

# APPLIED DRAMA IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Doctor of Philosophy in Education

By

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## Abstract

This thesis is a reflective exploration of the use and impact of using drama pedagogies in the English as a Second Language (ESL)/ English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. It stems from the problem of secondary school English language learning in Malaysia, where current teaching practices appear to have led to the decline of the standard of English as a second language in school leavers and university graduates (Abdul Rahman, 1997; Carol Ong Teck Lan, Anne Leong Chooi Khaun, & Singh, 2011; Hazita et al., 2010; Nalliah & Thiyagarajah, 1999). This problem resonates with my own experiences at school, as a secondary school student, an ESL teacher and, later, as a teacher trainer. Consequently, these experiences led me to explore alternative or supplementary teaching methodologies that could enhance the ESL learning experience, drawing initially from drama techniques such as those advocated by Maley and Duff (1983), Wessels (1987), and Di Pietro (1983), and later from process drama pedagogies such as those advocated by Greenwood (2005); Heathcote and Bolton (1995); Kao and O'Neill (1998), and Miller and Saxton (2004). This thesis is an account of my own exploration in adapting drama pedagogies to ESL/EFL teaching. It examines ways in which drama pedagogies might increase motivation and competency in English language learning.

The main methodology of the study is that of reflective practice (e.g. Griffiths & Tann, 1992; Zeichner & Liston, 1996). It tracks a learning journey, where I critically reflect on my learning, exploring and implementing such pedagogical approaches as well as evaluate their impact on my students' learning. These critical reflections arise from three case studies, based on three different contexts: the first a New Zealand English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) class in an intermediate school, the second a Malaysian ESL class in a rural secondary school, and the third an English proficiency class of adult learners in a language school. Data for the study were obtained through the following: research journal and reflective memo; observation and field notes; interview; social media; students' class work; discussion with co-researchers; and through the literature of the field.

A major teaching methodology that emerges from the reflective cycles is that of *staging the textbook*, where the textbook section to be used for the teaching programme is distilled, and the key focuses of the language, skills, vocabulary, and themes to be learnt are identified and extracted. A layer of drama is matched with these distilled elements and then 'staged' on top of the textbook unit, incorporating context-setting opportunities, potential for a story, potential for tension or complication, and the target language elements.

The findings that emerge through critical reflection in the study relate to the drama methodologies that I learn and acquire, the impact of these methodologies on students, the role of culture in the application of drama methodologies, and language learning and acquisition. These findings have a number of implications. Firstly, they show how an English Language Teaching (ELT) practitioner might use drama

methodologies and what their impact is on student learning. While the focus is primarily on the Malaysian context, aspects of the findings may resonate internationally. Secondly, they suggest a model of reflective practice that can be used by other ELT practitioners who are interested in using drama methodologies in their teaching. Thirdly, these findings also point towards the development of a more comprehensive syllabus for using drama pedagogies, as well as the development of reflective practice, in the teacher training programmes in Malaysia.

The use of drama pedagogies for language learning is a field that has not been researched in a Malaysian context. Therefore, this account of reflective practice offers a platform for further research and reflection in this context.

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## List of key terms and abbreviations

ESL	English as a Second Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
SPM	<i>Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia</i> or Malaysian Certificate of Education
PMR	<i>Penilaian Menengah Rendah</i> or Lower Secondary Assessment
KBSM	<i>Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah</i> or the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools (ICSS)
PPSMI	<i>Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Sains dan Matematik dalam Bahasa Inggeris</i> or the Teaching of Mathematics and Science in English
MBMMBI	<i>Memartabatkan Bahasa Malaysia dan Memperkukuh Bahasa Inggeris</i> or To Uphold Bahasa Malaysia and To Strengthen The English Language
ESB	English speaking background
NESB	Non-English speaking background
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
SES	Socio-economic Status
ERHEC	Educational Research Human Ethics Committee
TiR	Teacher in Role
SiR	Student in Role
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
PBL	Problem-based learning
L1	First language/mother tongue
L2	Second language
Pn	<i>Puan</i> – A Malay terms signifying a woman is married, but unlike the ‘Mrs.’, the name is her own first name
IPG	<i>Institut Pendidikan Guru</i> or Teacher Training Institute
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TEYL	Teaching English to Young Learners
<i>Bumiputra</i>	Malay term for natives, literally ‘princes of the earth’, or <i>tangata whenua</i> in Māori



APPLIED DRAMA  
IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING





# Chapter 1: Introduction

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## Introduction

This thesis addresses the problem of secondary school English language learning in Malaysia. It is an account of my own exploration in adapting process drama pedagogies to ESL teaching. As such it examines the ways in which drama pedagogies might increase motivation and competency in English language learning, and it reports my critical reflections on my own journey in learning, exploring and implementing such pedagogical approaches as well as evaluating their impact on my students' learning. These critical reflections arise from three case studies, the second of which has been divided into two chapters. This thesis, therefore, offers an account of reflective practice as well as an experiential analysis of the learning and teaching involved in a number of successive case studies. From these it offers recommendations for use of drama pedagogies in ESL and for further research into its effectiveness.

My search for better ways to teach ESL began with frustration about reported weaknesses in the way ESL has been taught in Malaysia, starting from the relegation of English to being a second language as a result of the Razak Report in 1956 (Gaudart, 1987). Hence, English language teaching began to undergo various changes of instructional methods such as grammar-translation, the direct method from the 1956 until 1970 (Asmah Haji Omar, 1984), to the communicative approach in 1982 which resulted from a "dissatisfaction with the old curriculum which was thought to be too subject content-biased, too much [sic] emphasis on rote-learning, too exam oriented, and excessive [sic] dependence on textbooks" (M. N. Lee, 1997, p. 12). Subsequently, in an effort to make Malaysia competitive in the global knowledge economy market, the teaching of mathematics and science in English (PPSMI) was started in 2003 (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2011a), but was abandoned seven years later in light of the continuing decline of the standard of English, as well as a decline in two other main subjects that were affected: Mathematics and Science (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). This trend of fluctuation in English language policy continued with the introduction of yet another Government initiative, the MBMMBI, or the 'to uphold Bahasa Malaysia and to Strengthen the English Language' initiative (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2011b). This was the result of the continuous decline of English language at school, as well as the accumulative result of reports such as those from Nalliah and Thiyagarajah (1999), Hazita et al. (2010), and Carol Ong Teck Lan et al. (2011) that found a large portion of Malaysian school leavers and university graduates were unable to communicate in English effectively. One of the contributing factors that was suggested lay in how the school-exit examination did not reflect authentic oral communication (Abdul Rahman, 1997), which could also imply that preparation for the examination in the language classroom would also lack this element of authentic communication. These

findings strongly corroborated my own experiences at school, as a secondary school student, an ESL teacher; and later as a teacher trainer.

This frustration led me to explore alternative or supplementary teaching methodologies that could enhance the teaching of ESL in my own teaching context. The decision to examine the use of drama pedagogies came from international advocacy (for example Baldwin, 2004; Greenwood, 2005; Heathcote & Bolton, 1995; Kao & O'Neill, 1998; Maley & Duff, 2005; Ntelioglou, 2011; Stinson, 2009) about the efficacy of this approach. That advocacy resonated for me because I had a long-term interest in acting and theatre.

The use of drama pedagogies on language learning is a field that has not been researched in a Malaysian context. Therefore, this account of reflective practice offers a platform for further research and reflection.

My central research question thus focuses on the reflective nature of the exploration as well as on the perceived impact on student learning.

## **Research question**

What have I learned, as an ELT practitioner, about the use and impact of drama pedagogies?

### **Sub-questions**

1. What are the changes in the students' level of English proficiency after undergoing a drama in ESL course?
2. What are the changes in the students' level of English language appropriacy after undergoing a drama in ESL course?
3. What is the level of engagement of the students while undergoing a drama in ESL course?
4. What changes have I made, am making, and have still to make in my practice?

## **Context for research methodology & emergent focus**

My role in the study is one that requires identification and careful framing. I entered the research as an experienced ESL practitioner. I had some experience of theatre and had used some drama strategies in my secondary ESL classroom, and also later in my initial teacher education programme with my teacher trainees in university.

My initial experience served as a reference point upon entering this study. I began with a basic premise that had long been of interest to me. I wanted to find out how to make language classes interesting and engaging, and yet at the same time I wanted the students to be able to learn what they were supposed to learn, as well as having fun in the process. This was especially relevant to me, being raised in a comparatively liberal British education system, and moving to one that was highly structured and examination-based in the Malaysian education system. As a teacher who had the benefit of experiencing

both education systems, I was in the position to compare and contrast the teaching and learning styles, and how they were different in the two separate contexts I was in. Consequently, as someone who had been very interested in the arts, especially acting and drama, I knew that I wanted to do something that infused the elements of drama into my own teaching styles. These decisions were mulled over and carried out just over a decade ago when I first started teaching, and since then my interest in using drama pedagogies to make my lessons interesting sustained, to the point where I taught it at university level to teacher trainees. This led me to the path of the PhD research I now describe.

