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Making *Colin the poet* real
English language learning as embodied action, aesthetics and emotion

Abstract This chapter analyses videorecorded interactions in English theatre sessions with a group of secondary school students. It shows how seemingly inauthentic language input is transformed into a real, embodied, aesthetic and emotional learning experience by the youth. In the data studied, learners work with a commercially published drama script over several weeks, reading it aloud, repeating it, memorising it, correcting themselves and being corrected, paying attention to their voices, to their bodies, to the physical space and to material props. They play roles, play with words and their voices, with their bodies and movement, and with objects encountered. The chapter considers notions of authenticity, play, action, aesthetics and emotion in second language education to trace how the young people show their understanding that authentic language and language learning are done while constructing real life.

Keywords: authenticity, play, theatre, embodied action, aesthetics, emotion, youth

1. Introduction

The following dialogue is taken from the English teaching resource *Get on stage*:

Scene: Mr and Mrs Atkins are having breakfast. Enter Colin.

Mr Atkins:	Good morning, Colin.
Colin:	Good morning, Dad.
	Good morning, Mum –
	It's Colin here,
	Your poet son.
Mr Atkins:	Oh Colin! *(rolling his eyes in desperation)* Tea?
Colin:	One, two, three,
	Tea for me.
Mrs Atkins:	Stop it Colin! Here's your tea.

(Puchta et al., 2012, p. 50)

To most teachers and researchers of English as a foreign language, scripted texts such as this might be swiftly identified as neither 'real' nor 'natural' language. As Gilmore (2007) writes, "it has long been recognised that the language presented

to students in textbooks is a poor representation of the real thing" (p. 98). Gilmore presents a review of the literature on authenticity in foreign language learning, beginning with a presentation of the diverse definitions of what makes language 'authentic'. He concludes that these definitions – the most appropriate of which, for him, would be "a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort" (Morrow, 1977, p. 13, cited in Gilmore, 2007, p. 98) – are too broad to be useful. Rather, he argues, we should focus on the desired outcome of foreign language teaching, being learners' communicative competence in the target language, and use classroom materials that best promote this end. Gilmore reviews research from different traditions to support the argument that the language provided in many current commercial teaching resources is inadequate for promoting communicative competence and less motivating for students, among other shortfalls.

While we do not disagree with Gilmore's (2007) claims about the inadequacy of certain published materials for teaching and learning English, in this chapter we take a view of authenticity that is more in line with Breen's (1985) approach. For Breen, there are four types of authenticity that need to be taken into account: 1) of texts used as language input; 2) of learners' own interpretations of texts; 3) of tasks for language learning; 4) of the social situation of the classroom. Only the first of these is contemplated in the definition supported by Gilmore, following Morrow; Breen's four types of authenticity are cited in Gilmore's review, but all except the first are critically disregarded as, he claims, "once we start including subjective notions such as learner authentication, any discourse can be called authentic and the term becomes meaningless" (Gilmore, 2007, p. 98). However, in this chapter, we are primarily concerned with the other three types of authenticity proposed by Breen. We concur with Breen (1985) when he claims that:

> It is reasonable to argue that the teaching-learning process should be authentic to its particular objectives and content—the language to be learned. However, the learners' own contributions, the activity of language learning, and the actual classroom situation are also constituent elements within this process. The language lesson is an event wherein all four elements—content, learner, learning, and classroom—each provide their own relative criteria concerning what might be authentic. Within the lesson, a balance needs to be maintained—or a tension resolved—between different and sometimes contradictory criteria for authenticity. (p. 61)

In the data studied in this contribution, a group of teenage learners of English as a foreign language are engaging with the script of a play from the *Get on stage* resource book entitled *Colin the poet* (Puchta et al., 2012)*,* from which the scene reproduced in the introduction to the chapter was extracted. They do so as part

of an extracurricular activity organised by their English teacher, who selected the scripts to work with. The learners work with the text over several weeks, reading the script aloud, repeating it, memorising it, correcting themselves and being corrected by adults and peers, paying attention to their voices, to their bodies, to the physical space and to material props. They move from a (written) drama text to a (performed) stage text (Göthberg et al., 2018; Moore & Bradley, 2020). Observing the teenagers in this process, the idea of play – in the sense of an activity done for fun – comes to mind. The young people play different roles, play with words and their voices, with their bodies and movement, and with objects encountered and given new meanings as props. While the text they are using is not 'real', in the sense of authenticity advocated by Gilmore and Morrow, the teenagers indeed seem to make it so.

