text, in which not only the dialogue and roles are pre-scripted for the actors, but even certain rules and guidelines as to how the text should be delivered are provided. This is the case with the works of Shakespeare, for instance, where actors performing Shakespeare professionally are expected to adhere to the rhythms of the iambic pentameter; and to be aware of, and able to effectively perform, the lines which break this metric rhythm, as well as the various rhetorical devices such as antithesis. Playing Shakespeare involves the actor speaking more slowly than might naturally be the case, also in order to honour the rhythm of the blank verse, but additionally to ensure clear enunciation of the often archaic vocabulary. There is a danger, however, in associating this spectrum of dramatic mode with an ever-decreasing freedom for the actor: improvisation being completely free of rules, and spontaneous; playing Shakespeare involving the actor being straitjacketed by the centuries-old text. This is far from being the case. Improvisation has become something of a distinct side-industry of the theatre profession, with its own star performers, forms and rules to be adhered to (see Johnstone 1979; Frost and Yarrow 2015); while experienced actors and directors often talk about the liberating effects of thoroughly learning, then suspending, the 'rules' of playing Shakespeare, allowing them an even greater creative freedom within them (see Barton 1984), rather like a jazz musician improvising within the set classical parameters of harmony and rhythm (Hall 2003: 22). And indeed, improvisation is a key component in any professional theatre rehearsal

process, including that involving Shakespeare (Purcell 2018: 83). In the present data set however, and in educational drama generally, is there a distinction between the use of improvised and scripted/structured modes of drama?

The obvious advantage of improvisational forms of drama for language learning is their spontaneous, unscripted nature: this means they are easy to explain and set up, and allow for (in fact demand) free, natural language production from participants. This was not lost on the students in the present study: "we could talk and improve our oral communication skills," declared Respondent 1907754, "because we did a lot of improvisation and therefore also learned to talk freely without thinking too much if it's right or wrong." This lack of forethought, of simply reacting naturally in the communicative situation, is a major advantage of improvisation over scripted dialogues in textbooks, for example, or strictly controlled production of certain grammar structures, and obviously better mimics the real world of face-to-face communication. This distinction was alluded to by Respondent 1007669, commenting that "the last exercise (improvisation-based) helped to practice oral comm, the first two not so much since the words were already given." Ideal as this sounds, it is not without difficulty. In order to improvise in an additional language, one requires not only the general confidence demanded of any dramatic performer, but also a sufficient proficiency and confidence in the relevant language. For this reason, it can be argued that improvisation-based exercises "are maybe more adequate [sic] for higher grades/levels of English" (Respondent 0901364). That said, the increased pressure of improvisation can be seen in a more positive light: "Everything that you do on a more improvised level in speaking a language will at first be a bit more difficult but I think you can benefit more from it than just rehearsing a text" (Respondent 0901364). Here we see a revisitation of the double-edged performance pressure effect raised in Section 7.1.2. Another potential pitfall of the spontaneous, natural communication context of much improvised drama work is that students may tend to stick to tried and tested language structures rather than actually using more recently learned language structures that they may not be as confident in. This is of course a situation recognized by anyone who has ever learned an additional language and attempted to communicate with minimal error. Respondent 0308291 criticized that the exercises "were often only leading to very colloquial conversations"; Respondent 2005303 mentioned that the group had used "our everyday language", and that "the difficulty level was not so high". A final key aspect of improvisation is that, presumably, any language benefits depend on how much the participant actually enjoys drama, and indeed improvisation specifically. Respondent 0707766 noticed that certain students were getting a lot more practice during the exercises than others, precisely because of the free, unscripted nature of the improvisation. As in regular oral communication exercises, individual communicative enthusiasm counts for a lot, it would seem (on willingness to communicate in language educational situations see McCroskey 1992; MacIntyre et al 2001; Dörnyei and Cumming 2003).

Turning now to the other mode of exercises – scripted, structured exercises – this is perhaps the greatest advantage: with exercises involving more conscious design, the amount of speaking time allocated to each participant can, of course, be controlled and channeled to an infinite extent, rather than being left to individual desire or motivation. Respondent 2210576 mentioned that "this class 'forced' you to speak a lot", that it "helped to overcome the inhibition level of speaking English in front of everybody, as everybody was speaking and you are/were not the only 'weird' person that was speaking". Here, not only are shy students obliged ("forced") to communicate, but any potential fears of being perceived as overbearing and over communicative, are nullified. Respondent 0301742 seemed to concur, commenting that "performing different roles forces you to communicate differently, both verbally and non-verbally. By taking up a role, you have to adapt the register which you use to talk to others". In the two comments above, the term "forced" could be cause for ethical concern. After all, it is a prerogative of applied drama work that participants do not feel obliged or forced into situations they are uncomfortable with. That said, as the majority of the participants were training to be language teachers themselves (Section 4.1.2); in keeping with the stated aims of the *Sprachpraxis* section of the department (Section 4.1.1); and given the explicitly stated desire by the majority of participants for more opportunities in class to practice spoken English (Section 6.1.4); it can be fairly assumed that there was a high enough level of intrinsic motivation to speak among the students, and that any initial shyness or hesitation was superficial, requiring gentle encouragement to overcome. It has to be said also that none of the presenting groups ever forced or obliged participation against anyone's will. It appeared that this obligation to speak was seen as greater in the drama-based class than in other, regular oral communication classes: "this course has allowed me to practice my spoken English much more than the 'Oral Communication I' course," according to Respondent 2902947, "as I was "forced" to speak and act every week whilst in the 'Oral Communication I' class I was in a more passive position whenever I did not have to give my presentation." The group-based consistency of speaking time afforded each individual student is certainly another advantage of the dramatic approach, and the inconsistency of other class formats alluded to also corresponds with comments in the pre-course questionnaire (Section 6.1.4).

Another main advantage of scripted work, over improvisation, is that exercises can be adapted and channeled for different uses – this exertion of control over the dramatic output is in contrast with the free, spontaneous and actor-centred creativity of improvisation. At a basic level, this means a greater ensured speaking time: during one typical activity, for example, Respondent 1712078 observed that "every student had the opportunity to talk." Here, perhaps, is a key difference between the aesthetics of professional theatre, where creative freedom is paramount; and the aims of educational forms of drama, for which priority is necessarily on the didactic goals, and where, therefore, this element of design control is desirable. In contrast to the comments above that bemoaned the rather superficial language level of the improvisation exercises,

Respondent 2711031 pointed out that in the scripted exercise they experienced, "the level of difficulty was raised which made it more challenging/interesting to apply our advanced knowledge. Here you could vary a lot to adjust your exercises to students." The "advanced knowledge" missing in the improvised dialogues could be consciously inserted into this more structured exercise, and as the student points out, such exercises can be altered as the educational needs require. And this variety can of course be extended to non-linguistic aspects of the exercises, which can in turn have an effect on the language spoken: "Due to different exercises and also different settings, situations within the exercises [i.e. the dramatic scenes/settings], the students also get to practice English in different ways" (Respondent 2902947). Such exercises, indeed, "could be adapted to nearly every language level," given the presence of "an overall suitable aim" (Respondent 0901364). Here is perhaps an important point of organization: that an educational aim should, in fact, be set out before drama planning begins, in order to best utilize the practice opportunities, rather than leaving it rather to the chance whims of where an improvisation might lead. Respondent 2005303 observed that: "As we already knew our text before, the performance was more about pronunciation and acting than improvisation," illustrating at least one linguistic area that can be targeted with a well-structured drama-based exercise.

On the negative side, there is the charge that structured, scripted exercises lack the spontaneous communicative authenticity of improvisation. While there is clearly merit in the claim that improvised drama best represents the closest form of communication to real life, the data did not necessarily view the structured drama exercises as any less authentic that any other form of speaking activity. "My oral comm I course was very different than this course," claimed Respondent 0301684. "We had to speak in a very staged way about current events [in the oral comm I class]. In this course, I liked that the exercises were less staged." The apparent contradiction of stating that drama exercises are "less staged" than non-drama exercises may be due to the fact that with drama, and the class being pre-advertised on the department website (see Section 4.2.1), students' expectations were already set to acting and theatre, so they were able to, as it were, suspend their pedagogical disbelief, and accept the fictional nature of the general framework: acting, according to renowned drama teacher Sanford Meisner, is being truthful within imaginary circumstances – perhaps also a useful maxim for educational forms of drama (see Silverberg 2020). This view was seconded by Respondent 2005303 among others, who said that "although you might think acting is something most people wouldn't consider as "natural" it didn't feel like acting in most cases." Another criticism of pre-planned, structured drama work however is that it "[takes] a lot of time" (Respondent 0908925), a fact that, although hard to deny, ensures that drama work is often seen as an added extra, to be tagged onto the end of a course , be it at school or post-compulsory level, once the 'real work' has been completed. A related criticism is that drama work in class requires "precise instructions in order to avoid losing time" (Respondent 0604589). Tasks that are "not made clear and transparent" (Respondent

0908925) are destined to either fail or not work optimally; but luckily the solution seems to be clear enough. "You have to be very specific in your instructions and also, to explain them COMPLETELY beforehand," argued Respondent 0908925, an element that itself can also require adaptation to context: "Still, with younger students you have to narrow the task by giving more instructions" (Respondent 0301684).

Clearly then, both improvisational and structured, scripted forms of drama exercise have their uses, and there is nothing whatsoever to prevent both modes of dramatic play being employed in educational processes. In fact it could be argued that any approach to drama in the classroom should consciously attempt to involve both modes, in order to reap the benefits and maximally eliminate the drawbacks of each type.

7.1.4 Drama applied to comprehensive language skills

The main focus of the study has largely been on how drama approaches can foster oral communication skills, as well as skills gained for professional practice as teachers, and the analysis of literary texts. However an interesting additional effect, noticed with significant frequency in the data, was the practice of the other general language skills of reading and writing, through drama. Within the English-speaking world, the field of applied drama has been extended for a range of various benefits for the participants, from social integration and economic development to trauma therapy and education, but all utilizing the live, oral communicative side of drama (see Section 3.1). From this basis, as we have seen, various forms of educational drama were formed which also focused on live, group oral interactions, but were applied to areas that have included both language learning and literary analysis (see Section 3.2.2). Maley and Duff, in their seminal work *Drama Techniques* (1978), did acknowledge that although "[s]pontaneous verbal expression is integral to most of the activities […] many of them require reading and writing, both as part of the input and the output" (1); but there is no denying that oral communication is still the main focus for most linguistically-motivated educational forms of drama. In comparison, the German-language field of *Theaterpädagogik* can be seen as more wide-ranging in its application, including, as it does, not only verbal acting, but also all forms of stage movement and voice work, and indeed directing, lighting and technical aspects of theatre, as well as performative writing, in its training[39]. This concept of educational drama would appear to make fuller use of the potential interfaces between (language) education and the professional theatre, in order to increase the benefits for participants.

Participants in the present study acknowledged "a great variety of different approaches" in the exercises (Respondent 0908925) that "applied not only reading skills, but also speaking and writing skills" (Respondent 2711031). Respondent 0901364 echoed the sentiment, but emphasized the complimentary nature of the multiple skills, in that

39 http://www.theaterpädagogik.com/Curriculum.pdf (last accessed 09/10/2023)

the drama exercises had "combined the writing with the speaking […] two components which are very important for learning a language." This concept of a performative pedagogy that combines different elements is, again, discernible in *Theaterpädagogik* (see Section 3.2.2) as well as in the more language specific performative pedagogy suggested by Manfred Schewe (2013). And the emphasis on language education is significant here, as the comprehensive skills practiced can be seen as "of central significance in the English classroom" (Respondent 0510319). As with all of the data trends, this also has significance not only for the participants as language learners themselves, but for the "potential pupils" of the majority of participants, in their education as future teachers of English (Respondent 0510319). As seen in Section 7.1.3, exercises involving multiple language skills could also be better tailored for specific pedagogical aims such as of course "practicing oral communication," but also learning and utilizing "useful [new] phrases" (Respondent 1007669). Another major advantage of this wider-focus concept of educational drama is that it is potentially more inclusive, favouring not only those who are good at, and confident in, oral communication. If a drama exercise involves reading, planning and writing as well as performing, then shyer, more introverted students may feel better able to contribute. This was noticed by Respondent 2906560, who observed that "the weaker students can help creating [sic] a scene and play more and stronger students can write the scene". Here it appears that "weaker" students refers to students less confident in writing English, but the point still stands that participants are able to contribute no matter what their preferred, or strongest, area might be. Interestingly, one Respondent (0510319) actually included performance under the relevant skills being practiced ("We also had the possibility to practice nearly every important skill from written skills to performance skills"). This ties in with the concept of the performativity of classroom teacher language, and indeed the performative nature of the language teacher role in general whereby teaching itself becomes a performance, and being a teacher requires taking on the specific 'role' of teacher (see Almond 2014; Crutchfield 2015).