## Research paradigms

My learning journey in essence is one of reflective practice, where within the boundaries of the study I engage in a continuous cycle of self-reflection and evaluation (Brookfield, 1995), in order to understand the actions that I take and their implications for my own practice, as well as for the students that I teach. This process of acquiring knowledge and insights through and from experience, according to Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985), is associated with deep learning as opposed to superficial surface learning (Moon, 1999), where the goal is not necessarily to gain insights as a reaction to a problem that the practitioner faces. Instead, it is the process of observing and refining practice on an ongoing basis (F. M. A. Cunningham, 2001).

The research is also an action research, which in accordance to Somekh's (2006, p. 6) definition, "integrates research and action in a series of flexible cycles". These steps holistically involve "the collection of data about the topic of investigation; analysis and interpretation of those data; the planning and introduction of action strategies to bring about positive changes; and evaluation of those changes through further data collection, analysis and interpretation ... and so forth". This is continued until a decision is made to stop the process and publish the outcomes. In fact, the intersecting areas between action research and reflective practice are many (Zuber-Skerritt, 1996, 1992; Wilhelm and Edmiston, 1996; Susman, 1983; as cited in Greenwood, 1999), in that they are both "investigative approaches that involve participants in inquiry that is collaborative and critical, that tries out ideas on-line, that combines practice and research as two faces of the same coin, and that seeks better practice" (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992; Taylor, 1996, as cited in Greenwood, 1999, p. 23). Even so, Greenwood (1999) highlights the fact that some theorists (Taylor; Wilhelm and Edmiston) differentiate the two in terms of their purpose and orientation. Action research is more concerned with affecting change in a specific situation, whereas reflective practice is geared towards professional and development (ibid.).

Here I am less interested in the difference that the integration of the two approaches. The research is reflective practice as it tracks my professional learning journey to becoming a better language teaching practitioner by learning to use drama pedagogies in my teaching. It is also an action research as it attempts to discover which ways of using drama pedagogies result in better ways of learning for my students, which in turn inform my learning journey as a language teacher.

At the initial stage of its inception, this study started out as an experimental mixed-mode research, blending qualitative and quantitative research paradigms, with the quantitative being my preferred mode of research since my first degree days. This was because I felt a sense of security in numbers, where I thought that facts and figures in empirical research do not lie.

However, it became increasingly clear after starting the research process that a quantitative-heavy paradigm could not cater to the increasingly self-reflective nature my research. I needed a research paradigm that would allow me to be as subjective as I had to be, without feeling that numbers were needed to back up insights and observations that a researcher makes. Rubin and Babbie (2009) stipulate that the qualitative research paradigm allowed for this by permitting the use of “research procedures to evolve as more observations are gathered and that typically permit the use of subjectivity to generate deeper understandings of the meaning of human experience”. Merriam (2009, p. 13) adds to the focus on qualitative research by stating that qualitative research is primarily “interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world”.

### **The case study as research method**

The research takes place in what Yin (2009) describes as a bounded context (Yin, 2009), and therefore may be called a self-reflective case study. This case study has two aspects, which are i) the overarching learning journey as a case study; and ii) the embedded cases that inform the learning journey. These embedded cases studies, labelled as Frames in this thesis, would be described in as much detail as possible, followed by a detailed analysis which was scrutinised through various lenses from the theoretical framework. Yin (2009, p. 18) notes that by using case study, a researcher is able to investigate a phenomenon “in depth and within real-life contexts, especially when boundaries between the phenomenon and its contexts are not clearly evident”. Yin also believes that a case study should not limit itself to one source of information, but should play on one of its biggest strengths, which is the ability to utilise multiple sources of evidence. As such, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, the case study also incorporated a multiple case design that was made up of three embedded individual cases. According to Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007), multiple case studies can produce a stronger conceptual framework that is grounded in rich evidence, and enables the researcher to gain insight into their informants’ views and perspectives. In turn, the analysis of the multiple cases would inform me, the researcher, of the progress of my learning journey as a researcher and practitioner.

In the design of this study, I utilised three embedded multiple case studies. Each embedded case had its own set of guiding questions, that developed from the specific context and that helped refine and address the research questions. An overview of these cases studies will be described in the Methodology chapter, and will subsequently be described and analysed in detail in the ensuing case study chapters (Chapters 4,5 & 6).

## Contexts for the study

The contexts for all the case studies need description. There are three distinct research contexts in two different countries that occur in this research. The first context, described in Frame 1 (Chapter 4), is an ESOL class in a New Zealand intermediate school, where the students were children of Korean and Chinese immigrants who had been classified as needing extra attention to work on their English. The school followed the guidelines in the New Zealand curriculum in teaching them. The second context, described in Frame 2 (Chapter 5), is of the Malaysian English as a Second Language (ESL) context, specifically, that of ESL in a rural school in Malaysia. All of the students were taught using a textbook that covered the prescribed ESL curriculum, which was standardised to enable the students to sit for a major national standardised examination. The third context is described in Frame 3 (Chapter 5), where the students were international students studying English in a language school in New Zealand. They were not studying towards any qualification in English, but were studying English mainly for general proficiency.

## The English language in Malaysian education

Since Malaysia is a former colony of the British Empire, its education system was very much based on the British education system. The result was the establishment of famous schools such as the Penang Free School, the first English school open to the public, and the Malay College of Kuala Kangsar (MCKK) which was established in 1905, where the medium of instruction was exclusively in English. Education in these schools, especially the MCKK, was initially only accessible to the aristocratic Malay families barring a few exceptions, but this changed in 1947 with the rise of Malay nationalism in the wake of the Second World War ([www.mckk.edu.my](http://www.mckk.edu.my)).

In brief, Malaysia's steps towards a national identity further developed throughout the 1960's and 1970's, where the Malay language started replacing English as the medium of instruction from 1969 at primary school level. The first cohort of Malaysians educated in Malay reached university level in 1983. When this full cycle was complete, English had officially been relegated from its place as the first language in Malaysia to its status as a second language.

Ideally, English language proficiency should not have to suffer greatly, as it is and has always been included in the Malaysian education curriculum. Theoretically, as a second language, the basics of the English language should be mastered by the time a student finishes Lower Secondary Assessment or Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR). This would mean that according the syllabus of the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools (ICSS) or in Malay the *Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah* (KBSM), by the time a student finishes PMR, he or she should among other things be able to form simple, compound and complex sentences, carry out rudimentary conversations, and have a basic knowledge of grammar.

Again hypothetically, with the knowledge and skills learnt throughout years of studying English at school, the typical high school graduate in Malaysia should be able to enter university, graduate, get a job and function in a society with English as its second language.

### **Challenges of English as a Second Language**

Unfortunately, as many teachers in both secondary and tertiary levels can attest, many students' proficiency levels of the English language are below the desired standard set by the Ministry of Education (Nalliah & Thiyagarajah, 1999). These students are unable to communicate effectively in English, score low marks in English examinations, and worse still, are not interested in learning English. My own experience as a former teacher in secondary school, a former language trainer in a language training company, and a lecturer of English in university attests to this statement. This inability to communicate well in English was cited as one of the issues that Malaysian employers had with local (Malaysian) university graduates (Hazita et al., 2010). In fact, a survey that was conducted by the National Education Research Institute of Malaysia (NAHERI, 2003, as cited in Puteh-Behak, 2013) revealed that alongside the inability to communicate well in English, the majority of unemployed graduates did not possess any interest in communicating in English.

Therefore, in order to understand the problem, one has to come face to face with the reality of the situation. Although English enjoys the status of being a second language in Malaysia, the reality is far different than expected. It can be questioned whether English is indeed a second language as claimed, or whether it is in fact a foreign language according to the different demographics found in the whole of the country. Additionally, there are contributing problems to be considered.

First of all, there are the students who live in a more urban environment where exposure to English as a second language (ESL) could be accessed more easily. Within this environment students are more prone to hear, see, and use English, and each time this occurs the students' acquisition process is reinforced.

The second group of students is the group that comes from a more rural environment, where English plays hardly any more than the role of a foreign language, albeit they are exposed to it on television almost every day. The participants of the second case study reported in Frame 2 come from this demographic. It has been observed that many of the students have a problem in learning English. That is, after six to 11 years of learning English from primary to secondary level, they still have great difficulty in acquiring a working knowledge of the language and how it works. Many of these students are greatly challenged when attempting to make a single grammatical sentence, and this problem is shared by many Malaysians in wider society. This inadequate proficiency level reflects, and is reflected, in their inability to communicate, their low exam results for English, and their lack of motivation to even learn English. The problems that these students face in learning English are summarised below:

The majority of these students do not get enough language input, and without enough 'i+1' input pitched at their level, these students would not have the needed skills and vocabulary to learn the newer ones that

they are supposed to at their academic level (Krashen, 1988). The 'i+1' here refers to providing input (i) at a level that is not too high for the students to understand, nor should it be at the present level, or a lower level than the students are already at. Therefore, the '+1' refers to a single level higher than the students' existing level of knowledge/skill.