Cook (1997) also contributed to the debate about authenticity in language teaching. We cannot present all of his arguments here; however we are inspired by his focus on play in language teaching and learning and what he sees as the authenticity of such play. Cook explains that while authentic language and tasks are often considered to be focused on meaning, much play is actually rule-governed; players know the rules, discuss them, and pull each other up when rules are broken. Furthermore, while worlds of play are often intrinsically not 'real' worlds, play does occur naturally and authentically; it is a major feature of human life. This is also so for language play; we play with sounds, grammatical structures, create words, and so on. Such language play has no 'real' practical outcomes; rather, it is "language for enjoyment, for the self, for its own sake" (Cook, 1997, p. 230). Understanding the role of play in human life and language use, according to Cook, has important implications for our understandings of authenticity in language teaching and learning: "What is needed […] is a recognition of the complexity of language learning: that it is sometimes play and sometimes for real, sometimes form-focused and sometimes meaning-focused, sometimes fiction and sometimes fact" (Cook, 1997, p. 231).

Setting out from these considerations of authenticity, we take a data-driven approach to understanding the activities performed and the resources deployed by learners as they interact with the drama text, *Colin the poet*, their own and others' bodies, space, material artefacts and emotions. We also explore the potential of these interactions for an expanded understanding of what and how the young people learn in terms of language. In the following section of the chapter, we present an approach to learning and cognition that connects with embodied action, aesthetics and emotion. We then present the methodological approach followed both in the collection and in the analysis of the data: while collaborative ethnographic and action-research principles inspired the fieldwork, the analysis

of video recorded interactions adheres to the principles of conversation analysis. The data presented and analysed in the next section were extracted from video recordings made over several sessions as a group of teenagers engaged with the script of *Colin the poet*. In the concluding section of the chapter, we summarise our arguments supporting the authenticity of the language learning process studied.

2. Language learning, embodied action, aesthetics and emotion

The approach to learning followed in this chapter is grounded, firstly, in Hutchins' (1995) notion of cognition in the wild (see also Pratginestós & Masats, this volume). Hutchins was a cognitive scientist who argued for anthropological methods for conceptualising and observing how people think. He was also an avid seaman, and his pioneering research was conducted on the navigation bridge of a navy ship. He observed how cognition could only be explained as a phenomenon that was socially distributed across the team of crew members, within an ecology of activities and conceptual and material resources, rather than existing inside individual heads (see also Moore & Hawkins, this volume). According to Hutchins (1995), cognition in the wild:

> refers to human cognition in its natural habitat – that is, to naturally occurring culturally constituted human activity. […] I have in mind the distinction between the laboratory, where cognition is studied in captivity, and the everyday world, where human cognition adapts to its natural surroundings. I hope to evoke with this metaphor a sense of an ecology of thinking in which human cognition interacts with an environment rich in organizing resources. (pp. xiii – xiv)

Also from an anthropological orientation, the work by Goodwin is essential to our research for understanding "cognition as a public, social process embedded within an historically shaped material world" (2000, p. 1491). Over numerous studies Goodwin shows how action is built through the mobilisation of diverse semiotic resources, including but extending beyond language, as participants mutually arrange their bodies around aspects of their environment, and how objects in the environment create a locus for the organisation of attention. Goodwin (2000) writes that:

> a primordial site for the analysis of human language, cognition, and action consists of a situation in which multiple participants are attempting to carry out courses of action in concert with each other through talk while attending to both the larger activities that their current actions are embedded within, and relevant phenomena in their surround. (p. 1489).

By situating cognition in bodies in space and social interaction, Hutchins' and Goodwin's contributions are harmonious with the view of cognition in conversation analysis (CA), as well as in sociocultural theories of learning, and in sociointeractionist approaches to language learning in particular. CA considers all cognitive properties of people to be rooted within, and thereby accessible from, their situated interaction (Coulter, 1991). CA thus redefines phenomena – such as memory, perception and learning – that have often been treated as individualistic in different approaches to cognition, as activities that are intrinsically social, occasioned and mobilised by people for practical purposes (Kasper, 2008). The present study draws on this CA perspective on cognition, as well as drawing on some of its methodological tools in the analysis of data (see Section 3).