Turning specifically to the sessions involving literature, two related effects pertaining to comprehensive skills could be noticed. Where students were asked to write extensions of, or reactions to, the given texts, the line between objective, academic analysis and personal creative production was crossed: "Having to write one´s own lines is also a very good idea,", maintained Respondent 1712078, "since it promotes the students creativity and also writing competence." Creativity in general, of course, is a major aspect of educational dramatic forms, and will be further explored in Section 7.4. Connected to the area of creative writing, however, is the specific task of textual adaptation, whereby a particular text (e.g. a poem) is adapted into another literary form (e.g. dramatic dialogue). This has been recognized as a useful form of creative approach to literary texts. Klippel and Doff identify cross-adaptation of text types as well as writing alternative endings as being appropriately effective creative tasks (2007: 134), and indeed both of these were used by students in the present study in combination with a more performa-

tive phase (e.g. acting out the created dialogue), which is also recognized by Klippel and Doff as a relevant creative aspect (ibid.). Thaler (2008: 56) quotes Holtwisch (1999: 417) on this issue as part of his (Thaler's) consideration of creative approaches to teaching literature: "reconfiguring, adapting or remodeling texts, or rearranging them in other medial forms[40]." Maley and Duff (1978) include an entire section in their book devoted to "Working from/into texts" (Maley and Duff 1978: 189-204), involving such adaptive and creative exercises, often writing-based. Respondent 1307009 commented: "transforming prose into drama was a great task to work on the understanding of literature"; a sentiment shared by Respondent 2005303 ("before you start rewriting a text you really need to understand it"). The idea that such textual work contributed to literary understanding emerged frequently in the data, often in combination with a feeling of creative freedom: "I really liked their approach to the poem because we were asked to be creative ourselves but also were given space to go in any direction we wanted to. Not only the first task, writing an own end, but also the second one, transferring it into a dramatic text, deepened my understanding of the poem" (Respondent 0604589). With the inclusion of acting in the mix of creative tasks, arguably all language skills were covered, as observed by Respondent 1307009: "by working with the literature and including own ideas in written form, as well as by means of acting, close reading is required, which then leads to a deeper understanding of the literature". One possible drawback to all of this is the danger that the drama exercises themselves become the main focus, rather than the specific educational aim/s – this phenomenon has already been met in Section 7.1.1 above. Respondent 1506908 observed that "This session [on text adaptation] focuses more on the creativity of students on their own, which results in less exploration of the original poem". Respondent 2005303 opined that the class had been "more about being creative and having fun with poems than understanding the poems." Perhaps finding and maintaining the balance between creativity and fun (which surely have their place) with textually-grounded analysis and "understanding" is up to the teacher planning the drama work, to make sure that the exercises themselves are not allowed to take over completely. The main point in involving comprehensive skills in classroom drama work is surely the multi-perspective, student-centred approach they afford. As Respondent 2802087 succinctly put it: "The exploration of the literature was conducted with a broad variety of methods. Thus, the process of exploration this week was engaging."

7.1.5 Drama as a structural element in class

Until now the emphasis has been placed on drama exercises and activities being utilized for content application – to develop speaking, literary analytical, or professional

40 My translation of the German original: "die Texte um-, nach- oder neu gestalten oder sie in andere Medien umsetzen."

pedagogical skills. However, a small but significant aspect that emerged in the data was drama being structurally incorporated into a larger class unit, as part of the overall lesson plan. This clearly falls under the banner of intentional use of drama techniques, in the lesson planning stage. We have already seen the importance of proper planning and instructions in drama work generally (Section 7.1.3), and the tension that exists between drama as a consistent, continuous pedagogical approach and its use as a single element within a curriculum that also involves other pedagogical techniques (Section 7.1.1).

An obvious potential function of any physical drama exercise is as a warm-up, whether the rest of the lesson will be drama-based or not. Many students expressed the view that this function could be extended as a consistent "warm-up ritual" for a class (Respondent 2011107), in order to, variously, "get focused and to mentally arrive in class" (Respondent 2011107); "awaken their interest" in the class topic (Respondent 1508476); "wake up" (Respondent 0510319); "loosen up" (Respondent 2802087); "calm the students down" (Respondent 0612869); and "move and get more concentrated" (Respondent 2005303). It is interesting that these exercises, although based on a piece of literature, were seen as having general social/concentration benefits rather than being used to delve into detail with the material. This keys into drama methods as holistic and balanced, involving not only the physical body (as with a basic stretching or movement exercise) but also the mind, the voice, and sometimes also the emotions. Too often, however, such warm-ups are employed without any consideration of the set-up, nor of possible thematic connections to the rest of the lesson. This was noticed by several participants, who described the initial exercise as effective, although "a little bit chaotic" (Respondent 2005303), and taking "too long until everything was set up and ready" (Respondent 2506633). Respondent 2711031 felt she was "lacking some instructions or explanation why [she] should do the exercises" and what the overall aim was. Respondent 0908925 believed that although "all the games and activities can be used in a classroom […] some of them would need some alteration or adaption or at least a proper leading through the activities". On the other hand, given enough of an overall scheme, some participants felt that the warm-up exercise had contributed structurally: "This weeks group," commented Respondent 2802087, "carefully constructed an overarching theme, that remained visible throughout the session, which in turn also helped to locate the individual exercises within the broader context". The same session was also described as "totally structured" (Respondent 0707766) and "coherent and well-rounded" (Respondent 0301742). It appears that, in terms of effectiveness, choice of individual drama exercise is not necessarily as crucial as having "a clear aim for the session and follow[ing] it through" (Respondent 1307009). Drama exercises then cannot apparently be regarded as a magic wand to be waved whenever one wants students to be physically engaged or warmed up; normal planning is required to make sure any exercises chosen are relevant, and, as usual, sufficiently set up and directed, in order to avoid the "chaotic" outcome described. Aptly, it was also mentioned that such well-planned exercises could be employed at the end of a lesson as well, functioning "to calm

the students down" (Respondent 0308291). Thus a model emerges of a lesson based on literature where drama exercises might bookend the session, framing it at the beginning and end with (topic specific) practical exercises.

How then, might this relevance to the overall class aim/s be reflected in the use of drama exercises as part of the overall structure of a lesson based on literature? Many respondents felt that a drama-based exercise could function as an "introduction to the text" (Respondent 1307009), or as "an appetizer" used to arouse students' interest in "going further into the literature" (Respondent 2506633). It is perhaps also noteworthy that participants felt the exercises could be used for introducing both new literature, and older texts. According to Respondent 0510319, the exercise involved could "really arouse the students' interest in discovering new texts"; while Respondent 0301684 believed a similar exercise in a different session was "a good method to introduce students to older literature as they might find it boring and irrelevant." Here we have drama being used as an eye-opener for completely contemporary literature, where the emphasis might be on basics like character analysis, thematic discovery and familiarity with the text; and also drama applied to older, potentially centuries-old text, in the case of Shakespeare, where the exercises used might be applied much more technically, on aspects such as pronunciation of archaic vocabulary or developing fluency with a particular metrical system like iambic pentameter. In this regard, as we have seen, practical work in Shakespeare has a long history (see Section 3.3.3 and Gibson 1998; 2000; Stredder 2009).

7.2 Emotional engagement

As well as the importance alluded to in 7.1.1 above of fun and playfulness in drama-based teaching, further emotion-based responses were highly noticeable in the data. The importance of emotional aspects in holistic language learning approaches such as CLT (alluded to in Section 2.2.2) is underpinned by Progressivist developments in education more generally by John Dewey and others (Section 3.2.1). This angle is perhaps particularly pertinent when dealing with teaching literature, as the importance of physical and emotional dimensions when dealing with sometimes challenging literature, in otherwise mixed classrooms, has been clearly identified (see Tomlinson 1986). Indeed, student responses in the present data set sometimes made the direct connection between the project and this theoretical heritage: "I feel that I engaged way more with literature than in any other classes when only reading. My body was part of exploring literature, so its [sic] an '*ganzheitliches Lernen*': body and mind interact" (Respondent 2711031).

7.2.1 Personal emotional identification

One obvious emotional facet of dealing with literature in the classroom is establishing a personal connection to the material, so that students feel invested in the work rather than alienated from it. This can be seen in much work on Shakespearean pedagogy, for example, where the perceived difficulty of the language and thematic material, compounded by its age, is ideally overcome by practical drama-based teaching in order to bring the material closer to the students' lived experience (see Gibson 1998, 2000; Stredder 2009). Respondent 0707766 commented "I think it is important to feel literature in order to understand it "fully" in your own terms. You will never be able to fully understand the intentions of the author, but sitting on a chair interpreting won't help us very much". This interesting insight seems to hinge on the interpretation of 'understanding': the insinuation is that "full" understanding of a text is not achieved only by "interpreting", but by an additional emotional/physical dimension ("feel"), which is necessarily subjective and student-centered, rather than imposed from outside ("in your own terms"). This would appear to be perfectly in tune with the theories of Dewey, as well as the *ganzheitliches Lernen* alluded to by Respondent 2711031, above. Another participant, 280287, offered a development of this, in linking emotions to "self-created approaches", a combination which in her view made the exploration of the literature "more vivid and engaging than the mere reading and discussing of such a source ever could be". Here creation and creativity are inextricably linked: creation as originating (i.e. the creation of emotions) and creativity as an aesthetic productive activity (of which drama is one). The aspect of creativity will be further discussed below.

A second form of emotional engagement encountered in the data was personal identification with literary characters through the drama exercises. Here, as may be expected, the effect was most pronounced in the data from sessions dealing with dramatic texts, in which the characters are clearly labelled and identifiable. The effect was seen to a lesser extent in the prose sessions, and less still in the sessions dealing with poetry. "Drama exercises", observed Respondent 0301684, "are a very effective way to approach literature as you have to "become" one of the characters and think about their feelings, behaviour etc.". This comment highlights the proximity of much actual theatre work with literary analysis and pedagogy, which is exactly the interdisciplinary fusion that underpins the German field of *Theaterpädagogik,* combining as it does training and practices from professional theatre with pedagogical practices and aims (see Section 3.2.2 and 7.1.2 above). The comment that the student has to "become" a character is particularly enlightening, as it reflects a belief (perhaps unaware) that convincing acting involves the actor and character merging into one, in a process of psychological immersion typical of later 20th century acting approaches, most especially the highly influential acting theories of Lee Strasberg, founder of what has become known as Method acting (see Krasner 2010). This unconscious influence, perhaps, of the enduring approach to acting from the mid-20th century onwards was also reflected in comments that the exercises "led one into the mindset" of the character (Respondent 2802087), and that

recalled being "put […] into the positions of the characters" (Respondent 0901364). These comments interestingly reflect perhaps the generational bias of young people in their 20's, and the contemporary pervading influence of Strasberg's theories as being the default approach to acting, especially film acting. That said, some comments raised issues relevant to older, more theatre-focused acting methods as well, such as those of Konstantin Stanislavski and his 'outside in' approach to building a character, through such externals as costume, posture and facial expression (see Stanislavski 1950: 5-10). "The focus on the gestures and the facial expressions helped a lot to feel like the characters", commented Respondent 0308291. Respondent 2011107 mentioned that the drama exercises had helped them to "identify more intensely with the text and to understand the actual circumstances of the scene", a sentiment repeated by Respondent 0908925, mentioning the "cultural and social understanding of [the] period" through the exercises. These comments would appear to align with another key aspect of Stanislavski's system, that of fully exploring the text and contextualizing each scene with its historical, social and interpersonal details (Stanislavski 1950: 173-182). A possible drawback to the scenic and character-based detail of such approaches however, is a micro-level focus on these aspects leading to a loss of general overview. This was also noted by one of the students. As Respondent 2011107 put it: "The session activities were only very little [sic] connected to the overall idea of the play. Rather, it was one aspect of one particular scene that was examined through the exercises. This is quite useful when working on a scene like this but not when one aims to explore the whole play or literature". This being said, the aim "to explore the whole play or literature" may not necessarily be the point of each lesson, and exercises which allow students to identify, actor-like, with characters may indeed be a useful single element within a literature teaching block. These character-based emotional responses suggest the potential of perhaps looking at various other approaches to acting in order to even further illuminate character aspects. Apart from the already-mentioned approaches of Stanislavski and Strasberg, these could include those of Bertolt Brecht (see Hodges 2010: Ch. 7); Jerzy Grotowski (ibid.: Ch. 12), and even more contemporary, post dramatic approaches (see Koerner 2014).

7.2.2 Dealing with sensitive topics

Another aspect reported in the data was the usefulness of the drama exercises in dealing with strong or sensitive emotions in the literary work being looked at. This use of performative drama, which allows unpleasant or sensitive topics to be explored at a safe distance, has of course a long history, stretching back to the catharsis of ancient Greek drama (see Section 3.1), and has even been extended into modern usage in therapeutic (see Emunah 2019) and trauma management (see Thompson 2006) contexts. Responses in the data seemed to allude to this affect, with one participant suggesting "you could use it [i.e. the drama exercises] for difficult drama with many strong emo-

tions or stories to get to know the play and get in the right state of mind" (Respondent 0901364). Here the knowledge effect (getting to know the material) is combined with the aspect of personal identification with the material, and possibly protection from its emotional excesses ("the right state of mind").

References to this were made in three sessions. Session 7 (see Section 4.5.7) focused on scene 3 of Sam Holcroft's *The Wardrobe* (2014: 22-26). In this scene the eponymous wardrobe acts as a shelter for the child protagonists, who are hiding from Royalist soldiers during the English Civil War. The claustrophobic horror of the situation is compounded by the group being joined by a servant girl seeking protection, who the other children end up inadvertently suffocating, as she was panicking and making too much noise. Respondent 0604589 commented: "When just reading about people hiding in a closet out of fear it sometimes can be difficult to actually realize how the characters feel and what their situation must be like", which reads like a justification for the use of drama for closer character identification, as discussed in the previous section. However, using drama activities in class in order to simulate, in this case, "the mindset of being trapped […] in a closet" (2802087) is not unproblematic. Close identification with character, as espoused in Lee Strasberg's acting theories (see previous Section 7.2.1) has been criticized for the potentially high psychological strain it places on actors[41], and there is no reason to expect that such pitfalls do not also potentially exist in a classroom setting. A similar danger could be seen in Session 4, which dealt with Ali Smith's short story 'And so on' (see Section 4.5.4) (2015: 211-220). The story deals with a young friend of the writer who died young, and the session touched on the issue of handling potentially sensitive material in class. This was not lost on the participants, one of whom warned "I think one should be careful with the chosen topic. 'Death in literature' is a deep [sic] issue and can be touching [sic]" (Respondent 2711031). The same respondent helpfully pointed out that this effect need not cause problems only in the case of negative emotions, commenting that "[l]ove will maybe be too embarrassing for students". This was in reference to a class discussion that was focused on school contexts, in which such considerations are arguably more pertinent. But the participant reactions in this regard are a reminder that even within a practical drama context, in which more emotions are necessarily displayed than would be the case within a normal class setting, proper preparation of the students for potentially sensitive material is of utmost importance, normally taking the form of a spoken trigger warning, and in the case of drama, at all times, never obliging students to participate in any exercise unless they feel entirely comfortable doing so. Finally, Session 2 had the general topic of 'Emotions in Poetry' (see Section 4.5.2), with the point of the lesson being to explore poetry as vessels for emotion. This session therefore involved the students working dramatically with a range of emotions much more than other sessions. One Respondent (1506908) was affected by the "sad and moving" poem 'Attention Seeking' by Jackie Kay (2007: 209), but the

41 https://harpersbazaar.com.au/actors-stories-from-method-acting/ (last accessed 21/09/23)

main emotional effect of this session was on watching other groups' performances of the various emotions (see Section 7.1 above for audience effect). Respondent 1506908 found herself "deeply touched by the sad group of Attention Seeking", while Respondent 0908925 "really liked the way they (the performance group) showed the impact of different versions based on different emotions!". These comments reflect a particular emotional angle of the audience effect discussed above (Section 7.1.2).