Next, the surrounding environment does not offer much use for English, thus making learning English redundant in many ways. Many of the students are from households that work in the agricultural sector or the industrial sector as production-line workers. English is still sometimes seen as the language of the former Colonialist powers, which is one of the key factors of why some so-called 'nationalists' choose ignorance over knowledge in terms of language. This befits the Malaysian slogan "*Bahasa Jiva Bangsa*", or "Language is the soul of a people". However, I have observed that more often than not, it has more to do with not wanting to take the effort to learn the language as opposed to not learning the language due to any core principles. Furthermore, the surrounding environment does not promote the development of English language skills in terms of social acceptance, deeming students who try to speak English as 'show-offs' who are sometimes ostracised by certain quarters of their peer groups. This is especially relevant to the lower proficiency students.

The teaching techniques that seem to be favoured thus far in many schools in Malaysia that I have observed are biased towards the more 'traditional' teaching methods, where the teachers are sometimes reluctant to step away from what is prescribed in textbooks. This would mean that much of the learning is done by students sitting in fixed desk spaces, with the teacher in the front. Moreover, teaching and learning in many of these schools I have mentioned are often unable to accommodate different learning styles, or even to provide a single model of learning that has been based on research about successful language learners. However, it is acknowledged that these are generalisations which may not stand true in every single case.

Of course, there would be other factors contributing to the challenges faced by English as a second language, especially within the rural context, and can only be determined on a case by case basis.

### **PPSMI – The teaching of Mathematics and Science in English**

The steady decline in the standard of the English language became a major point of concern, especially at the turn of the century. This was because although the standard of English continued its downward trend, the increasing forces of globalisation continued to push the need for English even higher. English was seen as the language of international business and commerce, of global communication, and also of mathematics and science. In short, the Malaysian Government realised that it needed an intervention to stop the decline of English, and to ensure that the nation's needs were met in terms of providing skilled workers and traders who were able to perform effectively in the global market. To achieve this, the government under the leadership of the then Prime Minister Mahathir Muhammad introduced the



Teaching of Mathematics and Science in English, otherwise known as PPSMI (*Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Sains dan Matematik dalam Bahasa Inggeris*) in 2003 (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2011)

This policy meant that all Mathematics and Science subjects, including the electives of Additional Mathematics, Biology, Physics and Chemistry, would be taught in English, by the teachers of these subjects. In addition, all PPSMI teachers were given in-house and centralised training in the English language and how to teach in English. Each teacher was also given hardware that included state-of-the-art laptop computers and LCD projectors, and specially designed courseware to teach the said subjects. They were also given training on how to use the hardware and software, and also given access to technical support (provided by the school Information Technology (IT) teachers who were also given special training), and also access to a 'Buddy Support System' provided by an English teacher to make sure the teachers knew how to use English in their teaching. In fact, whole textbooks and curriculums had to be re-written in this education mega-project, just to make sure that the Malaysians of the future were equipped with English in their everyday jobs, and more importantly, were equipped with the knowledge and skills to make them competitive in the global arena.

By the very virtue of this undertaking, it can be seen how seriously the Government acknowledged the importance of English, and how it was not acceptable for English to be sidelined as just another subject to learn at school.

Nevertheless, after just seven years of implementation and heated debate, the project was deemed as a failure by the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2010) and abandoned in 2010. In 2007, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007) conducted by the Institute of Education Sciences under the U.S Department of Education revealed that in the years that Malaysia had implemented the PPSMI initiative (2003 – 2007), the score for Malaysia in Mathematics had declined from 508 to 474, out of an average score of 500. A study conducted by Hamzah & Abdullah (2009) sampled students in classes involving 183 primary school teachers and 241 rural secondary school teachers nationwide, and found that 42.5 percent of primary school teachers and 50.8 percent of secondary school teachers failed in the English Language Proficiency Level Evaluation, which directly affected how well they were able to teach their students. This finding did not include other potential variables such as the students themselves and their own perceptions to learning English. Finally, Hamzah and Abdullah (2009) concluded that many students in rural areas suffered the most from PPSMI, though many students in more urban settings seemed not only to be adjusting, but even prospering, under the policy.

## **The New Zealand contexts**

In the past two decades, New Zealand has seen a great increase in the number of immigrants from all over the world. Data from the census carried out in 2001 reveals that 15 percent of New Zealand children under the age of 15 speak more than one language (M. Franken & McComish, 2003). By the year 2016,

the Asian population of children under 15 alone is projected to have risen to 11 percent of the entire population of the country (Department of Statistics, 2002). This means that the need for non-native speakers of English, or non-English speaking background (NESB) students, to be able to communicate well in their adopted country is of utmost importance. To illustrate the challenge the NESB were up against, M. Franken and McComish (2003, p. 23) developed a model that used English speaking background (ESB) children as a benchmark for the development of four types of proficiency: i) Developing literacies including how to read and write in English; ii) Developing English language proficiency; iii) Developing academic literacies including how to read and write in curriculum areas; and iv) Developing academic proficiency including vocabulary and discourse. In the model, it is projected that migrant NESB children may only start reaching an 'establishing' stage of proficiency (suggesting that it is underway to some extent though no distinction is made to how far the development has proceeded) when they enter later primary at the very least, with English language proficiency (category ii) remaining at the 'emergent' level (suggesting that development of this aspect of literacy is as yet hardly underway) no matter when they enter the New Zealand education system, from early primary to secondary.

There is generally a broad continuum between two categories of language learners that require second language support. Most students fall between learners with little or no knowledge of English, and learners who are fluent in social communication but require assistance in academic English (Corson, 1990). In the New Zealand Ministry of Education's *Non-English-speaking-background students: a handbook for schools* (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1999, p. 7), the goals of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) are to provide "support in learning to communicate in English", and to help NESB to "learn to communicate confidently in English and cope with learning in the mainstream curriculum". To help achieve this, a number of ESOL programme structures are available for each school to choose from, with the most popular ones being: reception programmes for the newly arrived (Genessee, 1999); free standing ESOL programmes where students are grouped in entire classes of NESB students with the aim of meeting immediate communication needs (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 1996); and cooperative ESOL teaching, where the ESOL teacher works alongside the class teacher in a single class (Corson, 1999). In the case described in Frame 1, the student participants in the school were enrolled in the free standing ESOL programme structure where the students were placed in the same classes as the Kiwi peers, but were placed in separate ESOL classes when their first language speaker friends did their normal English classes.

Apart from the immigrant population, English was also marketed as a booming market for knowledge economy in New Zealand (Li, 2003). In 2003, international education was touted as the fourth biggest export earner that contributed two billion dollars to the New Zealand economy (Education New Zealand, 2003, as cited in F. L. Collins, 2006). Although the number of foreign students of English in New Zealand suffered a serious setback in 2005 (Li & Campbell, 2008), A. Richardson (2005) suggested that as long as New Zealand upholds its commitment to quality assurance, export education in New Zealand will