Sociointeractionist researchers of language learning conceive of language use and language learning as two sides of the same coin: naturally occurring social interaction is the genesis of cognitive processes, including second language learning, and is the natural site for their study (Mondada & Pekarek-Doehler, 2004; Pekarek-Doehler, 2013). Furthermore, they propose that if higher thinking processes such as learning are understood as being inextricable from participation in social activity, a CA approach has the capacity to effectively capture emerging phenomena that constitute social interaction and thus cognition.

So far we have connected cognition and learning to bodies in coordinated action and in space. Returning to our discussion on play and drawing on Piazzoli's (2018) work on action and artistry in second language education, we also consider learning – and language learning in particular – to be an aesthetic and emotional experience. The emotional dimensions of language learning have been well studied in sociocultural theory (e.g. Kramsch, 2009). Developing this further, Piazzoli considers teaching and learning as art forms, the work of which may be observed in the interaction (e.g. improvisation) between teachers and learners (or coartists), between learners, and between teachers, learners and educational resources as they are crafted into lessons. The artistic processes of teaching and learning "involve not only cognition, but also affect, imagery, sensation, different forms of memory, emotion and embodiment" (Piazzoli, 2019, p. 8). In making her arguments in favour of an aesthetic and emotional approach to second language education, Piazzoli draws on Winston (2010), who develops beauty as an educational concept, examining the cognitive, affective and moral consequences of the experience of beauty, for example in the use of drama in second language teaching. Piazzoli also cites neuroscientist Immordino-Yang (2016), who claims:

> Understanding the role of emotions in learning goes far beyond recognizing the emotion a student is having about a situation in order to design learning environments that strategically manipulate students' reactions. […] Instead, understanding emotions is also (and perhaps even more critically) about the *meaning* that students are making – that is, the ways in which students and teachers are *experiencing* or feeling their emotional regions and how their feelings steer thoughts and behaviour, consciously or not. Emotions are not add-ons that are distinct from cognitive skills. Instead emotions, such as interest, anxiety, frustration, excitement, or a sense of awe in beholding beauty, become a dimension of the skill itself. (p. 21, cited in Piazzoli, 2018, p. 3)

Retaining these different perspectives on language learning as situated in embodied action, and intimately tied to aesthetics and emotions, we now turn to the methodology employed in collecting and analysing the data studied in this chapter.

3. Methodology

The video data analysed in this chapter were recorded over four weeks in a regular class slot used for curricular reinforcement at one of the secondary schools involved in the IEP! project (see Moore, this volume). The activity itself lasted a whole term, as did the ethnographic observations. The teacher in charge of the slot (Almudena Herrera, one of the authors of this chapter) decided to use the time to set up a nonformal activity to help students improve their English through theatre. At the beginning of the term, the students were assigned to groups and were provided with different scripts from the *Get on stage* (Puchta et al., 2012) resource book. Over several weeks the students read, memorised and rehearsed their scripts, working on their reading comprehension, pronunciation and performance skills. They did so in a large, multifunctional room at the school, equipped with a stage (with curtains and lighting), reading booths and moveable chairs. Some groups were more committed to the process than others, with several choosing not to continue with the activity, and others being actively engaged, including one group of girls who eventually performed their play on stage at the local theatre as part of a community event. This is the group whose process is examined in this chapter. This group most often occupied the raised stage area of the room during the sessions and made use of its material affordances, including some props found in the wings.

Similar to the different studies making up the IEP! project, the data were collected following a collaborative ethnographic (Lassiter, 2005) and action-research

process, with two of the authors – Almudena Herrera and Emilee Moore – taking on different but complementary roles (Nussbaum, 2017). The sessions were designed and led by Almudena, while Emilee participated in them as researcher and teaching assistant. As Nussbaum explains, and we explored in our collaborative work:

> Research in schools […] entails a long journey of mutual recognition and trust between the researchers and the teaching staff, and a negotiation of give-and-take. In our experience, the most effective reward for both parties is engaging in a mutually satisfying project in which both the researchers and the teachers occupy complementary spaces – rather than asymmetrical ones – to collaboratively build educational knowledge. For external research teams working in a school, this option represents an excellent opportunity to acquire educational experience, to compare theory and practice, and as a source of inspiration for future investigations. For teachers, it offers a chance to share their professional concerns with colleagues who can help them to reflect upon them, as well as the reward of being a collaborative participant in building didactic knowledge and disseminating it jointly. (p. 47)

Both adults guided the students through the dramatic process, reading and rehearsing with them, correcting their pronunciation, and so on, while also allowing the students to take on most of the work as 'directors' of the play themselves. Both adults also filmed the students at times using a handheld video camera. Different students also took on the responsibility of filming their classmates, while others were spectators who were more or less taken into account by the group rehearsing on stage. Thus, in the sessions studied there was always an 'audience' physically present, besides the imagined audience of a potential final performance.