Despite the sensitivity of the material, and the obvious need for sensitive handling of it by the teacher, there seemed to be positive views of the use of emotions within the drama work, with one commenting that it "really opened up new perspectives of looking at the works" (Respondent 0301742). Respondent 2902947 developed this further, saying that "trying to discover and express different emotions within the poem is a great way to find new perspectives and interpretations". Here again we see the combination of more traditional methods of literary pedagogy (trying to "discover" emotions in the works by reading and analysis) with dramatic performance (using the pre-knowledge gained in the first stage to "express" a dramatic version). This seems again to suggest the usefulness of drama as consolidation of existing knowledge (see Section 7.1.1), and the embedding of drama techniques within a wider varied language pedagogy, rather than a model of wholesale replacement and drama-as-knowledge-creation.

7.2.3 Confidence

One of the many aspects that foreign language learning shares with professional dramatic performance (and indeed all forms of public speaking) is speaker confidence. The links between theatre and other forms of professional speaking have been long recognized, and indeed theatre training techniques are now well established in training non-actors for public vocal performance (see Rodenburg 2009; 2017). Part of this crossover pedagogy has involved a recognition of the vital importance of confidence, and the disadvantages of a lack of it, in speaking out loud, especially in public and/or formal contexts (Rodenburg 2022: 3).

Even in the pre-course questionnaire responses, confidence indeed emerged as a key aspect in students' expectations of and wishes for *Sprachpraxis* classes (see Section 6.1). The relevant responses occurred as answers to the statement 11b in the questionnaire, which read:

b. I believe the thing that would help me most in oral communication classes is…

The inclusion of the word 'help' in the statement, combined with the frequency of responses regarding a lack of confidence, implies that a lack of confidence in speaking is an active problem that needs to be addressed in *Sprachpraxis* oral communication classes. Several respondents expressed a desire for a class atmosphere that allowed freedom to speak "without fear of being judged" (0908925) or "being afraid" (1907754). So

it would appear that the lack of confidence in these cases was not so much a general insecurity about language level, say, but rather a concern regarding the actual classroom atmosphere itself – and a desire that, perhaps in contrast to previous experience, the atmosphere in oral communication classes could be established with this specific aim in mind. Additionally, both respondents quoted above reported extensive drama experience in both school and university contexts, and both reported the highest level of enjoyment of these drama activities (pre-course questionnaire item 3). Therefore it cannot be argued that these students lacked confidence in speaking in front of others generally, nor in drama activities. The issue, it would appear, was rather with pre-experience of *Sprachpraxis* oral communication classes. So to what extent did participants feel that the class had helped in this regard?

Responses in the oral communication section of the post-course questionnaire addressed this point (see Section 6.5.2.2). Although the top response frequency was focused on opportunities to speak, many comments addressed the confidence aspect. For a direct comparison, Respondent 1907754, quoted above, claimed: "I didn't think about e.g. if I'm using the right words/grammar etc., I just talked and that helped me really much [sic]". An interesting variation on this came from Respondent 1712078, who said: "I think this course […] helped us to become more confident while speaking. Especially the performances where we often were asked to improvise were very effective for the oral communication, since we did not perform an 'artificial' written play and speak in an unnatural way, but an authentic scene". This raises the distinction between structured, scripted drama work based on a given text, and spontaneous, free improvisation, perhaps based on a given general situation (see Section 7.1.3 above). In some regards, it could be argued that scripted drama, based on a pre-written text, might elicit greater feelings of confidence among the students, given that the only barrier to correct grammar and vocabulary is simply the memorization of the dialogue. However Respondent 1712078 seems to be suggesting on the contrary that the freedom and authenticity afforded by more improvisational forms builds communicative confidence more effectively. This could be due to the effect of taking on a role: after all, even when one is improvising, one is not being entirely 'oneself': one is still acting, and therefore any mistakes or inaccuracies can be hidden behind the protective veil of the dramatic mask (see next section on role taking; and Tschurtschenthaler 2013 on dramatic learning and sense of self). The beneficial effect on communicative confidence of improvisational drama in language teaching is well attested, and has branched out in recent years into studies of self-efficacy in adult learners (Smith 2017); confidence building for professional language use in pre-service language teachers (Athiemoolam 2013); and the effect of performance pressure in drama festival participation on oral skills (Shiozawa and Moody 2016). So while structured, text-based work might naturally be best fitted to working on literature (and be regarded as "unnatural" for oral communication practice), it would seem that improvisational forms, combining as they do free spontaneous speech with the protective effect of playing a role, are best for improving

speaker confidence. In three cases, these benefits were tied to a reported fear of public oral communication. Respondent 0308291 reported his "fear of speaking publicly", but that participation in the work had aided him in "becoming more comfortable speaking in front of the class"; Respondent 1712078 said that she was able "to overcome [her] nervousity [sic]" in speaking through the exercises; while Respondent 0707766 reported that the exercises "took away the fear talking in a foreign language in front of a class". Whether this is due to the actual nature of the drama work, or simply exposure to the communicative situation (see Section 7.5 below on 'forced' communication) is unclear. Another open question is to what extent the nature of the drama work helped to actually create the relaxed, pressure-free environment; or whether the atmosphere was relaxed and positive anyway, which led to the positive experiences of the drama techniques. This is an aspect which is linked to the collaborative learning afforded by drama, explored and discussed in Section 7.5.

7.3 Role playing

We have already briefly encountered the aspect of roleplay in Section 7.2.1. There, students reported the usefulness of playing particular characters from the literature in terms of developing greater identification with that character, an increased awareness of the circumstances and period, and therefore a deeper insight into the work generally. Such an effect, as discussed above, has roots in the theatre-making process and actor training, where such close identification with a role is clearly desirable. The current section will investigate the aspect of role playing in more detail, and from the different angles that emerged in the data.

7.3.1 Role playing and communicative confidence

Section 7.2.3 already dealt with the fact that confidence in speaking English may be developed or at least aided by drama-based teaching techniques; but more in terms of the authenticity of the dramatic situation used, and the question of improvised, spontaneous exercises, as opposed to more structured drama techniques. This present section will rather consider the extent to which taking on and playing a role had an impact on the perceived confidence levels of the participants.

Playing a role is clearly a defining element of most western (and indeed non-western) theatre forms, where actors are engaged in the performance of a fictitious situation, whether scripted or not. Roleplay – the taking on of a character not one's own – has its fundament in the so-called neutral mask. This is a white mask which has human features but does not display any emotions (for example through smiling or frowning). The mask is generally associated with the ancient Greek theatre, where it was used to render performers objective, allowing them to portray the often excessively emotional and dramatic situations in the plays (Baldwin 2010: 91). In modern western actor train-

ing, the mask is used to effectively hide the real actor, allowing them to relax into more challenging roles, and free themselves from any natural constraints they may feel (ibid.). Interestingly, the same basic technique is to be found in many non-western forms of theatre, including the elaborate masks of the Indian Kathakali theatre, and the thickly-layered intricate facial make-up of the Japanese form Kabuki, both of which have also been borrowed into western theatre-makers' work (Fischer-Lichte 1996: 27-29). It appears therefore that the hiding of the real actor behind an assumed role is a widespread, intercultural theatrical element.

French director Jean Dasté observed that "[w]hen the face is masked or hidden, one is less timid, feels freer, more daring and insincerity is quickly apparent" (quoted in Rudlin and Paul 1990: 236). This observation is of vital importance to the assumption of roles in the drama-based language classroom. In a role-based setting, as commented by Respondent 1712078, "also shy student[s] get the opportunity to speak and performing a role is as if one would wear a mask and one feels more free to act." This comment combines the freedom of the mask with the general improvement in communicative confidence through drama discussed more frequently in Section 7.2.3. In some cases the mask may be seen as helping with particular nervousness or timidity, as exemplified by Respondent 0308291: "I am a student who deals with his fear of speaking publicly and in this aspect, it really helped a lot. I could really see myself becoming more comfortable speaking in front of the class". Respondent 1712078 mentioned the "challenging" nature of roleplay but opined nonetheless that it "showed us what we are capable of and gave us more confidence for speaking". Respondent 2312874 believed that the mask effect "helps to overcome the shyness to talk freely". In the above comments we not only see the effect of role assumption in affording free communication, but also the mask/role being used as a tool for students who feel unusually shy or particularly timid in speaking English. This not only aligns with the observations on confidence made in the pre-course questionnaire, but also the general effect of drama constituting a safe space where even shy students can speak without fear or pressure (see Section 7.2.3), and confirms trends in the research on roleplay for communicative confidence in language learning (see Brash et al 2009; Geneuss et al 2020). Such classroom work, of course, need not involve an actual neutral mask, as discussed above, or even elaborate make-up, but can be achieved more simply through other effective means (e.g. costumes, props, different vocal qualities such as accent etc.). The important aspect would seem to be allowing students to be someone-other-than-themselves.

So far the comments have alluded to the role assumed allowing a freedom of expression perhaps not present if the student were asked to speak as themselves. But this element of distancing takes on an added dimension within the data alluding to roleplay and mask work. Once a role is assumed or a mask put on, there appears to be no limits to the attendant communicative flexibility: once one has departed from one's own persona, it appears that the possibility for fictional roles is endless. Respondent 0301684 commented that the character-based work helped them "adapt different roles and talk

in several different ways which normal oral communication classes usually don't". This, then, would appear to be another important difference to non-dramatic oral communication classes: the communicative adaptability of the assumption of dramatic role. Respondent 2902947 appeared to concur, commenting that through "different exercises and also different settings, [and] situations within the exercises [i.e. the dramatic scenes/settings], the students also get to practice English in different ways". Another important distinction with non-dramatic classes in this regard is the constant interactivity of drama work, an aspect also seen in the data on roleplay. Respondent 0301742, for example, commented that "performing different roles forces you to communicate differently, both verbally and non-verbally. By taking up a role, you have to adapt the register which you use to talk to others". Two elements are striking here: firstly, the important reminder than communication involves the non-verbal as well as the verbal; and secondly adaptation to the conversation partner. Both of these, according to this participant, would seem to be served by the roleplay work. By using masks or roleplay in a drama-based class, then, both confidence and the multiplicity of communicative situations can be addressed within a single dramatic form: "The class helped me," said Respondent 2011107, "to use English more confidently in different situations, esp. communicative situations". This would appear to be another advantage of the dramatic method in class: the combination of several helpful aspects in one drama-pedagogical form. And throughout all the drama-based work, any liberating effect is also presumably amplified, and at least complemented, by the fact that the students are speaking in a non-native language, which also allows a certain distance from emotions and personal identity, but on the other hand could cause a level of disconnect (see Tschurtschenthaler 2013 for a fuller discussion in a drama-based context).

7.3.2 Role playing and classroom modelling

Throughout the data, responses reflected a generally positive view of the class in terms of picking up ideas for use in the students' future careers as language teachers (see Sections 6.4.3; 6.5.2.1; 6.5.3.2). And many of these comments made reference to roleplay exercises. Drama techniques generally have been researched for relevance to language teacher training (see Section 3.3.2), and this has included role playing elements embedded within teacher training programmes (see Haack and Surkamp 2011; Bengsch 2021). Adrian Haack has also extended this to examine role-based drama as a binding element in teacher training, exploring the various different functions the job entails, such as knowledge holder, communicator, facilitator etc. (Haack 2018). Indeed a clear advantage of role-based drama is the opportunity to fully simulate a classroom environment from both the teacher's and specific learner's perspective. After all, the perspective of a school pupil and a university student of English will differ considerably, both in terms of pedagogical setting and level, and language competence. Respondent 0301684 commented positively on "the chance to both be 'students' and 'teachers' to

experience ourselves what we will be asking our students to do!". Crucially, the chance to experience the situation from the teacher's point-of-view allows these "changing perspectives" (Respondent 0908925), and ideally raises "awareness of what the exercises aim at/should be constructed for" (Respondent 2711031). Respondent 0604589 mentioned that "the group built the lesson according to a lesson they would teach in class", and "especially liked the idea of experiencing the exercises in the role of a student but then put[ting] it to the meta-level to reflect on it". So, in a directly reciprocal relationship, it appears that experiencing the exercises as a teacher can afford a better understanding of the effectiveness of the exercises on the students, and vice versa. This level of experiential exploration can in the best cases also potentially affect lesson planning and communication, as expressed by Respondent 2802087, who believed that the work "helped to foster ones understanding for the creation of suitable opportunities for the other students to speak and in turn also challenged oneself to break down complex explanations in a still functional way." So in a sense, roleplay situations like this may offer not only the teacher and student perspectives separately, but actually synthesize a synchronous experience whereby playing the teacher illuminates the perspective of the student simultaneously, and in a still applicable manner ("functional").