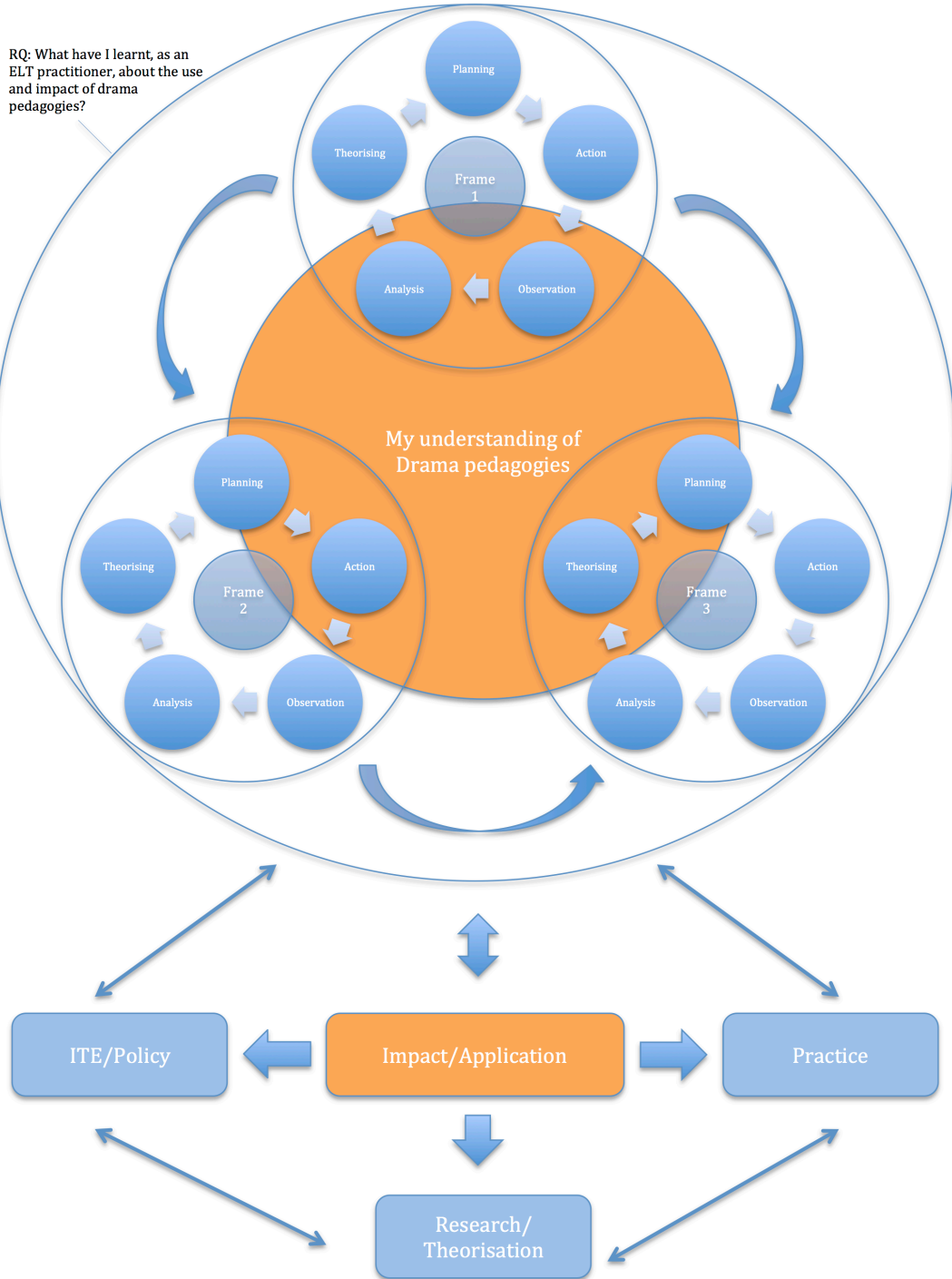
continue to be a desirable commodity to the rest of the world. Furthermore, the New Zealand Ministry of Education acknowledges that the quality and sustainability of domestic education is deeply affected by the influence of international engagement in the education system itself (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2006). In Frame 3, the student participants were adult learners who formed a small part of education system's international engagement, by the virtue of being enrolled in a language school in Christchurch. Therefore, one of the aspirations of this study is that the findings about drama pedagogies in ESL/EFL will add to the quality of language education in New Zealand.

## **Significance of the study**

As a record of reflective practice, the primary significance of the study is to provide a working model of continuous self-improvement in practice as a language teacher. The techniques and activities that I acquired in the process of learning to be an ESL practitioner who is versed in using drama pedagogies had gone through the process of reflection and refinement by the end of the study. It is hoped that this in turn will translate into better teaching, with my students benefitting from better language acquisition as a result from the added value of motivation and engagement in my lessons. Even though the study is primarily a personal reflective learning journey studying specific contexts, it is also believed that there will be overlaps in the areas of interest of other language teachers, especially those who wish to explore using drama in their teaching.

Furthermore, I come to this exploration not just as an ESL practitioner, but also as a university lecturer and a teacher trainer. My own learning through research process gives me first hand experience in learning and applying drama pedagogies to language learning. Not only does this provide the foundation of what I can offer to my student teachers in their ITE (initial teacher education), it also provides an illustration of the kind reflection on learning that is advocated by Ministry policy. ITE in Malaysia stresses the application of lifelong learning in teachers, as well as imparting the value of lifelong learning in their students (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 1987, 2002, 2003). However, at the moment of writing this thesis, there still exists a sparsity in the literature on how Malaysian teachers can work towards this. This thesis aims to partially fill this gap by providing a framework for how reflective practice can be used as a model for lifelong learning.

Although the focus of the output of this research is its application in the Malaysian context, this study also drew from the fieldwork and analysis that was carried out in the New Zealand context (refer to Figure 1 which illustrates the interrelatedness of the three Frames). Thus the study also has relevance to ESL/EFL teachers in New Zealand who are interested in reflective practice, and applying drama pedagogies in their teaching.



**Figure 1:** Thesis framework

## Thesis structure

Chapter 1 provides the introduction into the research, detailing the research question, primary method of study, and the contexts in which the research occur.

In Chapter 2, I describe the methodology that was used in the study, beginning with a description of the overarching methodology of reflective practice, which forms the primary lens for analysis. This is then followed with an overview of the three case studies, the Frames, that form the presentation of the fieldwork of the research. Subsequently, I describe the instruments that were used in the data collection, and also how the data were analysed and presented in the thesis.

The literature reviewed in Chapter 3 provides a theoretical framework from which I draw throughout the study. I begin by describing current reports of the use of drama in English language teaching and learning, citing from the literature that informs the field on drama and how these different views impact on each other. I then discuss the current directions in the literature on language teaching, covering the theories of language learning and acquisition, and second language teaching methodology. This discussion is then focussed on how ESL is taught in Malaysia. Another major section of literature reviewed is the on the field of how drama, the brain and language learning styles are connected.

In the following four chapters, I describe and discuss the three Frames, as three distinct but connected parts in my learning journey. The first Frame details the first study of the research, carried out in an intermediate school in Christchurch. The foundation of the chapter is my reflection on my role of apprentice to an experienced drama practitioner, where I learn and begin to apply the basics of drama pedagogies in teaching ESL. I also map out an emergent model of language learning and their corresponding drama strategies, which would be used as a guide in the planning of future drama in ESL activities.

Due to the extended nature of the second frame, I have divided it into two chapters. The first half of the Frame forms Chapter 5, and reports the pilot study that was carried out to investigate the use of drama in ESL in a rural school in Malaysia. This pilot study builds on the work that was carried out in the previous chapter, where I was given the opportunity to put into practice and reflect on the techniques that I had learnt as an apprentice to drama. Moreover, in this chapter I investigated the students' and the collaborating class teacher's attitudes and reactions to drama, which enabled me to come up with a more comprehensive teaching plan that was better suited to the research context. This is further described in the Chapter 6, the second half of the Frame, which reports the main teaching programme of the Malaysian phase of research. The specific focus presented in this Frame is pertaining to learning ESL in a second/foreign language environment, and discusses some tensions between ESL literature and the reality an ESL teacher faces in the front lines. Here I also propose an emergent ESL teaching methodology that 'stages' a drama layer on top on the textbook layer, and the use of the transmission

model to transmit language from teacher to student. There are three approaches that are discussed in the transmission model: the adjunct approach, the integrated approach, and the integrated adjunct approach.

In Chapter 7 I present the third and final Frame in the series of case studies that inform this research. The context of this study is distinct from the previous Frame, as the focus shifts from ESL students learning English in a second/foreign language context to that of ESL/EFL learners learning English in a first language context. The issues that seemed to dominate Frame 2 such as L1 translation and communication in L1 became irrelevant in this context, which allowed me to focus on developing and refining the drama techniques and activities that I had previously learnt and applied in the preceding chapters. Additionally, this focus on the teaching itself also paved the way for the crystallisation of how drama and language are connected in a 'comprehensible feedback loop' that takes place in what I term as a *new space*.

Chapter 8 is the concluding chapter of the thesis. In the chapter I review my key learnings and insights based on the work carried out in the three Frames. Subsequently, I explore the positionality and implications of the study, with a focus in my home context of the Malaysian ESL classroom. Finally, I offer suggestions for future research.

# Chapter 2: Methodology

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## Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology I used in this research. The broad approach is a qualitative one. It tracks the development of my understandings of how drama processes might be used to make my teaching of English as a second language more interesting and effective, and my developing confidence in using such strategies. It is thus an account of reflective practice. The practice I report took place in three sites, two in New Zealand and one in Malaysia. In the case of the Malaysia work, it took place in two separate episodes. Each of these sections of work can be considered as an embedded case within the overall case study of my developing understanding of my practice. Because I am working with processes of applied drama, I have adopted the term 'Frame', as in frame of action, to denote each of these embedded cases. The term is also capitalised to demarcate this specific use.

The chapter starts with an overview of the research methodology, and states the research question and sub-questions that directed the research. Subsequently, it details the overarching reflective practice model that was used as the main lens of analysis of the three Frames. It then outlines the specific methods used to collect and analyse data and to present findings.