In terms of the analysis, the process followed the principles of conversation analysis and incorporated Mandy Deal, the third author of this chapter. The video data were analysed at a situated level – tracing phenomena within each recording – as well as longitudinally – tracing phenomena across recordings – to study how the young people collaboratively construct actions and activities, including language learning. We take an emic approach, rather than an etic one; in other words, we consider the phenomena that emerge in the data and consider the meaning of different interactional moves from the perspective of the young people according to their behaviours, rather than interpreting the data based on a priori categorisations about what interaction and phenomena such as learning should look like. Throughout this process of unmotivated looking (Sacks, 1984) our ethnographic knowledge about the learners and the context was available to us. However, following conversation analysis principles, as researchers we

also needed to be in a position to distance ourselves from the data and not seek to uncover any deeper understanding of events than what was made relevant by the participants themselves (ten Have, 2002). This stance of "ethnomethodological indifference" (Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970, p. 345) towards the data studied has been consciously sought.

4. Analysis

The analysis presented in this section is framed around two main themes: 1) how a group of students make their communication real or authentic as they work with the script of *Colin the poet*; 2) evidence of their language learning. In terms of the first, we present a microanalysis of two short extracts which indicate how the students construct authentic language in their character roles, out of their character roles, and with spectators present. As for the second analytical focus, we present a more panoramic view of some of the evidence of the young people's learning identified across the corpus.

As we have mentioned already, although two adults – the English teacher and the researcher – were present in the different sessions, the students were largely left to self-direct as they worked from a static, drama text to a stage text. In section 4.1 of the analysis, we firstly examine their interaction in their character roles: Mrs Atkins, Mr Atkins, Colin (their son and the protagonist), Fred (Colin's elder brother), Kate (Colin's elder sister) and the Postie, and follow this with an analysis of their out-of-role communication. The six male and female characters were played by five actresses, sometimes fewer if a group member failed to attend, such as in Extract 1. In the extracts the students are referred to by the characters' names, whether or not they are acting in-role.

4.1. Making *Colin the poet* real: in-role authenticity

In making their in-role communication authentic, the students employed a multimodal interactional ensemble. For example, if playing more than one character, the students would change the position of their bodies on stage and use different vocal resources to indicate these different roles. They also used gaze at the other characters with whom they were interacting (i.e. rather than at the script), prosodic resources (e.g. intonation – pitch, stress, rhythm – for marking emphasis, for expressing anger or annoyance, excitement, begging) and symbolic, embodied actions (e.g. pretending to clean, eat, drink, make and serve food

and tea, opening doors). These embodied actions were usually accompanied by physical objects found in the room, which were often symbolically repurposed as props (e.g. the stage curtain became the door, some cut off plastic bottle ends became teacups, some broken pieces of styrofoam became plates). Authenticity was also given to the stage text by spontaneously adding spoken lines and actions that were not part of the original script.

Many of these features of the students' in-role interaction may be observed in Extract 1, which was recorded in week two of the four weeks that were filmed of the process. As we saw in the introduction to this chapter, the opening scene of *Colin the poet* includes Mr Atkins and Mrs Atkins having breakfast, as Colin enters. Several lines later, Fred also enters the scene and joins his parents and brother at the table, after which the following exchange takes place in the script, which the students rehearse in Extract 1:

Mrs Atkins:	Would you like some toast with your tea?
Fred:	Yes, please.
Colin:	D'you want your toast
	As white as a ghost?
Fred:	Be quiet, Colin! I want brown crispy toast, please.