Several comments linked these role-based classroom simulations to concrete aspects of the teacher training process, both inside and outside the university, which would indeed appear to support the inclusion of increased provision of such work in formal teacher training settings explored in the research (see Haack 2010; Haack and Surkamp 2011; Haack 2018). Respondent 1712078 said that the class "contained a lot of teaching methodology and gave you many ideas and methods you can apply," a sentiment that led Respondent 2312874 to claim that "it [was] good to get the chance to play the teacher more often since we only have two *Fachdidaktik* courses where we can do that." "As it was a session based on education it was very helpful. I especially liked the references to the *Fachdidaktik* terms," commented Respondent 0612869. Respondent 1907754 extended this view to the phase after university, claiming that "[the role-based session] was so helpful for me, also in regard of my *'Praxissemester'*, I'll have in September". Respondent 2011107 also viewed things in terms of the advantages for professional development, commenting that the exercises were "very beneficial for students' and teachers' personality," and for fostering "competences that are expected in the curriculum (*Bildungsplan*)." Such sentiments appear to be backed up by the overwhelmingly positive responses to the question of offering drama-based classes within the *Sprachpraxis* curriculum in the post-course questionnaire (see Section 6.5.3).

7.4 Creativity

7.4.1 Interpretation of literature as a creative act

Drama is a creative activity – actors, directors, designers, and even theatre technicians are involved in the process of making something new, even if it is based on a pre-existing text. In fact, the dramatic text can be seen as something that "points forward" (Wallis and Shepherd 1998: 3) to the "theatrical text" (ibid. 2): in other words, to some kind of performance of the original dramatic text. In the professional theatre, therefore, written works are seen and valued for their potentiality as precursors to action on a stage – and the process that derives that action from the words on the page is necessarily creative. In educational terms, this reciprocal relationship has been recognized and utilized to foster creativity in pupils and students, and has been developed into entire manifestos for teaching language and literature performatively, especially dramatic literature (see Schewe 2013; Stredder 2009: 3-22).

Certainly, from the perspective of literary understanding and appreciation, the students in the present study seemed to recognize that the drama method "really opened up new perspectives of looking at the works" (Respondent 0301742) and constitutes "a useful idea for future teaching" (Respondent 2902947). The multiplicity of interpretations had the added effect of making students aware of the very fact that there are multiple, perhaps infinite possibilities herein, rather than one single 'acceptable' interpretation: according to Respondent 2210576, "[i]t was very interesting to see how the different groups interpreted the beginning of the poem differently and how they interpreted the ending. For me personally, it was very helpful to explore the poem, as you could get a broad spectrum of interpretations". Respondent 0707766 was among the many students who concurred with this, saying that "[t]he session helped to explore literature because it showed that each person would create literature differently. I think, this is a really important feature when dealing with literature, to make clear that literature is produced and read individually. I think the group presented this very clearly" (Respondent 0707766). This comment highlights the importance of reminding students that, far from being set in stone, literary works, even those several hundred years old, are themselves "produced individually" and from the creative mind of the author. Given this truism, a creative approach to the study of such works would seem to be axiomatic. Several students referred positively to being "given space to go in any direction we wanted to," which "deepened [their] understanding of the poem" (Respondent 0604589). The approach of being "free to do anything we wanted," far from leading to chaos, was seen as "more creative" (Respondent 1508476), and positive in terms of literary exploration. As well as the potential organizational drawbacks of this level of creative freedom, which might require consideration of the appropriate contexts and learner ages with which to engage in such work, there is the added issue of whether the drama method itself, rather than the literature being explored, becomes the focus

of attention (see discussion in Section 7.1.1). Respondent 2005303 claimed that the session "was not really about understanding the literature but more about exploring it and being creative." The emphasis, according to the same respondent, was more on "being creative and having fun" than "understanding the poems." Others voiced their concerns more starkly, including Respondent 1007669 who declared herself "not convinced of the way this is to help me explore the literature", claiming that "[m]ost of the literary analysis was done in our group discussion which wasn't based on drama exercises." This raises the question of what, if anything, can be done to best integrate drama-based work into a class session in order to avoid a potential imbalance in which "having fun," as valuable as that may be, may unseat the literary analytical work required of the curriculum. Can a balance be struck, and if so, how? As usual, the answer seems to lie in the combination of the practical, creative work with other approaches. For this, a consideration of the three-part scheme of pre-, while- and post-reading may be useful (Klippel and Doff 2007: 132). Respondent 1508476 voiced a relatively common view that "[i]t would have been more helpful for us to hear some theoretical aspects of analyzing poems and then to work on a poem in groups instead of directly working on it [dramatically]." Respondent 2005303 said similar, opining that "it's a nice way to work with literature but only if there is already a basic understanding of the text." Focusing more on the post- stage, Respondent 1907754 commented that she would have wanted "to also talk more about the original poem after the drama exercises and not merely focus on our own interpretations, but work a little bit more with the actual text." These latter comments are interesting in as far as they seem to offer a variation on the classic three-part didactic reading process cited above. Reading the literature itself, in the light of the student comments here, would appear to be either a pre- or a post- task: either reading and understanding the poem before drama work can be effective; or else returning to it after engaging in the creative drama exercises in order to see what additional light has been thrown on it. So here perhaps we can talk about a combinational approach involving pre-, while- and post-drama phases, some of which will necessarily involve close reading and analysis of the text. Klippel and Doff make the point that creative approaches to the teaching of literary texts are useful in order to create a distinction between the reading (and understanding) process, and the language production phase, which could for example include specific questions on the text itself (Klippel and Doff 2007: 133). The above student comments would seem to support this view, with creative drama-based work offering a necessary distinction, or bridge, between more text-focused analytical work, and the kind of productive language task that may constitute an assessment, for example. And it is vital, although perhaps easy to overlook, that rigorous understanding and "critical reading" of the text involved is not only important for the students themselves, but also for the teacher in preparing such drama-based classes (Stredder 2009 xix).

Many students indeed seemed to acknowledge this combinational approach. Respondent 1307009 commented that "by working with the literature and including

own ideas in written form, as well as by means of acting, close reading is required, which then leads to a deeper understanding of the literature". Here the implication seems to be that, in a reciprocal relationship, close reading and understanding of the text is required to actually make drama work effective in the first place: then, in turn, the drama exploration enriches the understanding already gained by more traditional means (e.g. text analysis). Many of the exercises involved not only acting out scenes, but adaptation of the original text, and, as such, creative writing on the part of the students, an aspect identified by Thaler as one the most popular of the "modes of creation" approaches to literary texts (Thaler 2008: 56). "[S]ince we had to write our own ending of the poem," said Respondent 1712078, "our creativity was asked [sic] and therefore we were asked to think about the poem first". Here again we see the combination of creativity, in this case adapting a poem, with a reading/understanding phase. And, as illustrated by Respondent 2011107, this creativity also includes the writing of "dramatic scenes" to be played out. As seen in Section 7.1.2, a particular aspect of the dramatic approach that is unique from other creative approaches (e.g. creative writing) is the so-called audience effect. This was also observed as regards the exchange of personal interpretations. "[A]lthough I had read the second poem before and thought about its meaning", commented Respondent 2902947, "I was very surprised by how much my perspective on the poem changed after seeing the different group presentations [performances];" the exercises, in the opinion of Respondent 0901364, "really got us into a creative way of thinking and all groups came up with different ideas."

Ultimately the chance to work creatively with texts regarded as untouchable or canonic, such as those of Shakespeare, represents an important empowerment of students. Instead of mutely succumbing to the "intimidating reputation" of a great writer (Stredder 2009: 6), students, through creative work, are not being encouraged to de-throne a particular canonical writer, but rather to develop an increased awareness of and respect for, the craft of writing and the creative challenges involved. "Apart from reading, analysing and interpreting a text," writes Thaler, "learners should also be allowed to relate to a text on a creative level" (Thaler 2008: 55). Perhaps with a removal of the canonical barriers to great literature, and permission to explore it more freely, an increased appreciation and understanding will result. "[A] course in which the focus is on creativity and not theory," reported Respondent 2902947, "could be much more likely to actually get [students] to express their thoughts and practice their spoken English;" another important observation in a class that combines literary exploration with second language practice.

7.4.2 Contrast to traditional approaches to literature

We have seen in the previous section how creative drama-based approaches can be combined with other more traditional approaches such as the close-reading and analysis of a text, as well as the potential dangers of the freedom that creative work often

entails. The present section will consider comments that explicitly contrasted the drama-based work with other, more traditional approaches to the teaching and exploration of literature that the students had experienced.

"Exploring literature can be really boring, especially for students in High School," wrote Respondent 0707766; "When interpreting a text with several exercises of the session in which the students do not have to write anything down but create something on their own they pay most likely more attention and have fun doing so." Respondent 0510319 concurred, claiming that the respective session "has shown me that a written text does not necessarily have to be analysed/interpreted with the aid of only written exercises." The importance of the elements of fun and enjoyment notwithstanding, these comments would appear to leave unanswered the question of assessment phases, or the language production aspects of the post-reading phase discussed in the previous section with reference to Klippel and Doff (2007: 133), which, it has been claimed, can indeed be combined with creative phases in the classroom. Students claimed that "you normally would just read the text" or that "dealing with prose in school or in university is always connected to reading"; but that "by doing these exercises we worked with it in a totally different way" (Respondent 2005303); or were encouraged "to explore prose in a more lively way" (Respondent 1506908). Importantly, Respondent 0604589 was of the view that "since I did not know this method before I was motivated to participate," highlighting the importance of methodological variety in the classroom, with or without creative approaches.

However, the contrast to traditional classroom approaches was most keenly observed in the sessions involving poetry. As we have seen, poetry was judged as the least enjoyed literary genre in the pre-course questionnaire (see Section 6.1.2), and many comments on the drama methods of teaching were illuminating in this regard. "The [drama approach] is really useful because most students at school don't seem to enjoy learning about poetry," claimed Respondent 1907754. The creative methods involved could offer "easier access to the world of poetry" which students "even might enjoy", she added. Respondent 1508476 continued in the vein of the unpopularity of poetry, commenting that it "is not very popular and bores students." The frequency of such comments, and their explicitness, as well as the fact that very few such comments were coded for the prose or drama sessions, suggests strongly that the way in which poetry was dealt with in school created this overwhelmingly negative viewpoint. Respondent 1508476 expanded on her answer above, positively contrasting the "creative and 'non-conventional' exercises" with "analysing a poem in a boring way as many teachers used to do it in school;" while Respondent 1712078 claimed that, although "[p]oetry many times is not very popular," through the drama work "it became more interesting and the students were motivated". The reasons for this apparent unpopularity of poetry in school lie outside the focus of the present study; however a pertinent question would be how, if at all, the drama exercises were contributing to overcoming these negative notions. Firstly, as encountered in Section 7.4.1, any educational technique which offers

a new approach will presumably be welcomed. "Today's exercises were quite new for me because we tried new methods to explore poetry," reported Respondent 1508476; "I have never experienced such an approach to poetry and I really liked it". In a similar vein, Respondent 0901364 said that the drama work "made us think a bit 'outside the box […] be creative and have an open mind". Respondent 1712078 observed that "through the different methods/tasks it became more interesting and the students were motivated", while Respondent 0510319 appreciated the "totally different approach to poetry" that constituted "an alternative for students." Secondly, many comments emphasized the physically active nature of the approach. Respondent 1508476 believed that "as we moved instead of just sitting and talking, we were more awake than in other lectures," while Respondent 1712078 claimed that "through the performance of poems poetry gets more interesting and vivid and real." "[T]his is a very good way to motivate the students and get them to work with passion," commented Respondent 0612869, a view that aligns with the discussion of personal investment in the material in Section 7.2.1. And thirdly, it appears from some responses that the physical, emotional dimensions of the drama-based work were an effective counterbalance to the cerebral, literary-critical approach often apparently taken with poetry in school. Respondent 1606908 suggested this in her comment that "it is effective to combine the abstract poetry with the concrete performance" afforded by the dramatic exercises. "[The] exercises were good since we had to be creative," which "made the poem more accessible," said Respondent 2312874. Respondent 0510319 mentioned that she "liked the combination of poetry with verbal drama exercises," citing "another approach to poetry". All in all then, although the reasons for the apparent particular unpopularity of poetry in school have not been explored fully here, it would appear that a drama-based class, offering a novel, physical, and emotionally engaging pedagogical approach, can have positive effects in this regard.

7.4.3 Creativity of future teachers

In Section 7.4.1, we encountered creativity connected to literary interpretation and analysis; in Section 7.4.2 the focus was on the comparison of the drama methods with more traditional approaches. In the present section the concentration shifts from students as learners to students as future language teachers themselves, and therefore to the aspect of creativity regarding their planned careers as educators. The concept of the teacher-as-artist has already been discussed in Section 3.3.2, with its attendant proponents and critics (see Eisner 2006; Haack 2010; Dunn and Stinson 2011). A consideration of creativity in the present context would appear to be less controversial in its more general definition: creative teaching might simply involve innovations on the part of the individual teacher, adaptation of existing methods, and generally thinking and acting "outside the box" (Respondent 0901364), rather than employing any recognizably 'artistic' methodologies. Although the concept and very definition of creativity varies and is far from uncomplicated, Anne Harris' exploration (2016) of the term in education

makes some important insights into creativity from the teacher's perspective (Harris 2016: 54-56), and considers the term free from any arts-specific context (e.g. drama). In the context of the current study, however, an interesting question is the extent to which, if at all, the drama methods utilized developed the notion of creativity in the students as future language teachers, in terms of their general intention to use the novel approaches to teaching that they experienced, or perhaps an indication that they were thinking of specific ways to employ the drama exercises in their future classrooms (e.g. considerations of adaptability).