## The Frames

This section describes in brief the design of the three embedded cases, which as mentioned earlier are described as Frames. Every Frame had its own set of guiding questions, as they helped me to refine and answer the research questions.

## Overview of Frame 1: Christchurch intermediate school

This period of work was an essential stepping-stone from which I began to refine my skillset in using drama pedagogies, and also as an emerging researcher. In the initial phase, I took on the role as apprentice to Janinka Greenwood, who became the lead teacher (or the Lead) in the teaching work. The premise of the research was to use drama pedagogies to teach English to medium-proficiency ESL/EFL learners. The project first started on 17 February 2011 with an initial meeting with the Principal, and was scheduled to run the following week. However, Christchurch was hit by a major 6.2-magnitude earthquake on 22 February 2011, and this was to have repercussions on many aspects of life in Canterbury as we knew it. Even before meeting the students, initial strategies had to be rethought in order to take into account the physical and psychological impact that the earthquake had had on the school, and also the students who were to be the participants of the research.

## Guiding Questions

The guiding questions that directed the design of this Frame were:

1. What drama strategies would work with this group of students?
2. How could the drama strategies used in this study be used to inform the teaching in ensuing embedded case studies?
3. To what extent do the strategies used influence the completion of set language learning objectives?
4. How does using the drama strategies differ from using my pre-existing learnt drama strategies?

## Participants

The participants of the research were Korean (majority) and Chinese EFL speakers that were chosen by the principal, and as participation was not mandatory, the students were given the choice to stay with the research group or drop out. The original group consisted of 12 students, but two dropped out after two lessons. The participants were mostly 11 years of age, and of lower proficiency in English. Additionally, they mostly belonged to families of medium to higher socioeconomic status, with their parents being professionals who had migrated and brought their families to New Zealand anywhere between three to seven years prior. All of the participants spoke their mother tongues (L1) at home and English at school with their teachers and friends who were not of similar language background.

## Method

The project took place in the form of once a week sessions that lasted for about 90 minutes, and were carried out to a total of eight sessions spanning two and a half months, accounting for some weeks where the classes had to be rescheduled. The research was qualitative, and relied heavily on the observations and interpretations of the researcher being the research instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The series of lessons used different methods of drama in education to mould the operational definition of applied drama in English language learning, which would include games, drama techniques, acting, and using storybooks. Observations and reflections were recorded in a research journal and analysed for emerging themes, and especially for new insights.

## Overview of Frame 2: Malaysia

The Malaysia section of work is divided into two stages of implementation: a) the pilot study and b) the main study. The decision to carry out a pilot study was based on the lesson learnt from Frame 1, where it was important that I got a feel for the students first before I could properly design a teaching unit for them. I had to have a good idea of their levels of proficiency, their expectations and interests, and also what topics would suit them.



### Frame 2.1: Pilot study

I began with the same guiding questions as Frame 1, but added another set of sub-questions that were designed to probe the receptivity of the students to using drama in their ESL classes. The guiding questions for the pilot study were as follows:

#### *Guiding questions – pilot study*

1. What drama strategies would work with this group of students?
2. How could the drama strategies used in this study be used to inform the teaching in the course I was to design ?
3. To what extent do the strategies used influence the attainment of set language learning objectives?
4. How receptive are the students and the native teacher-collaborator towards using drama strategies in ESL learning?
5. How does using drama strategies affect the students' motivation levels?
6. How much do the student participants perceive they can learn using applied drama in ESL?

#### *Participants*

Selecting the participants for this stage of the research was a more deliberate process, due to the many restrictions imposed by time and geographic accessibility. I wanted to work with students who were not exposed to English on a continuous basis to get a more diverse set of data, as compared to the research context in NZ. In the Malaysian context, students who lived in more urban areas would also gain access to more English outside of school, and in cities like Kuala Lumpur, the capital, English was closer to actually being a second language, and in some cases a first language. For this reason, I chose a school in rural Johor, a state in the south of Malaysia. The school is situated in a Southeast Johor Development [Kemajuan Johor Tenggara] (KEJORA) township surrounded by Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) settlement areas, where the primary occupations of more than half of the people are factory workers, FELDA settlers and other professions that are situated relatively at the lower-mid end of the Socio-economic Status (SES) ladder. The other portion consists of teachers, small business owners, and a small population of well-to-do professionals, businessmen and politicians. The proficiency level of the students is relatively low compared to students of more urban settings, and this is mainly due to lack of necessity in using the language. As a result, this leads to a lack of motivation in learning English among the students, who do not see it as acquiring a new language but rather as a means to pass their *Penilaian Menengah Rendah* or 'Middle Secondary Examinations' (PMR) and their *Sijil Peperiksaan Malaysia* or 'Malaysian Examination Certificate' (SPM) examinations. Even then there will be the distinction between students who want to and, with effort, are able to pass the examinations, and students who do not even hope to pass the examinations, and thus do not even bother trying. Furthermore, this factor becomes detrimental where communicative competence is involved because many of the students do not see or feel a real need to make an effort to learn, or even to retain what they are supposed to have learnt in class.

At the time of the study, the students of the school are predominantly Malay (around 98%), with a small mixture of several Indian students. There were no Chinese students enrolled.

For the purpose of this study, a Form 4 class was chosen, as it had the highest probability of being approved by the school for this research. The reason for this is because in Form 5, the students would have to sit for their SPM examinations. There were 42 students in the class, and they were all offered to become participants in the research, along with their English teacher. In accordance with UC research procedure, the students and the teacher were given the choice to stay with the research group or drop out at any time.

### *Method*

With the experience that I had gained from the previous case study, I felt that I needed a more structured approach into planning this study. The pilot study followed an emergent design approach where lessons were planned based on initial investigation of the needs of the target group, and further refined in every teaching cycle. The pilot study was carried out in a space of a week, which comprised three ESL lessons (two double periods of 80 minutes and one single period of 35 minutes). Initial investigation was carried out by interviewing the acting principal, the English Head of Panel, and the collaborating class teacher, to determine the projected level of the students (the term participants, students, and student participants are used interchangeably as they refer to the same group of student participants of the research) and the type of lessons that would be most suitable. As the pilot study was a lead-in to the main study to come, the class teacher and I both agreed that we would not be too rigid on setting language goals according to the syllabus.

After reaching the end of the pilot study, I returned to New Zealand to analyse my data and to prepare for the next research cycle – the main study of Frame 2.2.

### **Frame 2.2: Main study**

With the data obtained in the pilot study, and the findings that had been obtained in the first Frame of investigation as an apprentice, it was possible to draw up a more targeted teaching programme for the students in the main study. The main study was supposed to be carried out over a space of four weeks, but due to the constraints of changing timetables, I was only able to teach for three weeks before the students started their preparatory week before their final examinations. As was normal custom, this final week was usually reserved for teachers to make their students ready for the examinations, reviewing of what they had learnt throughout the year, which usually meant a focus on worksheets and answering exam-style questions. Due to the extended period of time and proximity to the final examinations, an additional restriction was posed on me. I was required to teach the students according to the syllabus and the scheme of work that the school had set for the students, which somewhat restricted the freedom that I had compared to the previous research cycles. This resulted in a change of strategy, where I decided to

base the content of my teaching programme on the textbook the students had been using for the past year.

### *Guiding questions: Main study*

Because of the nature of teaching that grows out of critical reflection, each cycle builds on the previous one. In accordance, the following guiding questions were extracted from the pilot study:

How can teacher planning time of drama lessons be reduced by utilising what is already available in the textbook?

How can the mismatch between teaching using drama pedagogies and students' learning styles be overcome?

How can the cycle of student dependency on teacher translation be broken?

### *Method*

As mentioned before, the main study of Frame 2.2 ran for a period of three weeks, in which I co-taught with the collaborating class teacher. The method was similar to that used in Frame 2.1 (the pilot study), but with some adjustments made after the analysis of the pilot study. A more detailed description describing the teaching methodology can be found in Chapter 6.

## **Overview of Frame 3: Christchurch language school**

Frame 3 was carried out in a language school in Christchurch, which ran a variety of language courses – from general proficiency to business English, for international students. For this stage of the research, I was given a level 500 (Upper Intermediate) class to work with, where I worked in partnership with the class teacher. This teacher became an active co-contributor to the research process, and as with Frame 2, was designated as the collaborating class teacher. Frame 3 provided the opportunity for me to consolidate what I had learned in the previous three cycles of research Frames 1 and 2.

### **Guiding Questions**

It was found that there was a general direction in the guiding questions for the first two Frames, where the questions first dealt with specific strategies that would work with specific groups, and then moved on to dealing with the use of student's L1 in language learning. However, the questions took off on a bit of a tangent in this Frame, where the focus of the learning was not only on language learning per se, but more so the students' ability to learn the language and use the language in their drama classes, and in extension, their stay in New Zealand. The guiding questions that directed the design of this particular Frame were:

What drama strategies would work with this group of students?