(Puchta et al., 2012, pp. 50–51)

Extract 1

Characters from left to right: Mrs Atkins (MRS); Fred (FRE), Colin (COL), Mr Atkins (MRA)

```
01 MRS   would you like        MRS reads the script on her mobile phone,
02       some toast (.)        all other characters also look down at
                               the script saved to their phones.
03       with your tea?
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                               MRS and FRE make eye contact.
04 FRE   yes please.           FRE slaps hand on the table.
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05 (4)

MRA performs the action of drinking tea,
using a cut-off plastic bottle end as a
teacup, making eye contact with MRS.

06 MRA   hm <u>delicious</u>.

MRA looks at COL, anticipating next line.

07 (3)

MRS and MRA make eye contact, MRS also
performs the action of drinking tea, also
using a cut-off plastic bottle end as a
teacup.

08 MRS   [((slurps, coughs))
09 COL   [do you want your   MRS and MRA sustain eye contact, COL
10   toast as a white as   reads from phone while unscrewing lid
11   a ghost?   from small plastic bottle of water.
12 MRA   ((coughs))   COL performs drinking tea using plastic
                                          bottle, MRA coughs, sustaining eye
                                          contact with FRE.

In lines 1–2, the student performing Mrs Atkins reads her lines, looking down at her mobile phone. The other characters also look down at their phones as they follow the script. In line 3, as Mrs Atkins completes the question she is asking Fred, she and Fred look up and make eye contact. Fred then says his line without consulting the script and adds an embodied action that was not included in the drama text, slapping his hand on the table enthusiastically (line 4).

Several seconds of silence follow (line 5), during which Mr Atkins acts out drinking tea from a cut-off plastic bottle end, making eye contact with Mrs Atkins as he does so. He then ad libs a line that was not included in the script, claiming the tea is "delicious!" (line 6). As he does so, he looks at Colin, whose line the characters are anticipating as they follow the script. The silence continues (line 7), and Mrs Atkins replicates Mr Atkins' drinking action, using a similar cut-off plastic bottle end. She sustains eye contact with Mr Atkins as she drinks, showing playful complicity with him, then improvises a slurping noise and a cough that were not part of the drama text.

The latter happen in overlap with Colin's scripted lines (9–11). As Colin reads his lines, he unscrews the lid off a small plastic water bottle, which he then drinks from, emulating the action of drinking tea performed by the other characters. Colin sustains eye contact with Fred, who is the next speaker in the script, as he drinks. Meanwhile, Mr Atkins improvises a cough in line 12, responding to the cough performed by Mrs Atkins in line 8.

Thus, with the use of props and the improvisation of lines and actions that were not part of the script, the students begin to transform the prescribed drama text into a stage text they own and make real as characters of the play. What stands out in this extract is the reciprocal effect of the students' improvised lines and actions, with a symbolic, embodied action initiated by Mr Atkins (i.e. drinking tea) being taken up by Mrs Atkins and Colin, and then elaborated by Mrs Atkins who adds a slurp and a cough, the latter being then incorporated by Mr Atkins into his own performative repertoire. It is also interesting that while the students do read most of their lines from their phones, they also make eye contact at significant interactional moments, such as to address their turns at the next speaker (i.e. lines 3 and 12), thereby displaying orientation to making their in-role communication authentic.

4.2. Making *Colin the poet* real: Out-of-role authenticity

The students also bring authenticity to the text when stepping out of their character roles, to comment on aspects of the rehearsal and correct each other's lines as 'directors' of the play, or to seek assistance from others. We see such real out-of-role communication in Extract 2, from the fourth week of the data collection. In this case there is a fifth character present, Kate, and Mr and Mrs Atkins have

switched place at the table. The students have also incorporated new props found
in the room into the scene, being a mop, a washcloth and some cleaning liquid.
They are being filmed by another student, María, and Emilee, the researcher, is
looking on. The students are practicing the following lines from the text:

Kate: Stop bugging me, Colin!
Mr Atkins: Colin, *please*! we want peace and quiet!

<div align="right">(Puchta et al., 2012, p. 51)</div>

Extract 2

Characters from left to right: Mr Atkins (MRA); Fred (FRE), Colin (COL), Kate
(KAT), Mrs Atkins (MRS). María (MAR) – a student filming the rehearsal – and
Emilee (EMI) – the researcher – also take part in the interaction.