Responses can be organized into those referring to language aspects; to literature; or to general teacher training aspects. Respondent 0604589 mentioned that the drama work was "really helpful for those students who are not yet confident enough to speak in a foreign language but get extra practice to do so in order to face their fears," a comment that links up to the discussion in Section 7.2.3 on confidence more generally. Respondent 1307009 agreed that the drama method was "great to practice speaking skills," and therefore "perfectly suitable for teaching in school." Some responses focused down to the specifics of vocabulary learning, and referred to how participation in the exercises, and following discussions, had led them to reflect on the pedagogical usefulness of the methods experienced: "In my opinion the exercises were very effective in terms of dealing with new vocabulary and showing how to deal with vocabulary in texts that are unknown to you" (Respondent 2005303); "All of the exercises are useful for vocabulary teaching. As we also figured out in the discussion, it makes a lot of sense to teach new words so that they are used in a particular context or situation rather than teaching them isolated" (Respondent 2011107). Here again we see the suggestion that drama exercises at this level are perhaps best followed by a discussion phase during which the potential uses and benefits can be fully worked through.

The two preceding sections have already explored literature-related responses in some depth; however also at the metalevel, with students reflecting on the pedagogical effectiveness from the teacher's perspective, comments on exploration of the literature were made. Exploring poetry through drama exercises was, according to Respondent 2902947, "a useful idea for future teaching" which "opens up new perspectives" for students' planned careers. And such comments were not, in contrast to Section 7.4.2, overly skewed towards the sessions on poetry. "If you want to dive into a drama with your pupils," said Respondent 0901364, "maybe a session like this where the pupils can get creative […] is quite fun for them," emphasizing once more the natural combination of practical drama methods with dramatic literary texts (see Section 3.3.3). In terms of concrete ideas for teaching literature through drama, Respondent 2312874 mentioned "a lot of ideas [of] how to approach literature and how to plan a lesson;" a sentiment shared by Respondent 1907754 who appreciated the "methods of combination of literature with drama exercises." "I perceived the exploration of the literature much more effectively than with a usual class setting," said Respondent 2802087. "It was combined with emotions, self-created approaches and thus it became much more vivid

and engaging than the mere reading and discussing of such a source ever could be." Here we see once more the kind of combinational pedagogy discussed in Sections 7.4.1 and 7.4.2. Further comments emphasized that using drama exercises involves a careful consideration of class level, such as Respondent 1712078 who argued for the benefit of the approach "especially when the topics are more complex […] in the upper grades." Respondent 2005303 commented that it was "a great way to work with literature, at university as well as at school," offering an alternative to the still pervasive, if often only implied view, that drama work in education is most appropriate for child rather than adult contexts (see Section 3.3).

Several students made concrete reference to the general application of the exercises in school classes in the future. Respondent 2506633 opined that the drama approach experienced in the session was "a perfect method which can be used in school," while Respondent 1307009 recognized more generally the "beneficial aspects of drama exercises in school." As seen so often, this effect seems to have been achieved by a combination of "experiencing the exercises in the role of a student" then shifting the focus "to the meta-level to reflect on it" (Respondent 0604589), where students were "invited to discuss" (Respondent 0301684) what they had experienced practically. Here again seems to be the strength of combining the practical, experiential nature of drama methods with a more traditional pedagogical form such as group discussion, in order to reap the maximum benefits (see Sections 7.1.1 and 7.4.1). In terms of the vocational training aspect, Respondent 0612869 believed that it was a "really nice idea to offer such a course; especially as I am a "*Lehramtsstudent*" it helped me a lot and was in many ways useful for a future career as teacher," raising the question of the provision of drama-based classes in the curriculum for teacher training (see Chapter 8). Some students recognized the double-effect of learning useful teaching methods with the improvement of oral communication generally, a key aim of *Sprachpraxis* classes (see Section 4.1.1): Respondent 250633 believed the class had "helped me to improve my spoken language and […] in terms of becoming a better teacher." Importantly, however, this combination was not always stated positively: "I don't think that it improved my language skills a lot but the exercises we used were really really good for my (teacher-) future" (Respondent 2906560). Generally, comments on the positive nature of the class for future teaching ideas were more ubiquitous, while the benefits of speaking exercises, especially improvisation-based methods, elicited a wider range of reactions (see Section 7.1.3). That said, the recognition of the benefits of such drama exercises for professional training within a university language class has important curricular implications (see Chapter 8). A last encouraging trend in this data was constituted by comments that revealed students already considering the applicability, and flexibility, of the utilized methods. According to Respondent 0901364, "[the] verbal exercises […] could be adapted to nearly every language level." Respondent 1007669 had the same thought process involving literature, saying that "I realized that it's important to link exercises with the literature" for the drama methods to be most effective. Arguably this meta-level reflection is perhaps to

be expected at the university stage of education, where students have become used to taking responsibility for their own learning, but it is still an important element where the exploration of the drama methods are concerned.

7.4.4 Unaware learning

Section 2.1.2 offers a fuller exploration of theories of integrating content and language in the language classroom, most importantly those involving CLIL (content and language integrated learning). Such approaches are in keeping with the core values of *Sprachpraxis* at Tübingen (see Section 1.3), and are relevant to the choices each teacher makes in a system without a centralized or standardized curriculum. Section 7.1 has focused on the learning effects of various types of drama (e.g. improvised forms versus scripted drama) as well as the effects of various types of roleplay work and the combination of other language skills, such as writing, in the drama-based oral communication class. This current section discusses the few, but pertinent, comments pertaining to the feeling that the drama-based work produced learning as a side-effect of the class activities; a phenomenon related to aspects of group learning that will be focused on more exclusively in Section 7.5.

Sometimes this effect was seen as regards oral communication practice, such as the comment by Respondent 2711031 that the students were "not always aware that they are practicing English because it is 'covered' in acting-exercises." Respondent 0301684 mentioned that "the oral communication was basically a side effect of talking about performing literature and I really enjoyed this". It is interesting to note in this comment that the speaking practice was not seen as an effect of actually performing, but rather "talking about" performing: arguably this effect then could presumably be seen as achievable through "talking about" almost anything. However, as we have seen in Section 7.1.2, discussion of performance as the so-called rehearsal effect is not the same as simple classroom discussion, but is dependent on and inseparable from the other dramatic phases (performing and being an audience member) for its communicative effect. The unaware learning effect was actually seen more often in comments pertaining to the literature per se rather than oral communication. Respondent 2902947 felt that she had often "left the class feeling that I had actually analyzed a text, but without purposefully doing so. It simply came along with the different exercises, which was very enjoyable;" a comment that touches on aspects of dramatic literary exploration discussed in Section 7.4.1. In an interesting related comment, Respondent 0301684 observed that "the students really dive into the literature without realizing that they are actually 'working' and 'studying'. I think this approach is much more sustainable." Although it is not entirely clear what is meant here by "sustainable," it would appear to be in contrast to the observations noted in Section 7.4.2 regarding more traditional classroom methods of literary analysis often commented on as dull and uninspiring; and perhaps also alludes to the enjoyment of the drama methods generally (see Section

7.5.2). In a final relevant comment for this section, Respondent 1508476 highlighted the integrated nature of the class, saying that "[o]ne can practice his/her spoken English and his/her knowledge of drama at the same time. It's a great opportunity to connect various areas (Literature-Sprachpraxis-future teaching) in order to practice more than only the spoken English". This idea of combining all the relevant subject matter in one class through drama is a key point of interest, making this response all the more pertinent. The ramifications for the future of drama classes at the department will be summarized in Chapter 8.

7.5 Group learning

Although the stated aim of *Sprachpraxis* classes is the development of the individual language learner, including spoken competence (see Section 4.1.1), there are institutional as well as pragmatic reasons why the development of such competence has to take place in groups. Firstly, oral communication classes necessarily involve a large number of students, and indeed this apparent contradiction – the development of individual oral skills in large, diverse classes – constitutes one of the central issues underpinning the research question (see Section 1.1). And secondly, oral communication among humans is a group activity by definition. For a meaningful communicative act to take place it requires at least two conversationalists, but communicative situations can of course involve far more interlocutors than only two. The issue of group communication was therefore raised throughout the data, and will be explored in this section.

7.5.1 Group communication

Peter Brook's seminal theatrical prerequisite of one person in a space being watched by another, as discussed in Section 7.1.2, highlights the importance of audience observation to a dramatic event (Brook 1968: 11). Ironically however the metaphor is not extended to include arguably another condition of a dramatic event: that of verbal communication. While it is true that some theatre is non-verbal, the majority of theatrical happenings involve at least one person interacting verbally with at least one other. This aspect of drama has clearly been of vital importance to the theory and practice of drama applied to language learning (see Section 3.3.1). However, while much relevant work has emphasized the individual speaker and his/her language production (see Maley and Duff 1978 for example), another important but less discussed aspect of dramatic verbal communication is group interaction: the communication that happens when more than two conversation partners are involved.

An important trend noticed in the pre-course questionnaire was the need for more opportunities to speak in oral communication classes (see Section 6.1.4); and many such comments emphasized the group nature of oral communication. Respondent 0301684 tied her stated wish for smaller *Sprachpraxis* classes to a desire to "interact more," mir-

roring a frequent implication that "everyone has to be included" (Respondent 0612869) for oral communication classes to be regarded as effective. Respondent 2802087 looked forward to "more opportunities to actively engage with […] fellow students", representing a generally felt view that communicative opportunities were restricted to the necessary assessed presentations and individual contributions to feedback (e.g. question and answer formats). These impulses appeared to be positively answered, as reflected in the data for the post-session questionnaires. Respondent 2011107, for example, regarded the class as having been "very interactive and communicative," while Respondent 1307009 praised the "interactive set-up of the class;" a comment that attributes the interactivity to the actual design of the pedagogical environment rather than any possibly coincidental effect. In fact the dramatic nature of the activities seemed to provide "many possibilities to speak" (Respondent 0301742) with an emphasis on the "variety of English language registers that were spoken and practiced" (Respondent 2011107). This variety is connected again to the specifically dramatic nature of the communication (e.g. students in roles), and would not be achieved to the same degree by non-dramatic exercises (see Section 7.1.2). Surrounding the actual dramatic playing, of course, were other communicative opportunities, also connected to the dramatic design of the class, where group communication was required – this is explored under the rehearsal, performance and audience effects in Section 7.1.2 above. Respondent 0707766 commented that it was "nice to keep talking [in groups]; having to speak out ideas" while preparing their dramatic scenes in class. Respondent 2011107 noticed "a lot of situations in which oral communication was practiced," specifying "working in the group for the short scene, the actual scene play, and the discussion" which "gave space for speaking and communicating with others in English." In particular, the "performative aspect" of the tasks, seen as "combining language learning with interactivity and theatre," were viewed as making "the learning process much more intensive as compared to just the usual presentations" expected of many oral communication classes (Respondent 2011107). Respondent 2802087 observed that the group communication effect was due to the fact that "everybody had an opportunity to perform 'on stage'." Not all opinions on this were positive, however. Respondent 2802087 commented that "the class did not bring/create that many more opportunities, compared with other OC [i.e. oral communication] classes." However, the same respondent continued by expressing the view that "the given opportunities occurred much more equally distributed throughout each session [than in other oral communication classes], and so was the quality (it never felt like one must speak but it was always part of an exercises/theatre performance)." The latter part of this statement is particularly interesting as it disassociates the obligation to communicate ("one must speak") from participation in the dramatic exercises. One could of course see this in the entirely opposing light: that drama exercises do, in fact, force participants to speak. However given the entire group participation in the communicative environment, everyone was in the same boat, so to speak, with no undue pressure being put on any particular individual. Viewed in this light, this can be seen as another dimension of the group communicative effect.

The effects of group inclusion and team spirit will be dealt with more thoroughly in the following section. However some comments did focus on the group communicative effect in terms of the even spread of opportunities for all students to speak – including those not predisposed to regular contribution. Respondent 0908925 complained that "in the traditional approach [i.e. regular presentation-based oral communication classes] there's mostly a presentation and thus, only a certain amount of speaking opportunities per student;" while claiming that "[i]n order to increase those '*Redeanteile*' [i.e. opportunities to speak], it seems a great idea to implement drama-based activities." Respondent 1207638 "liked that everybody had to participate in oral communication at some point," while Respondent 0604589 appreciated "the chance to work with different people every time" during the drama exercises. This last comment would indeed support the notion of group communication, with students having to widen the scope of their communicative circle beyond their immediate desk neighbour or circle of friends in class, for example. Respondent 1712078 made the important observation that "…the group activities gave everyone the chance (even those who are too shy to speak in front of the whole class) to talk." This effect was mentioned several times by other respondents, but mostly with the proviso that groups be kept small. Respondent 2005303 for example said that "[e]specially during the group work we were able to practice our oral communication […] because we were working with just two other students it was easy to feel comfortable." Respondent 0908925 concurred, opining that "people who are rather shy or insecure would feel more comfortable in smaller groups," although "there was enough possibility to speak in general." This then would suggest an important consideration on the part of the teacher employing drama methods in class: despite the positive effects on group-level oral communication, as always less confident students and those less disposed to acting generally have to be taken into consideration; and small group work, as demonstrated in the data, would appear to be a potential solution.

7.5.2 Class spirit

In addition to comments focusing on group communication effects, many students also referred to the more general, group spirit achieved through the drama work. This effect has already been alluded to in Section 6.5.2.2, in the context of drama applied to general team-building for professional purposes (see Monks et al 2001; Koppett 2002), but has also been expanded in scope in a recent examination of the interfaces between drama and citizenship, in terms of building responsible, community-minded global citizens (McGuinn et al 2022). The accepted use of drama and roleplay in business for this purpose would suggest widespread acceptance of effectiveness. And in educational work also, the primacy of group formation has not been ignored either (see Stredder 2009: 51-80).