How receptive are the students and the native teacher-collaborator towards using drama strategies in ESL learning?

How does using drama strategies affect the students' engagement and motivation levels?

How much do the student participants perceive they can learn using applied drama in ESL?

How much of the prescribed curriculum could be taught and practised in the applied drama sessions?

How would the drama strategies help with the students' language needs in an English-speaking country?

## **Participants**

A major obstacle in carrying out an extended study was the school policy on enrolment. Because of the nature of students entering and leaving New Zealand at their own time and of course, visa requirements, the school practiced a 'rolling enrolment' policy. The students were free to enter the programme at any time of the month, and also leave at any time of the month, whether to leave the country, to move to another part of the country, or even to move to a different programme as they saw fit. This meant that I was unable to work with a steady group of enrolled students, and the composition of the students was dynamic. In fact, the group that I had enrolled in my class at the end of May 2013 ended up being totally different than the group that I had started with at the beginning of the April 2013. All the participants that participated in this study were international students in the level 500 (Upper Intermediate) of the English proficiency programme, and hailed from very diverse backgrounds. At one point or another in the duration of the study, there were students from Colombia, Brazil, Chile, Thailand, Japan, Korea, and Hong Kong. The students were adult learners, with the youngest being 19 years old, and the eldest being 35 years old; with the exception of one student from Chile who was in New Zealand for job purposes, they were all in New Zealand on some form of holiday – some on working holiday visas, and some on summer break from university.

## **Method**

In this final phase of the research, I worked with the class teacher, who became my co-researcher throughout the research process of Frame 3. This case started from early April 2013, and concluded at the end of May 2013. The typical day of the students was divided into three slots – textbook, enrichment, and self-study. My slot came in after the two-hour textbook slot, where I could choose to take an hour, or extend my session to another hour after lunch break. Although I was given a free rein to teach what I wanted to the students, I also understood that they were paying customers of the school, and would be aware of whether or not they were getting their money's worth at the end of the day. For me, this meant that I was not do deviate too much from the prescribed textbook, and that I would be working to supplement what they had learnt in the period before mine, or to make sure that what I would be doing tied in either in terms of the theme that was being taught, or the target language. The teaching methods

that were used were similar to those taught in the first two Frames. A more detailed description of the teaching methodology can be found in Chapter 7.

## **The reflective practice model**

The following is a description of the reflective model that was applied in this research. Griffiths and Tann (1992) articulate that reflective teachers go through cycles of action, observation, analysis and planning throughout their teaching careers, and that these cycles are carried out at different levels of speed and awareness. I have found this to be true for me, in that I have always applied these reflective cycles in my practice, always trying to find out what worked and what did not work in my teaching, though some of these cycles of reflection had been carried out at stages where I was: i) actively reflecting, especially in the earlier years of my teaching career, where I had not yet defined my own style of how and what to teach, and why I ultimately made those teaching decisions; and ii) passively reflecting, where the reflection of my teaching had become an acquired mental process that that happens in my subconscious, as an automatic process. I used this cycle as my guide in the process of planning and refining my teaching cycles in this study.

At the start of the teaching process, Zeichner and Liston (1996, pp.51-53) identify five different traditions of reflective practice come into play. These traditions are the i) academic, which stresses reflection on the subject matter and the representation and translation of that subject matter to promote student understanding; ii) social efficiency, which highlights the application of teaching strategies that have been built on research on teaching; iii) developmentalist, which centres on teaching that is focused on students' backgrounds, interests, thinking, and patterns of developmental growth; iv) social reconstructionist, which reflect about the social and political context of schooling and the assessment of classroom actions for their ability to enhance equity and justice; and v) 'generic', which simply focuses on what the teacher is doing without any further thought to the quality or substance behind these decisions. However, in acknowledging the generic tradition, Zeichner and Liston (1996, p.62) have also dismissed it to be lacking in both substance and direction, as it does not promote a deeper alignment with the teacher's goals of teaching. Therefore, I have also disregarded the generic tradition in my discussions of the reflective processes and lenses in this thesis. In the critical reflection of the teaching choices that I made, I focused my awareness on which of these teaching traditions influenced these choices, providing me with a better understanding of my motivations and objectives.

As a reflective practitioner, I needed a framework in which I could initiate the reflective process, akin to a factory processing line, where raw material is put through the line, and undergoes a process that churns out a finished product at the end of it.

Dewey (1903) states that there are two aspects in which a teacher approaches a subject, and they are as a scientist, and as a teacher. He goes on to say that although they may seem different in their own right, the two aspects are 'in no sense opposed or conflicting', but at the same time they are not identical.

Subsequently, there are two distinct layers of how I approached this research. Although they happened at the same time as each other, they were distinct in their application. The first layer of analysis of the three frames was that of an ELT practitioner (the teacher) who is learning to use drama in his teaching. The questions that were asked in this layer were such as: What worked or did not work in the lesson, and why? Was there a difference in the way the students managed to acquire language? Were the students actively engaged in the lesson, and why?

The next layer was a more introspective one, where I took on the role of a researcher (Dewey's scientist), looking at how I saw myself developing as a practitioner, and detailing this through the reflective process. The questions that I asked myself in this layer of analysis were closer along the lines of: How does this change my understanding of ESL teaching? How does this change my understanding of teaching using drama pedagogies?

Nevertheless, even though I consider the two layers distinct, they are discussed together in the body of the text, and not separated under different headings because of the large amount of overlap between the two. Additionally, in the reflective process of analysing my practice, I engaged in what Zeichner & Liston (1996) describe as reflective conversations, which are divided into three categories:

*Descriptive reflective conversations:* These are typically personal retrospective accounts of one's teaching, which provide a context-rich description of the experience, and form the foundation of what Zwozdiak-Myers (2011, pp. 38-39) terms as personal epistemology of practice. Different types of questions require different ways of thinking about what had happened in the teaching episode, from the reflective process-analysis question of 'How did I teach the lesson?' to ones that take on a more affective quality of 'How does this make me feel?' Other questions that can be asked are such as: How did I teach the lesson? Did all the students achieve the intended learning outcomes? What teaching and learning strategies were effective, or ineffective? How do I know? What does this mean?

*Comparative reflective conversations:* As the name suggests, this type of discourse requires teachers to relate their personal theories of practice to those of others in order to 'reframe the focus in their reflection in light of alternative views and possibilities, drawing on their own prior experiences and research findings from literature' Schon (1987). The types of questions that one encounters when engaging in this discourse are such as: What different strategies might I use in my teaching? What are the advantages or disadvantages of using particular strategies for diverse learners? What research enables me to gain further insights into this matter? In what ways can I improve the ineffective elements of my teaching? In what ways can the learning objectives be achieved? How do other people achieve similar objectives? For each alternative perspective, whose learning needs are addressed and whose are not?

Critical reflective conversations: These require teachers to factor in the cultural, social and political contexts of the research setting in their analysis, and to challenge pre-existing assumptions and to question their practice in relation to ‘ideological and equity issues’ (Zwozdiak-Myers, 2011, p. 37). Some questions that arise from this discourse, especially pertaining to my own research, are such as: What are the implications of using particular strategies in my teaching? Why do I teach in the way that I teach it to a particular group of students? How does my choice of objectives, learning outcomes and teaching strategies reflect the cultural, ethical, ideological, moral, political and social purposes of schooling.

However, it is also important to note that while these reflective discourse conversation guides were integral to the reflection of my practice, they were still only part of what guided the reflection of my practice. In essence, these conversations became layered onto the central cycle of my reflective process of planning, action, observation, analysis and retheorising, as well as complement the reflective lenses that I state above.

## **Instruments of data collection**

Throughout the research, data were obtained through the following means:

Research journal and reflective memo

Observation and field notes

Interview

Social media - Facebook, Twitter, blog

Students’ class work

Discussion with co-researchers

Literature

## **Research journal and reflective memo**

Self-reflection is an integral part of my research process, where the reflection of what went on in the research was as important as the results that I obtained. This is because my voice is central in this research; being the main research instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), I placed myself directly in the research, and did not just become an impartial observer. However, Mruck and Breur (2003) mention the pitfalls a researcher may face when talking about themselves in their research for fear of appearing indecent and self-aggrandising, which is a general topic empiricists like to bring up time and time again. Mruck and Breur pose this particular question to address this issue: “Are there any ways out of the dilemma between the hope of arriving at non-contaminated, valid, and reliable knowledge, on the one hand, and the threat of collecting trivial data, producing (unintentionally) autobiographies, or repeating

the same cultural prejudices prominent at a time or place, on the other hand?” (p.1), to which they give a positive response. My own response to this question had two dimensions to it. First I wanted it to be reliable and acceptable to the academic community because I was going to invest my whole research in a reflexive research paradigm. However, the other stance that I found myself taking was as someone who was used to quantitative research; I wanted to find out first hand whether this new research paradigm that I was adopting would hold academic weight, no matter what the literature said. It was also to become one of the cruxes of my learning journey.