```
01 MAR  °pst°
02 KAT  stop bugging me      MRA, FRE and COL look towards MAR (who is
03      colin                filming), KAT nudges COL with elbow.
04 MAR  (   )
05 FRE  ((to MAR)) qué?
        what?
06 MRA  estoy aquí           MRA fiddles with a wash cloth.
07      (limpiando) vale?
        i am here
        (cleaning) ok?
08 (5)
09 FRE  ((to EMI)) cómo
10      se dice que
11      tengo sueño
12      ((laughs))?
        how do you say
        i'm tired?
13 EMI  i'm tired.
14 FRE  ((to EMI)) qué?
        what?
15 EMI  i'm tired.
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16 FRE  [i'm tired.
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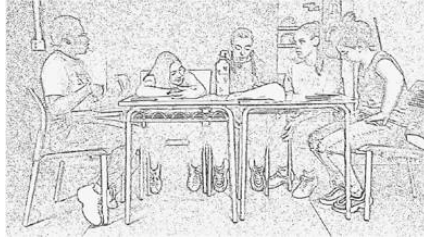


```
FRE puts head down on table, exaggerated,
performing tiredness.
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17 MRA  [ah we're
18      tired.
19 COL  no. colin
20      please we want
21      peace and quiet
22 MRA  pues eso.
        well that.
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In line 1, María tries to get the performers' attention by whispering at them loud enough to be heard on stage: "pst". Mr Atkins, Fred and Colin look at her, while Kate continues with her line (lines 2–3), telling Colin to "stop bugging" her, adding a nudge, which was not scripted. Maria says something to the group that is neither understandable in the recording nor to the students on stage, as Fred asks her "qué?" ("what?") in line 5. Mr Atkins makes an out-of-role metacomment about his embodied actions, telling his peers that he is cleaning, as he fiddles with the washcloth, which he folds and unfolds.

After a long silence (line 8), Fred looks to Emilee and asks her "cómo se dice que tengo sueño?" ("how do you say I'm tired?"), laughing as he does so (lines 9–12). Emilee provides the English translation for him (line 13), which Fred asks her to repeat. After Emilee repeats the sentence in line 15, Fred says it too as he puts his head down on the table in an exaggerated, performative manner. Thus, both student-actor Fred and in-character Fred seem to express their tiredness.

Fred's actions happen in overlap with Mr Atkins', who adapts Emilee's input in the first person singular ("I'm tired") to the first person plural form ("we are tired", lines 17–18). He does so following an "ah" change of state token, suggesting that he had been searching for his line and takes Fred's and Emilee's turns as appropriate prompts (lines 17–18). Colin, who has been following the script on his phone, corrects Mr Atkins in the following lines (19–21), reading from the text: "Colin please we want peace and quiet". Interestingly, Mr Atkins'

"we're tired" could be considered a good approximation of the scripted "we want peace and quiet", suggesting that he understood the meaning that his line was meant to transmit, although he forgot the exact words. Mr Atkins accepts Colin's correction in line 22, "pues eso" ("well that") although he does not repeat it, possibly satisfied that his version was adequate enough in expressing the scripted meaning.

In this second extract, we thus see how one of the characters, Fred, takes advantage of a pause in the flow of the rehearsal, caused both by Maria's interruption and Mr Atkins' forgetting his lines, to step out of his role and seek Emilee's assistance expressing his in-character or out-of-character feelings in English. He thereby creates an authentic language learning moment, which is effective as not only he, but also Mr Atkins, show uptake of the translation provided by the researcher (De Pietro et al., 1989). It is also interesting how the lines between out-of-role and in-role interactions are blurred in the extract, as non-scripted language input from an off-script moment is incorporated into the performance. Finally, it is important to highlight the directorship role taken on by the students, in this case by making metacomments about the embodied actions being performed (Mr Atkins) or by correcting their peers' lines (Colin). The latter is also interesting as it reveals different understandings of what bringing the text to stage means: Mr Atkins performs a free adaptation while Colin focuses on scripted accuracy. All of these features, we argue, bring the static, written text to life as an authentic communicative experience.

4.3. Evidence of learning

In this section of the analysis, we comment on some of the changes in the students' performance observed over the four weeks of videorecorded sessions and their implications for the students' language learning. Firstly, over time, the students became less dependent on reading the script and their gazes towards their cointeractants grew longer. In earlier rehearsals (e.g. Extract 1), they tended to read the script and looked at the next speaker at the end of their turns. In the latter rehearsals (e.g. Extract 2), there are attempts to depend less on the script and to sustain eye contact longer. Gazing at interlocutors is in competition with reading the script, leading to more interruptions due to forgetting lines, such as in Extract 2. However, the students' increasing use of eye contact is an indication of their growing understanding of the text and of the rules of real-life communication.

We also see changes in the use of props (e.g. from teacups in Extract 1 to cleaning products in Extract 2), in the distribution of the space (e.g. in Mr