Certainly the feeling of togetherness created through the drama work was noticed by many students. Respondent 0301684 mentioned the "special atmosphere in which every student is equal," and Respondent 1907754 noticed that the class "really got closer together" when working on the exercises. There may have been an accumulative effect to this, as alluded to by Respondent 0908925 in her comment that "the feeling of safety in the classroom […] grew during the semester." This presumably would especially be the case with students unused to drama, who may have taken more time to get into the spirit of the work. This group mentality was often linked to the aspect of interacting with all of the class, rather than just a few select friends or acquaintances. Respondent 1712078 judged the drama exercises as "very helpful to strengthen the class sense of community […] since you have to be able to rely on the others, and furthermore you get in contact with other students you may have never interacted with." Respondent 0510319 referred positively to interaction with "students we usually would not talk to nor work with […] unknown students." The elements of trust and integration raised here ("rely on the others") is a central component of work in the professional theatre, and indeed the subject of many theatre development games for actors (see Boal 1992: 77-86). Stredder (2009) warns indeed that the absence of such group-development "may lead to good work from friends who enjoy playing or spending time together, but can mean that others are left out" (51).

The general feeling of confidence and comfort alluded to was often specifically connected to a perceived educational outcome. Respondent 1007669 mentioned that "because there was such a comfortable atmosphere in general, I didn't feel like I had to compare my English to that of other speakers in the classroom;" Respondent 2005303 remarked that "the atmosphere was very confident and helped me to practice my spoken English without any fear in certain tasks." With these comments we can see a clear network emerging where the drama work first helps to establish general confidence and trust; then encourages interaction between students; which, in turn, allows improvised oral communication to happen. Whether such improvised drama work has a beneficial effect on students' language skills is of course another question however (see Section 7.1.3). What is clear, nonetheless, is that all students were included in the drama work, regardless of general predisposition towards acting or speaking in public. Respondent 1712078 reported that during the exercises she was able "to overcome [her] nervousity [sic] in regard of acting in front of [her] classmates and [get] more self-confidence." Respondent 0612869 made the more general observation of "the opportunity for shy students to integrate themselves in the group activities."

7.5.3 Fun and enjoyment

An aspect of educational drama work often taken for granted, and whose importance is possibly still not fully considered in higher education contexts, is that of fun and enjoyment. The basic premise that playfulness, and attendant positive feelings, are of

central importance to educational efficacy is however not new, and underpins many established theories of learning (see Section 3.2.1 for a fuller discussion). Taking Shakespeare as an example, the "delight" that Stredder refers to children experiencing when working practically on Shakespeare's plays (2009: 13) can be seen in the larger context in which fun and enjoyment are seen as more, perhaps exclusively, appropriate for school-age learners. This view is not completely unchallenged however, with recent work in Shakespearean practical pedagogy also taking in the significant, and growing, interest in play-based approaches at post-compulsory levels (see Hartley 2015). And of course the fun and enjoyment experienced during drama and other game-based activities are not the exclusive preserve of young people: one need only note the popularity of amateur and community drama clubs that are enjoyed by people of all ages.

The aspect of enjoyment was indeed reported frequently in the data, particularly in the post-course questionnaire when asked about overall impressions of the class (see Section 6.5). Several points are noteworthy here. The first of these is the report of enjoyment being attached to initial reluctance, or an aspect that otherwise would have appeared to constitute an object to a student's enjoyment of the drama work. Respondent 0604589 admitted, despite reporting significant initial skepticism, to "never [having] expected to enjoy this class to such an extent." Respondent 1907754 commented that, although she considered herself "a bit shy," "the class helped [her] to get better in improvising, speaking English and lots more!" This seemed to be connected to a more general persuasion regarding drama generally: "I didn't know how much fun acting can be." Respondent 250633 rather hyperbolically remarked that "all students who participated in this class also liked it." Respondent 1307009 more soberly suggested that "it is important to consider that not every student likes acting and performance," while nevertheless holding the view that "not only is it fun to have a drama-based class, but it is also a great way of practicing to speak spontaneously." While it is indeed encouraging to note the enjoyment reported, especially from those who were not drama aficionados to begin with, pedagogically it is crucial to consider the inevitably various levels of pre-experience and enjoyment of drama, and perhaps to allow students the choice of which drama-related task/s they involve themselves with (see Section 7.1.4 on comprehensive language skills).

8 Conclusions

Based on the discussion of the data trends in Chapter 7, the current chapter will return to the research questions, exploring to what extent they have been answered, and how. Then the implications of the findings will briefly be discussed, and finally suggestions will be made for future avenues of research, and, of equal importance, how the study might impact the practical provision of drama-based classes from the perspective of a student, and in terms of my own future teaching practice. The institutional implications will also be considered.

8.1 Research questions

The contextual pedagogical challenges addressed by this study are outlined and discussed in section 4.2, and were initially explored in a previous pilot study (Sharp 2014). They are:

i. Diverse degree types within each class
ii. Large student numbers in each class
iii. The stated aim of the oral communication classes to offer plentiful opportunities for speaking practice and improvement (considering the first two challenges)

The classes of the *Sprachpraxis* (Academic English) section are intended to cater for all degree types within the English department, and are taken by students from their first semesters upward, and throughout their studies. In order to cater for this diversity of focus and aim, the study attempted to integrate three separate but discipline-relevant elements, asking participants to what extent they felt that drama-in-education classes fostered:

i. Oral communication skills
ii. Career-relevant skills (for teacher trainees)
iii. Exploration of literature in English

This study applied drama-based pedagogical methods, involving elements from Drama (and Theatre)-in-Education; actor training and skills; and the German-language field of *Theaterpädagogik* (see section 3.2.2) to attempt an integrated pedagogy involving the three named focus elements. A qualitative action research paradigm was utilized to ascertain to what extent the participants felt that the drama methods involved had indeed helped to foster the three skills areas identified. The data analysis indicates that the participants did indeed feel that the drama methods had been effective in these

regards. In the post-course questionnaire, all three aspects were rated below two in a five-point Likert scale, where number 1 indicated the highest, and number 5 the lowest, level of satisfaction (see Section 6.5.1). In terms of order, it was reported by the students that the drama methods had been most effective for career-relevant skills (1.21); followed by oral communication skills (1.52); followed by exploration of literature (1.65). These results must of course take into account that the vast majority – 21 students of the 25 who entered the information – were training to be teachers so would have had a particular interest in the educational applicability (see Section 4.1.2).

In terms of oral communication, it was not generally believed that the class had offered necessarily more overall speaking time than any other, non-dramatic class; and indeed many comments in the data explicitly expressed this point. However several effects were reported that were directly connected to the drama-based format and that were positively experienced by the participants. The opportunities to speak in class were reported as more evenly-spread throughout the semester than in other classes, where the format was often reported to be based on individual presentation sessions, and therefore consisting of intense, but one-off oral communication blocks. An unexpected trend in the data was the wide range of communicative situations reported. In past research, the performative nature of drama has been tied to its application to individual rhetorical and public speaking skills, for example: this particular element has a long history stretching back to even classical times (see Section 3.1). But the present study revealed various communicative situations not involving individual performance, and importantly not dependent on individual acting ability or interest, that nevertheless were judged as effective in one or other of the three areas under investigation: in Section 7.1.2 these are discussed under the terms rehearsal effect, performance effect, and audience effect. These stages of dramatic work, which crucially function in interaction with each other, can be seen in the data as offering language learning opportunities beyond the expectations previous to the research being carried out. In the theatre, rehearsal[42] is a phase in which ideas and boundaries are tested; roles are developed and built; the play is blocked (choreographed); and the character interrelationships are worked through. As such, this phase involves detailed discussion and experimentation on text, often in smaller groups, but not, at this stage, before an audience. This particular stage was mentioned in the data as a comfortable, pressure-free communicative context where even shy students could fully contribute. The performance phase was, as expected, connected to a certain amount of pressure. This was variously reported, with some students appreciating the obligation of being "forced" to communicate. Indeed, contrary to what might be expected, even those students reporting shyness or a lack of confidence commented positively on having performed scenes in class, referring

42 The German term for rehearsal is *Probe*; a word also used in terms of test, or attempt; the French *répétition* is self explanatory. Rehearsal itself is ultimately derived from the old English verb for harrow: to go over (as in plowing a field); or in a later meaning, to pillage or plunder.

importantly to the familiar, trusting atmosphere of the classroom. Another element in this regard was the safety and confidence provided by playing a role, rather than having to communicate 'as oneself.'

So this would suggest that dramatic performance is not merely for those already experienced in and comfortable with drama, and also serves as an important reminder that achieving a trusting, safe environment for students is a prerequisite, and the responsibility of the teacher or facilitator. In addition, any decision to perform should ideally be made together with the participants themselves, rather than being imposed by the teacher or session leader (see Prendergast and Saxton 2013: 178-179). Participants may choose to perform, not perform, or perform to a limited audience, "and this decision should be supported fully by a facilitator" (Prendergast and Saxton 2013: 178). This element of student control over performance parameters is certainly an aspect that, as a reflective practitioner, I would attempt to better integrate in future work. The final dramatic stage, represented by the audience effect, involved watching the performance of others as a means of exchanging ideas. The very fact of sitting silently and respectfully while other people perform something perhaps acts as a guarantee of heightened attention, and greater awareness; as opposed to the regular format of oral communication classes reported, with a different student presentation every week. This can also be seen in terms of camaraderie: watching fellow students perform, which can be pressured and exposed, as discussed above, is likely to lead to greater empathy and respect, especially if combined with the knowledge that every student, at some point, will be up there on stage.

Further unexpected distinctions were made between improvisational oral communication exercises, and those based on scripts. Improvisation is widely accepted as the most appropriate dramatic form to practice authentic, real-world communication; and while this effect was widely reported in the data, there was also a significant number of critical comments. The first point was that improvisation tended to be more appropriate for the practice of everyday, colloquial speech, and that the communication that emerged stayed on a rather superficial level, even when based on the literature we were exploring. Secondly, it was reported that in improvisation, students would stick to language structures they knew to be correct, rather than try out new constructions or take risks with vocabulary etc. These points raise the question of the appropriateness of improvisation in university language classes, where ideally students are indeed improving and expanding their linguistic repertoires in English, particularly at higher levels of complexity, in preparation for other classes in literary analysis, for instance. Despite the lack of spontaneity, speaking exercises based on scripts can be tailored more effectively to focus on particular language structures; and roles can be assigned evenly, which, in contrast to completely free improvisation, ensures that naturally extroverted students will not simply dominate the conversations. Improvisation was the basis of the emergence of Drama-in-Education in the UK and elsewhere starting in the 1960's, representing a free, open, student-centred alternative to methods used before, which had tended

to be scripted, and were criticized as imposed, prescriptive and restrictive (see Section 3.2.2). Perhaps, however, at university level, this implies that students could effectively be involved in creating their own scripts, or could work with already published plays at higher levels of linguistic complexity. This ties in with a trend seen regularly in the data, where respondents appreciated the chance to employ different language skills, like reading and writing, in combination with the oral communication practice.

In answer to the second part of the research question, regarding career-relevant skills for teachers, the data spoke unambiguously. On a macro level, the alignment between process (using spoken English in class) and content (the English language and literature to be taught in school as future teachers) is grounded in the "Loop Input" theory of Woodward (1988; 2003) (see section 2.1.1). This reciprocal effect was noted positively in the data, and the same effect was noted for the drama exercises *per se:* put simply, by experiencing and working through the drama exercises themselves, the students felt that they were being furnished with useful tools for their future pedagogical careers. The vast majority of students reported that the drama work had given them very useful input for their future teaching careers, and many engaged creatively with the exercises, suggesting alternatives and alterations to the exercises as they experienced them in class. Many of these comments were made in combination with reference to the general teacher training curriculum, raising the important question of whether drama-based classes should be offered as part of this (see Section 8.2). A particularly interesting trend was the data connected to roleplaying a classroom situation, allowing students to experience the double perspective of (school) student and teacher. This can be seen against the background of comments expressing the view that not enough teaching simulation work is offered in the training before the assessed state in-school phase (*Referendariat*).

In terms of literary exploration the data was more mixed. Creativity loomed large, with students appreciating the chance to engage personally with the literature, both in terms of specific tasks, such as the creation of a dramatic adaptation of a poem, and in terms of emotional identification with characters through acting exercises. These personal, creative approaches were often mentioned in contrast to more traditional methods of literary analysis such as close reading and discussion. Of particular note was the chance to work creatively with poetry, which was very frequently reported in the context of negative teaching experiences at school. On the other hand, it was also apparent that many participants felt that the drama work applied to the literature had stayed on a more superficial level, and had not in fact helped them to any deeper understanding of the works; only to a more personal connection with them. A picture thus emerges of the drama methods being applied as pedagogical tools alongside other approaches, including those regarded as "traditional" in the data. For creative drama work to be effective, it seems, there first must be a solid understanding of the work being explored. Drama might then offer an added dimension, a possibility to see a work or a character from the inside, so to speak, over and above a mere objective, scholarly reading. In

this way, then, it would appear that drama work on literature has its place at university level, albeit in combination with other methods.

In general, the data suggests drama as a combinational pedagogical element, involving not only oral communication, but elements of reading, writing, and, crucially, listening involved as well; and best employed, indeed, in combination with other more standard methods in the language and literature classrooms. The effectiveness of the drama methods was often combined with the enjoyment of the work, and many students reported not having been consciously aware of studying or learning specific aspects, but rather simply enjoying the holistic nature of the drama-based classroom. A strong implication emerges that drama-based methods are therefore best in this context for supporting and consolidating knowledge, alongside and in combination with other educational approaches. This would appear to support work that utilizes drama as a distinctive aesthetic subject and educational approach, involving many different communicative methods and situations, but grounded in its literary heritage (see Hornbrook 1998). This might in turn imply that other dramatic methods such as process drama, which is designed as an entire "pedagogic process" largely based on improvisation (Bowell and Heap 2017: 2), within whose parameters children learn and teachers teach, is not as appropriate at higher education level where the traditional didactic processes of text-based learning and literary analysis are not easily replaceable.