And so, in keeping to the norm of qualitative research practice of this kind (Ely et al., 1991; Delamont, 1992, as cited in Greenwood, 1999), I kept a research journal that chronicled my learning journey in doing my PhD, as well as recorded plans of lessons and also my observations in the field. These observations were essential for me to understand the phenomena being studied and would give me “detailed and specific information about educational activities and practices that would be difficult to ascertain in other circumstances” (Scott & Morrison, 2006, p. 168). In the journal section where I wrote down my learning journey, entries were made when something specific or notable happened that I felt was worthy to record. This could encompass new knowledge or insights that I had learnt, or even if how I was feeling had a particular impact on me and my research. Consequently, this also meant that it was not a journal that I kept every day, to be filled with mundane daily events. On the other hand, the section of the journal that detailed my research during the embedded case studies were written in most every day, though there would be days when I would be too busy or too tired to write in it. However, I would attempt to write what I had missed within the following day or two, usually while reviewing my field notes and the while going through the interviews of the day.

In Frame 2, the collaborating class teacher also kept her own field notes and research journal, detailing the lesson plans and also critical reflections on the lessons and activities that transpired during that day. This helped me to obtain a different lens on how the lessons were taught and received by the students, as well as their effectiveness in meeting the teaching objectives.

The mediums that I used to keep this research journal were mostly electronic, and were integrated with each other so that I had constant access to the journal no matter where I was. I used a combination of the Pages word processor on my iPad 2 that was tied to my online iCloud account, which synchronised with each other every time they were within reach of an Internet connection. This also meant that in situations where I did not have access to my iPad, I was able to write from virtually any computer and synchronise with the data on my iPad whenever I had Internet access.

Another important tool of data gathering and data analysis is through the use of reflective memo, where I step out of my initial frame of recorder of data to analyser of data. To do this, I made it a point to read and reread the journal entries, field notes and transcriptions of interviews, and even Facebook notes and status updates that I had written, and made memos on these entries to gain additional insight. Mills,



Bonner, and Francis (2006) talk about how we as the researcher write the ‘worded world’ (L. Richardson, 2000) of theory on top of simultaneously co-constructing and analysing data. The ‘theoretical world’ that we are trying to create through our research is constantly being rewritten in our memos to reflect our ever evolving construction of meaning. As such, writing reflective memos helped me to crystallise the “multiplicity of influences in the reconstruction on theory” (Mills et al., 2006, p. 11).

## Observation and field notes

Pretzlik (1994) categorises observation into two – structured and unstructured. It is important to note early on that the label ‘unstructured observation’ relates to the way researchers within a naturalistic paradigm enter the field with no predetermined notions as to the specific behaviours they set out to observe (Mulhall, 2003). This is opposed to entering the field with a list of predetermined criteria, as that found in structured observation.

For this research, before entering the field, I had planned to use both methods of observation. My observation checklist started with the following criteria:

Student participation

Group interaction

Student – student interaction

Perceived level of interest

English language use

Mother tongue use

Perceived level of enjoyment

Making observations according to the list would greatly simplify the analysis of the data, as the criteria had already formed a cohesive list of themes. Any additional criteria would be added as the observations proceeded. However, as the data collection progressed, I found that there were more complex relationships that had to be explored as well as more criteria that had to be added due to expanding scope my research. As a result, I realised that I had to rely less on preconceived notions and more on what the data that was being presented in front of me in the form of interactions with the participants and the collaborating class teacher, the interviews, and everything else that I had observed and made a record of in my field notes. In reflective practice, everything that we see and perceive is potential data (Greenwood, 2013b). As such, it was paramount that data be recorded in the form of field notes as soon as possible to minimise the risk of lost or corrupted data.

I kept my notes in various forms, both electronically and on paper. However, I relied a lot more on electronic means for several reasons. First, being what many would consider a tech-savvy researcher, I always had a piece of technology on my person at all times, being at least one of my iPhone, iPod, or

iPad. This made data gathering easier for me, instead of constantly having to search for pen and paper (which I always seem to forget to bring with me). Also, as with the research journal, electronic media enabled me to synchronise all my field notes between my iDevices and cloud storage services such as Apple's iCloud, Microsoft's Skydrive, and Dropbox. This meant that I could access my field notes no matter where I was in the world.

I also utilised video as a means for observation. This allowed me to conduct 'retrospective analysis' (Edwards & Westgate, 1987), in which I was able to analyse the phenomena being studied at my own convenience, and in even more depth than using techniques involving live coding (Bowman & Education, 1994). However, the role of video was more of a supporting one, rather than a main feature of the study, where they were used to support the data obtained by my observation and interviews. For instance, in Frame 2, I had introduced a Teacher in Role character by the name of Mr Boutros, whom the students could call upon if they needed translation from English to Malay. Initially I was perplexed at why no student called upon this character throughout the entire class. However, upon review of the video, and cross examination in an interview, I discovered that the class teacher had been translating for the students, and that it had been her *modus operandi* in her teaching style. However, despite the usefulness of video evidence, I did not go beyond using it as a tool to support my findings from other sources, and as such, documentation of the proceedings of the video recordings were limited to observations written in the research journal and field notes. I also took photographs to achieve a similar outcome. Additionally, due the constraints that I faced in terms of time and availability of equipment, I was not able to record on video every single lesson that was carried out.

### Interview

Interviews formed an integral core of my research, as it provided the best way for me to understand what was really going on in the research participants' minds, voiced in their own words (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), which would reflect their lived experiences and the meanings they have attached to those experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Seidman, 2006).

I used interview in all three embedded case studies that informed this research, though the type of interview depended on the situation, as well as the type of data that I was hoping to obtain. All of the names used in the interviews in this thesis are pseudonyms. In both Frame 1 and Frame 2, I used focus group interview when I wanted to talk with the respondents in a setting that was non-threatening, where they could feel relaxed and act as naturally as possible, and not feel singled out in any way. I also wanted the authenticity and spontaneity in the responses to the questions, where like in a good conversation, have the ability to create chain reactions in the dialogue (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). Cues from the other members of the focus group were also important in gauging the discrepancy between a speaker's claims and how the other members of the group perceived them. Take for example this exchange: "I learned, I learned about the right speech, because, because the first time I came here I was not very good," said a female Korean student, "because I was too shy". At this point many of the members of the

group looked at her with disbelief, which gave me an insight to her real feelings and perceptions, and how it was different to what the others had thought. This added to the richness of the layers of communication and subsequently of the data that was available to be analysed.

I also used one-on-one interviews in Frame 2 with the collaborating class teacher and several selected students who were not part of the focus group. For the teacher, as mentioned earlier, I wanted to gain insight into how the teaching methods were being accepted by a Malaysian ESL teacher, as this would be the target demographic of that I wanted to benefit from this research. Also, I wanted an extra lens from which to view the progress of the research, in order to fine-tune upcoming lessons. The method I used in conducting the interviews was similar to that of the focus group interview. Aside from asking questions and prompting the respondents, I also noted any additional details that I felt were important into my iPad 2. This included how I thought the participants' state of emotions, whether I get that the participants were uncomfortable, or whether they were not telling the whole truth. These observations were useful when I wanted to analyse and triangulate the data.

Additionally, I was also aware that in both Frame 1 and Frame 2, there was a power relationship involved between me, the researcher, and the student participants – one of unequal balance of power. This power relationship was not as obvious in Frame 1 as the participants were mostly Koreans who had become used to the comparative informality and friendly relationship between teacher and student. However, this dynamic had the potential to be a challenge in Frame 2, where the participants were rural Malays, who were part of a more traditional culture where teachers were superior to the students, and they had to be respected in every way. I wanted to make sure that this power relationship did not affect the validity of my data. In order to overcome this challenge, I took several measures. First I conducted the interviews at the local Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant which was seen to be something of a treat by the students and also the local community. I chose this environment to lessen the impact of the boundaries set by school norms, and for the students to feel comfortable for them to be able to talk naturally. I also made it clear to them that I was not there as a teacher, but as a friend, and took a very light hearted tone that would (at least I had hoped) make them feel at ease. Next, I made it a point not to appear formal and bring in any papers or prompts as not to pressure the students. The interviews were carried out in a semi-structured way, which was more akin to having a conversation with the participants, allowing for more flexibility and informality (Boeije, 2010; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2003). I came into each interview with a skeleton of the information that I wanted to obtain from them, and would direct the conversation in a way that facilitated that met the needs to obtain the data.