and Mrs Atkins' switching places in Extracts 1 and 2) and in the characters' embodied actions across the videorecordings. These features reflect the students' interpretation of the task as play – they find objects around the room, give them a symbolic use and incorporate them into the set design and their embodied dispositions – as well as their focus on the task as an aesthetic experience. This play, following Cook (1997), is also rule-governed, with the students taking on directorship roles; for example to correct wrong lines (Extract 2). Furthermore, the students' embodied actions appear to be increasingly coordinated with the talk, with others and with props as the rehearsals progress.

Later rehearsals also showed increasing emotional reactions, such as in Fred's embodied performance of tiredness in Extract 2. Emotions such as annoyance at Colin's rhyming speech, which are expressed in the characters' spoken lines, also become increasingly expressed in the actors' embodied actions (e.g in Kate's nudging Colin in Extract 2).

Finally, there is concrete evidence of language learning, in terms of new language picked up (e.g. "I'm tired" and "we're tired" in Extract 2) and particularly in terms of correcting the pronunciation of certain words. In earlier recordings, for example, "tea" is pronounced /tea/. Following corrections from the teacher, researcher and peers, it is pronounced /ti/ in later recordings. Similarly, the pronunciation of "quiet" transitions from /kiɛt/ to /kwaɪət/ as an outcome of assistance from others. We consider these instances as potential acquisition sequences (De Pietro et al., 1989), in an approach to language learning as situated in social interaction (Firth & Wagner, 2007; Mori, 2007).

5. Discussion and conclusions

We began this chapter by considering the meaning of authenticity in foreign language learning, especially in reference to learning materials published in textbooks, as in the case of the *Colin the poet* play. We argued that viewing authenticity simply in terms of real language conveying real messages produced by real speakers or writers for real audiences (Morrow, 1977, p. 13, cited in Gilmore, 2007, p. 98) was inadequate, and instead adopted Breen's four types of authenticity – of language input texts, of learners' interpretations of texts, of language learning tasks, and of classroom interactions – as offering a more complex representation of how texts – in our case a drama text – could be made real by learners. Following Cook (1997), we also connected authenticity to play. Finally, we introduced different perspectives on learning as embodied action, aesthetics and emotion, and in particular

were influenced by Piazzoli's (2019) work on drama – as well as art and artistry more generally – in language teaching and learning. Through the analysis of videorecorded interactions in English theatre sessions with a group of secondary school students, we showed how seemingly inauthentic language input was transformed into a real, embodied, aesthetic and emotional learning experience by the youth.

The use of props, the stage space, embodied actions and the students' emotions are essential in this transformation. Indeed, the authenticity of the language learning experience studied cannot be considered in isolation from the multimodal ensemble of resources deployed by the learners. For example, a student in Extract 2 exploits the possibilities of the classroom context as an authentic interactional space, calling on the researcher for language input to express a real feeling. The students also show how they orient to the language learning task as one meant for their enjoyment, for play – this is not a task to be rushed through, or to be done solely for a hypothetical real audience in the future, but rather one meant for the students' enjoyment in the present. Furthermore, we have shown how the students' use of multimodal resources both gives meaning to the script (i.e. scaffolds the students' understanding of it) and allows them to construct and display new meanings. That is, the use of props, the space and embodied actions both mediate understanding for the characters and for potential spectators. In short, through their talk and actions, the young people show their understanding that language and language learning are inextricably done while constructing real life.

Finally, we offer some reflections on the collaborative research process that we have presented. We began this chapter with the observation that the *Colin the poet* drama script chosen by the teacher (Almudena Herrera) might be rapidly identified by language education professionals and researchers as being 'inauthentic' or including 'nonnatural' language, and thus disregarded as a valuable teaching and learning resource. Being entirely honest, this was also the first impression of the researcher (Emilee Moore) who attended the drama sessions. What the process studied in this chapter suggests, however, is that the teacher's intuition that this fabricated drama script would support meaningful learning for her students was indeed verified by the empirical evidence gathered. Collaborative research, as we have understood it in the IEP! project, involves teachers, researchers and other members of educational communities taking on complementary roles, in order to jointly build knowledge. Such complementarity entails being critical of epistemological hierarchies, which in more traditional approaches would place university-researchers as the 'knowers' and others as 'learners'. This hierarchy of 'knowing' was flattened in the study presented herein, which in turn allowed for

the disruption of preconceived ideas and the generation of new understandings of language learning.

Acknowledgements

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