8.2 Implications and future directions

8.2.1 Implications of the research

This study applied drama pedagogical methods to practical English language classes at a German university English department, in order to explore how, and to what extent, the methods impacted three areas of relevance to the curriculum: oral communication skills; professional vocational skills in education; and the exploration of literature in English. The research was conducted within the Academic English (*Sprachpraxis)* section of the department, where large class sizes and diverse degree types can make consistent individualized practice of language skills challenging. This was the first drama-based class offered in *Sprachpraxis* on such a formal scale.

The findings of this study indicate clearly that, in the view of the participants, the drama methods were effective in practicing oral communication; offering ideas for future teaching; and exploring the literature. In terms of oral practice, the drama methods were felt to offer a variety of different communicative situations, involving in-role character-based work as well as free improvisation; and utilizing written scripts as well as self-generated authentic speech. Drama exercises, it appeared, can be effective on a smaller scale (involving only two conversation partners) or a larger scale (smaller or even larger groups). And by mimicking different elements of a professional theatrical

process (rehearsal – performance – audience), the pedagogical-communicative effects were appealing to different students. Participating in a class that explored techniques relevant to students' future careers was almost universally deemed as a positive experience, with students creatively and consistently engaging in the methods used, reflecting on them as potential tools for their own future working lives. The exploration of the literature through drama was also viewed positively, albeit with some unexpected aspects. The main attraction of drama methods in this context seems to lie in their activation of students' creativity – identification with characters; imagination of alternative endings or plot development; and, in the special case of poetry, of encouraging students to suggest and develop their own lines of interpretation, rather than relying on pre-learnt knowledge to support the one, 'correct' reading of a work. In fact, given its unpopularity at school reported in the data, drama-based approaches would appear to be a fruitful and potentially successful complementary method of teaching poetry.

Overall, it cannot perhaps be claimed that drama-based classes could or should replace other, non-dramatic classes in *Sprachpraxis*. Speaking opportunities will continue to be offered in non-drama-based classes in the curriculum. And drama classes will probably continue to attract a majority of students who are already familiar with and interested in such methods. But an interesting and important implication is that drama need not only be effective with extroverted or drama-talented individuals. The chance to incorporate comprehensive language skills and combine speaking exercises with drama-based writing and rehearsal, for example, would seem to offer all students an equal chance to participate. A future challenge might therefore be persuading students with no experience of drama nor any particular affinity for it to try out a drama-based class.

8.2.2 Suggestions for further research and practice

The present study is the first of its kind to investigate drama-based methods in German university practical language courses for students of English. As such, the research is firmly exploratory, and intended to also identify areas for future practice and further research. Fruitful avenues of further investigation might focus on the different forms of educational drama (e.g. script-based, improvisational, performance-based etc.) and their effectiveness in the various specific areas of the curriculum (oral communication; literary study; teacher training). Another aspect mentioned but not covered comprehensively is the issue of performance: what effect might a public (or semi-public) performance of a piece of drama have on the pedagogical effectiveness explored in the present study? The pressures of performance in education have been touched upon (see Section 6.5.2.2; Grube and Sanchez-Lansch 2004) and advantages and disadvantages discussed, but a systematic investigation would seem relevant and worthwhile, especially in regard to avoiding the "sense of isolation" that can be felt by using drama work in the classroom without a performative product at the end (Hornbrook 1998:

138). A further area of importance is assessment. Assessment in applied drama and the arts generally is under researched, but interest and output are currently growing in this important aspect (see Jones 2024). In line with these developments, performance or drama-based assessment rubrics could be developed that would allow teachers to use drama methods more confidently, given the ongoing need to hold regular assessment in language classes. Finally, emotional aspects, although difficult to research, have suggested themselves frequently and consistently enough in the data to warrant further investigation. This would include the potential of drama methods to establish a greater emotional connection with the language, and a feeling of empowerment in the students, to counteract the distance from self that can occur when learning an additional language. Especially the issue of student empowerment could be explored through the wide range of expressive and communicative situations that were alluded to in the data.

In terms of practice, several suggestions can be made. Given the overwhelmingly positive response to the drama based work, it would appear that continuing, and expanding, its provision within the Academic English curriculum would be appropriate. In this regard the most practicable, and equitable, arrangement for such a provision, especially in the oral communication and teacher training areas, would be the offer of such classes as an option within a larger curriculum that also features non-dramatic classes. As seen in the data, and especially with regards to exploration of literature, it would also appear that drama methods are most appropriate, and indeed most effective, at higher educational level when combined with other pedagogical techniques and methods. This would support the notion that drama should either be incorporated into existing literary seminars and classes in combination with other teaching methods; or else that drama sessions are offered as one-off extraordinary workshop sessions, additional to the regular class meetings. In the former case, the teacher involved would have to feel confident enough in leading such practical drama work, raising another potential avenue of investigation: the training of university instructors in drama-based methods. In the latter, workshop-based format, the possibility is raised of inviting a drama specialist in to run such a session. Such outreach work already happens within the remit of the German area of *Theaterpädagogik,* in schools, theatres, colleges and other contexts (see Section 3.2.2), but its provision at higher education level is still less than what might be desirable. In the department in which the present study is based, classes and training in *Theaterpädagogik* are offered for students, but on a voluntary, and increasingly sporadic, basis. As mentioned in several comments throughout the data, however, such classes would appear to be greatly desired, especially by those students training to be language teachers themselves.

An important related strand of the study is the effect of the research on my own practice as a teacher and drama facilitator. In this regard the process has been very useful, not only in terms of exploring how students perceive such work, but also in terms of how this kind of class could be further optimized from the teacher's point of view. There were frequent, and unexpected, references to the multifaceted nature of

the drama work to include not only spoken communication, but also extensive planning/discussion phases and even written text production. As David Hornbrook has it:

> At its core, the dramatic art curriculum offers opportunities for students at all levels to explore the expressive potential of theatre, as performers possibly, but equally as writers, designers, directors, technicians, animateurs and experimenters (Hornbrook 1998: 134).

And by extension, in educational drama, the full "expressive potential of theatre" can and should be applied to the pedagogical context at hand. Therefore I would make sure to incorporate this creative diversity into class design in the future. I would also allow students even more freedom in choosing which parts of the process they wished to contribute to. This might potentially mean allowing a student to avoid, for example, any performative exercise which they might not be comfortable with, but without wanting to let go entirely of the beneficial effects reported of students being gently brought outside their comfort zones on occasion, including performatively. Given the range of communicative situations indeed, it would appear that all students can contribute within their own area of strength while simultaneously benefitting from the contributions of others (see Section 7.1.2). The core motivational factor for the study was principally to explore the potential benefits to students of a drama-based approach to teaching in the given context; but simultaneously to interrogate, and hopefully therefore improve, my own practice as a teacher. In both of these, I feel the investigation has been a success.

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Appendix A: questionnaires

Appendix A1: pre-course questionnaire

Drama and Literature in the *Sprachpraxis* Classroom

Hello, and thank you for taking the time to fill in this short questionnaire! I am interested in how drama-based teaching methods can be applied to Sprachpraxis classes here at Tübingen, and one very important part of this is how you, the students, feel about it. That's why I'm asking for your input. The final aim of the study is to find the ways in which drama methods can be best used in Sprachpraxis, and thus to improve the quality of the classes on offer. Please be honest in all of your answers – remember, there are no right or wrong answers, and none of this feedback will affect your grades in any way. Your honest feedback is highly valuable to the project, and your identity will remain anonymous throughout the process with the identification number system. Thanks!

Jonathan Sharp

Section I: Drama experience

1. Have you ever taken part in practical drama before, including educational drama? Examples would include theatre groups in school, role-play exercises in class etc. Circle the ONE answer that applies to you: YES NO

2. If you answered YES to question 1., please give brief details below:

_____

_____

_____

3. If you answered YES to question 1., please rate the following statement by putting ONE cross (X) on the line:

I enjoy/ed being involved in practical drama activities.

AGREE _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ **DISAGREE**

Section II: Literature

4. Please rate the following statement by writing ONE cross (X) on the line:

I enjoy reading in English.

VERY MUCH _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ NOT AT ALL

5. Please assign each literary genre a number according to how much you enjoy reading it. You can repeat numbers as many times as you wish (ON NEXT PAGE!).

1= Very much enjoy it (my favourite!)
2= Enjoy it
3= Don't mind it either way
4= Don't enjoy it
5= Don't enjoy it at all (my least favourite!)

POETRY: _____
PROSE: _____
DRAMA: _____

Section III: Language Skills

6. Please RANK your competence in the four skills in English, from **1=BEST** to **4=WORST**. This time, please use each number only ONCE:

Reading _____
Speaking _____
Listening _____
Writing _____

7. Please mark the words you associate with when you <u>are speaking English</u>. You can mark as many as you like with a cross (X), and add others of your own if you want.

confident _____
insecure _____
correct pronunciation _____
performing a role _____
fluent _____
using the wrong register _____
restricted _____
lacking vocabulary _____
effective body language _____
embarrassed _____

Others? (Please state)

Section IV: Lehramt

Please note: this section (questions 7 and 8) is ONLY for students intending to become teachers. All other students please proceed to Section V!

7. Rate the following attributes in terms of how important you believe they are in an English teacher. Use ALL numbers, but only ONCE each.

1=most important; 8=least important

Patience _____Cultural knowledge _____
Language competence _____A good accent _____
Friendliness _____Presentational skills _____
Reliability _____Self-reflection _____

8. Please state, in one sentence, why you want to become an English teacher:

Section V: The class/other comments

9. Please fill in the following table by placing a cross (X) in ONE of the boxes for the statement:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Partly agree	Slightly disagree	Dis-agree	Strongly disagree
I generally enjoy Sprachpraxis classes						

10. Please complete the following two sentences (CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE!):

a. If I could change anything about Sprachpraxis classes, it would be

b. I believe the thing that would help me most in oral communication classes is

11. Please complete the following statement:

My expectations of this class are:

_____

_____

_____

Section VI: Personal details

12. Please fill in these details about yourself:

_____

_____

_____

Identification number: _____
Age: _____
Degree course: _____
Semester of English study: _____
Native language/s: _____
Other language/s: _____

13. Please place ONE cross (X) on the line according to where you think your personality sits:

EXTROVERT _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ INTROVERT

I would like to thank you very much for taking the time to fill this in, and once again assure you that your answers will be handled with total confidentiality, and your identity kept anonymous. Your input will be of great help to the project, which aims to improve the range and quality of Sprachpraxis classes!

Appendix A2: post-course questionnaire

Drama and Literature in the Sprachpraxis Classroom

Hello, and thank you for taking the time to fill in this short questionnaire! I am interested in how drama-based teaching methods can be applied to Sprachpraxis classes here at Tübingen, and one very important part of this is how you, the students, feel about it. That's why I'm asking for your input.

The aim of the study is to find the ways in which drama methods can be best used in Sprachpraxis, and thus to improve the quality of the classes on offer. Please be honest in all of your answers – remember, there are no right or wrong answers, and none of this feedback will affect your grades in any way. Your honest feedback is highly valuable to the project, and your identity will remain anonymous throughout the process with the identification number system. Of course you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Thanks!

Jonathan Sharp

Identification Number: _____

1. How suitable do you think the class was in terms of opportunities to develop confidence and fluency in your spoken English?

VERY MUCH _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ **NOT AT ALL**

2. How suitable do you think the class was in terms of developing topics and ideas relevant to your future career?

VERY MUCH _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ **NOT AT ALL**

3. How suitable do you think the class was in terms of exploring and engaging with the literature we dealt with?

VERY MUCH _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ **NOT AT ALL**

4. a. Please rate the following areas, in terms of how relevant the class was for each of them.

- Practice of spoken English: ____
- Introduction to career-relevant topic/s: ____
- Exploration of literature: ____

(1 = highly relevant, 2 = relevant, 3 = irrelevant)

b. Now, please explain your choices below:

_____

_____

_____

5. How suitable do you think drama-based classes are in the *Sprachpraxis* curriculum?

_____

_____

_____

6. Do you have any other comments?

_____

_____

_____

I would like to thank you very much for taking the time to fill this in, and once again assure you that your answers will be handled with total confidentiality, and your identity kept anonymous. Your input will be of great help to the project, which aims to improve the range and quality of Sprachpraxis classes.

Appendix B: class materials

Appendix B1: guide to class session

	Poetry	Prose	Drama
Non-verbal exercises	Group 1 (17/05)	Group 4 (14/06)	Group 7 (05/07)
Verbal exercises	Group 2 (24/05)	Group 5 (21/06)	Group 8 (12/07)
Textual exercises	Group 3 (31/05)	Group 6 (28/06)	Group 9 (19/07)

The Session

For the group-led sessions, each group of 3 will lead the class for that week. The session should be a minimum of 45 minutes long, and a maximum of 70. 60 minutes is a perfect aim.

The aim of each session is to apply your drama exercise type to an exploration of an aspect/s of the literature you're dealing with. You should think about leading the class, not presenting to them. They should be actively involved in the drama exercises, rather than passively listening to you the whole time. The focus of your session can be using the drama exercises to explore the literature for it's own sake (literary focus); or else using the drama exercises to explore how the literature could be dealt with in a school classroom (educational focus). This is entirely up to you.

Important: As a group you must decide on which excerpts/s of your literature you will focus on. The poetry groups can focus on one or two poems; the prose group on one short story; the drama group on one particular scene from the play. As soon as you have decided which pieces you will use, let me know so that I can inform the other groups!

The week before you lead the session, you must send me a PDF copy of the excerpt/s you intend to use – I will then send this round the class by e-mail for everyone to read in advance. This way not everyone will have to buy copies of all three books. I will also speak to the groups for the following two weeks at the end of each class to hear your ideas.

After the end of the class, please get to a computer as soon as is convenient and give your feedback on the session on the Moodle feedback space!

Examples

These are only some ideas – remember, you can do anything you want as long as you work with your given literature and given drama exercise type!

i. **Poetry**
   - Use your exercises to explore the theme/s and /or language of the poems
   - Divide the class into groups to work on different poems to compare
   - Adapt a poem into another text form
   - Create a performance based on the poetry

ii. **Prose**
   - Use the exercises to explore certain character/s in depth
   - Use improvisation to explore situation/s presented in the story
   - Use the exercises to explore potential alternative ending/s or situations in the story
   - Create a performance based on the story

iii. **Drama**
   - Use the exercises to develop character/s
   - Use improvisation to explore situation/s
   - Do detailed character-based work to explore characters' lives or backgrounds
   - Create a performance (either the actual text or adapted)

Appendix B2: guide to drama exercises

Drama Exercises

i. Non-verbal exercises

These are any exercises which do not use verbal (spoken or written) language. So instead actors must use their bodies as well as objects (props) to communicate. Classic exercises of this type include:

- Statue work
- Frozen pictures
- Tableaux
- Mime
- Dance

ii. Verbal exercises

These are exercises with an emphasis on using language, mostly spoken rather than written. These can be structured, where the actors are given particular instructions or a particular scene to play out with specific language, or non-structured, where the actors have to generate the ideas themselves (improvisation). Classic exercises of this type include:

- Word association
- Story improvisation
- Role play and character work
- Object-based or situation-based improvisation

iii. Text-based exercises

These are exercises which work with given text (as opposed to made-up text, as in improvisation). The given text might be assigned (e.g. a scene from a play), or might be a short dialogue given to the actors, or else the text might be generated (e.g. written and performed by the actors themselves). This kind of work also includes changing one kind of text into another (e.g. a short dramatic scene based on a poem). Classic exercises include:

- Working on an excerpt from a published play

- Working on a given piece of dialogue
- Writing inner monologues of characters
- Adapting one kind of text into another (e.g. poetry into dramatic dialogue)
- Re-writing a given text excerpt for a specific purpose (e.g. a modern version of Shakespeare; a children's version of a particular work).

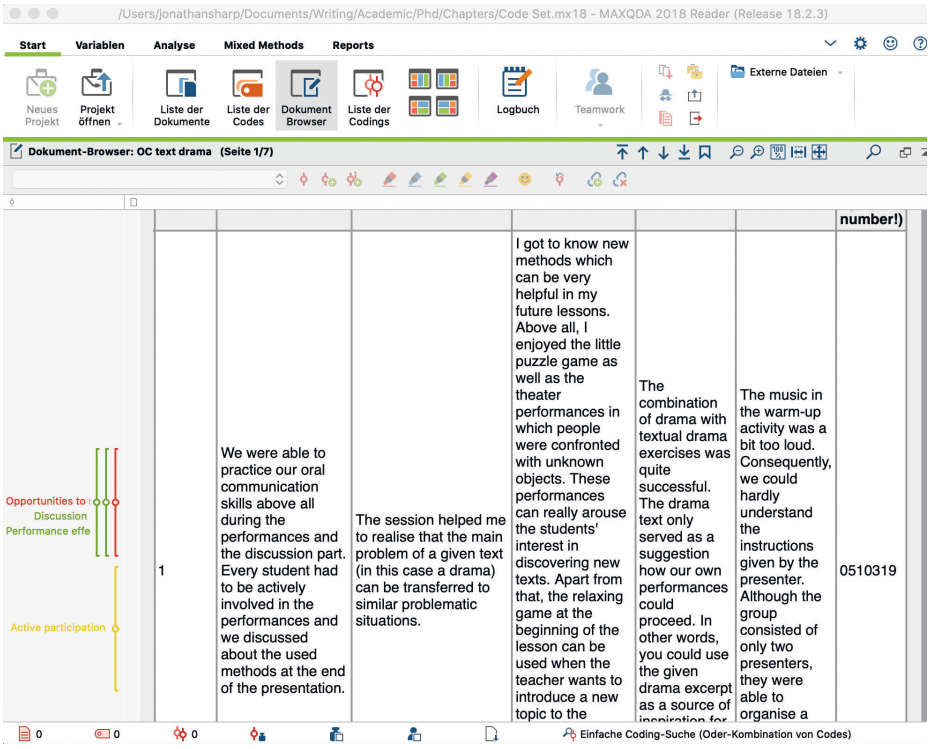
Appendix C: Tables and Figures

Appendix C1: List of Tables

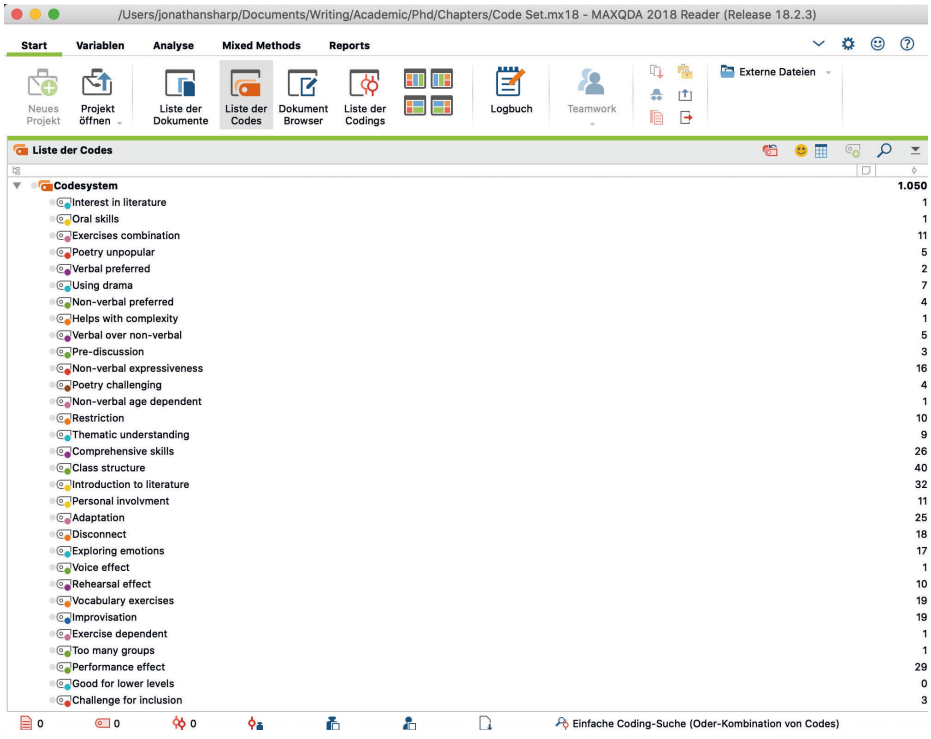
Appendix C2: List of figures

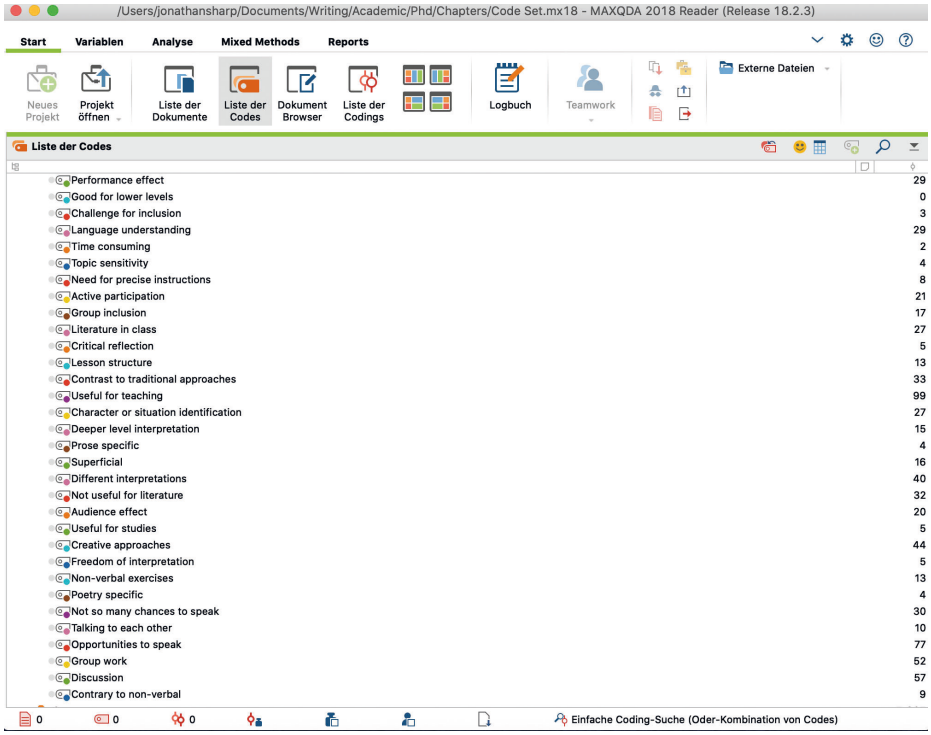
Appendix D: Data analysis

Appendix D1: Example coded text

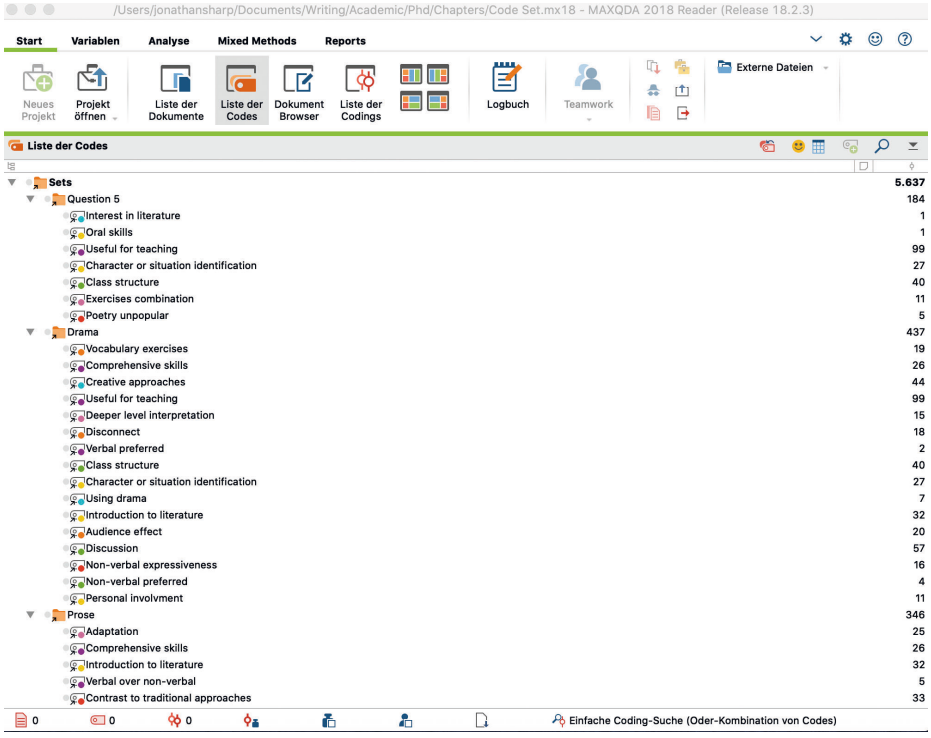


Appendix D2: Complete coding list (two-part)




/Users/jonathansharp/Documents/Writing/Academic/Phd/Chapters/Code Set.mx18 - MAXQDA 2018 Reader (Release 18.2.3)
Start
Variablen
Analyse
Mixed Methods
Reports
Neues Projekt
Projekt öffnen
Liste der Dokumente
Liste der Codes
Dokument Browser
Liste der Codings
Logbuch
Teamwork
Externe Dateien
Liste der Codes
Performance effect 29
Good for lower levels 0
Challenge for inclusion 3
Language understanding 29
Time consuming 2
Topic sensitivity 4
Need for precise instructions 8
Active participation 21
Group inclusion 17
Literature in class 27
Critical reflection 5
Lesson structure 13
Contrast to traditional approaches 33
Useful for teaching 99
Character or situation identification 27
Deeper level interpretation 15
Prose specific 4
Superficial 16
Different interpretations 40
Not useful for literature 32
Audience effect 20
Useful for studies 5
Creative approaches 44
Freedom of interpretation 5
Non-verbal exercises 13
Poetry specific 4
Not so many chances to speak 30
Talking to each other 10
Opportunities to speak 77
Group work 52
Discussion 57
Contrary to non-verbal 9
0
0
0
Einfache Coding-Suche (Oder-Kombination von Codes)

Appendix D3: Example code sets



Drama techniques in English Language Teaching (ELT) have been extensively explored, but much of the work has focused on students' speaking skills, as well as on less advanced learners.

This book investigates the under-researched area of drama applied to higher education, and to comprehensive English language skills: reading, writing and listening, as well as speaking. Drama techniques are utilized in order to serve the ever-changing and increasingly complex needs of ELT students today: learner-centred, multi-skilled and contextually fluid. It is also the very first study of its kind to explore drama-based teaching methods in practical language classes (*Sprachpraxis*) at a German university English department.

The book will be of interest to language teachers who already use drama techniques in class, as well as those interested in doing so: especially, but not only, those teaching older children or adults.

Jonathan Sharp teaches English at the University of Tübingen. He studied English at the University of St. Andrews (MA), and English Language Education at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich (Phd). Previously an actor and musician, he also taught English and Drama at the Universities of Vienna and Munich. His research and teaching focuses on applied drama and dramatic texts in performance.

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