Also in Frame 2, I had to conduct two telephone interviews that had to be done from NZ to Malaysia. This was because during the final focus group interview, two of the participants were not present at school on the day, and were not able to be interviewed. Here I acknowledge that this was a limiting factor in terms of richness of data, with no access to non-verbal communication, etc. Nevertheless, I was able to obtain the required data from these telephone interviews.

As mentioned previously, one of the potential challenges that I faced was the possibility of the student participants not being forthright in their responses. However, it was also surprising when I found in one of the focus group interview sessions that the students actually became brave enough to point out several perceived shortcomings of the way their teacher taught, and compared it to how I taught – with the teacher being present. Of course it was done in a very nice way, and that the students stressed that they meant no offense to the teacher whatsoever. What this indicated to me was that the students seemed to be prepared to level with me, and this reassured me of the genuineness of their responses.

Another indispensable value of these interviews was that they provided a way for me to triangulate my own understanding that I had obtained through other research instruments. This was important in my utilisation of reflective practice, which required me to modify the teaching approaches and content based on my reflections of the feedback that I was getting from both observation and interview.

### **Social media (Facebook, Twitter, blog)**

Utilising social media is not entirely new to academia, with a growing number of scholars adapting and adopting its various forms for research (Collin & Hide, 2010, as cited in Gruzd, Staves & Wilk, 2012). In 2011, social media overshadowed email as a communication tool, and is continuing to reach new heights as the preferred method of communication (Henderson, 2011). To disregard the exponential rise of such a useful tool could be considered a fallacy. However, Brydon (2010) poses several interesting questions with regard to the use of social media, where she asks what it is about social media that makes humanists cautious about embracing its potential for the advancement of research, learning and teaching; and also where the caution is justified, and where the opportunities are missing for the advancement of our work. The stance that I took to using social media is one of simplicity. I do not divulge any personal information of any person who has contributed their thoughts to my ideas, other than state what is already available in the public domain. Any personal communication that is not public (i.e email, personal message, inbox, direct message) is first cleared by the contributor (i.e their consent is obtained), and they will be asked whether they wished to remain anonymous or be named in any presentation of data. As long as the rights of privacy and propriety are maintained, they should remain a non-issue in my research, as large quantity of it revolves around my own experiences and reflections.

In the course of my research, I utilised three forms of online social media, and they are Facebook, Twitter and my personal and PhD blogs. These tools were used in two ways. Firstly I used writing in them as a method of crystallising my thoughts, using Margot Ely's (2003) style of writing as part of the research process. An interesting quotation in her writing attracted my attention as she was discussing the focus of her paper: "After all, why do I introduce this piece with thoughts on A and R when, clearly, I am writing about something else? Or am I?" (Ely, 2003, p. 216). This seemed such an interesting way to work out how thoughts connected to each other in the process of writing, and it was done in a way that was accessible and thought provoking at the same time, which is what I tried to include in my social media posts.

Secondly, I also utilised social media as a means of collecting other people's thoughts as data, as much as a questionnaire or an interview. These ranged from questions regarding people's opinions regarding teaching techniques, to how to effectively structure a research chapter. An example of this can be seen below.

[Research related question]

I am a bit stuck in the writeup of my research at the moment, and wondering if any of my friends can help. I have a case study that I have divided into 2 parts - the pilot study and the main study. For the pilot study I have chosen to describe and discuss lesson by lesson as there are only 3 lessons. This is no problem.

Problem now starts as I am describing the main study, which has roughly 10 lessons running over the course of 3 weeks. How would you propose I describe and discuss them? lesson by lesson? thematically?

This is going to get even more complicated as I hope to do one final longitudinal study that will hopefully run over the course of 3 months. No way am I going to go lesson by lesson on that one. Would appreciate all feedback on this.

Keywords of my study are qualitative, reflective practice, reflexive, multiple case-study, action research.

████████████████████ & anyone else who can share a moment or two to give feedback.

Thanks a million!

████████████████████ What was the case you were studying? For example, if you studied 4 teachers over the period you can treat each teacher as a case and describe what he or she did over the period. Or you can use the weeks as the cases and describe what went on within each week.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [February 14 at 11:35pm](#) via [mobile](#)

[Abdullah Mohd Naw](#) Oh sorry - forgot to put that in. I thought it was implied through the keyword reflective practice. To summarise, I am studying - 1) what happened in the classroom when I was teaching; 2) Me, my own observations on my practice; 3) the students' reactions; 4) the students' learning.

There are of course other complex things in between but for now these are the main things that I am looking at.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [February 14 at 11:39pm](#)

[Abdullah Mohd Naw](#) In terms of the cases - I have 3 embedded cases. 2 completed, and 1 more to do. Each case gets its own chapter. Case 2 is rather complex as it is divided into 2 parts. The second is the longer part. And the division between weeks is not clear as some parts cross over to the next week, otherwise a weekly division would be quite a good idea.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [February 14 at 11:42pm](#)

████████████████████ You seem to have very nice themes already. Why don't you go along the lines you've enumerated? What happened in class, your observations, students' reactions and their learning. You can then lump the lessons together and bring out unique things that need to be highlighted.

[Unlike](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [February 14 at 11:44pm](#) via [mobile](#)

[Abdullah Mohd Naw](#) Thanks for your suggestion mate! That would be one way to go about it!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [Friday at 12:03am](#)

████████████████████ I think themes would read better. I also suggest to put a section at the beginning of the chapter as methodology where you explain how the data was collected (some info such as time frame and the number of the lessons). The lessons you have been through could all be piled up as appendices. While reflecting, I think a couple of examples from the lessons would be great.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [Friday at 12:33am](#)

[Abdullah Mohd Naw](#) Thanks ██████████. I have already included (I think) what I was going to do in the methodology chapter. Do you think I should go over the points again in this chapter as well? If I were to do it according to themes, then it's going to be: Theme - what happens that supports this theme - detailed examples from the lessons? At them moment one of the questions that I am thinking of is how much detail? I know it sounds stupid, and that the appropriate answer would be 'as much as you need', but it's kind of hard to gauge, especially for cases that run over a lengthy period of time.

[Like](#) · [Friday at 2:25am](#)

Every chapter should stand independently but don't be repetitive (this would be either boring for your reader or would shift the focus of the work). A very short summary with ref. to the chapter you have explained these lessons in details would do the job, I think.

[Like](#) · [Friday at 9:29am](#)

[Abdullah Mohd Nawi](#) A short reference. Noted. Cheers bro.

[Like](#) · [Friday at 9:30am](#)

For coherence and arguement it seems themes are the way to go, otherwise you would probably get bogged down. The lessons could act as an introduction, but what happened in each lesson is not what your study is about, its the themes like [redacted] and [redacted] said.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [Friday at 7:50am](#)

[Abdullah Mohd Nawi](#) Lesson as introduction. That sounds good. What would you propose? - I have 3 teaching models that I use. They aren't central to the thesis, but they are every bit as important as everything else. I guess that is one of the complexities if this particular research that I'm doing. It would have been easier to isolate the variables (if this were a quantitative research), and have 1 model, with 3 identical case studies. Here I have 1 teaching method with 3 models of application, win 3 case studies that are related but not exactly a duplicate of each other. SO the selection of the lessons does get a bit complicated.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [Friday at 9:40am](#)

**Figure 2:** Using social media for collaborative feedback

The above illustration, taken from my Facebook page which was accessible to all my contacts, merely serves to provide readers with an idea of how the communication takes place. However, in the presentation of data and the ensuing discussion, the feedback and insights obtained will be presented in prose, and tied in with the immediate discussion at hand.

I also kept a blog that I wrote selected entries on, that was accessible to the general Internet community. Once I had written a blog entry, I posted a link on Facebook, inviting my contacts to read the blog. An additional reason for doing this was also that the blog invited readers to participate in discussion about the entry that I had posted. They became my critical friends, albeit at a slightly more random level. An example of this can be seen in an entry where I talk about my insecurity being a researcher and practitioner who found out that he did not know as much as he did. One of the responses I got was as follows (the response has been shortened and identifying markers omitted):

Thanks Bro Abdullah for this entry. It resonates with me because I have had a similar journey from the 'known' to the 'unknown'. The known in my case (as in your case) is English language teaching, as that is what I do professionally...I realised that there is an entire (ever-growing) field of literature on language ideologies, linguistic anthropology, and language & identity, and that I knew nothing about any of those things...This led to an almost debilitating sense of worthlessness...Now I am in the last six months of my PhD journey. I have got the help of a stats consultant for the stats part of my thesis, I have read a fair amount of the literature I previously knew nothing of, and I am constantly learning that I have more to learn. But do I feel as worthless as I did earlier? Probably not. Because I know I will finish what I began and because my supervisor believes in what I am writing (although most often I don't). [Blog response 21.9.12]

What was interesting about this response was that it managed to achieve two things: first, it helped to remotivate me and put me back on track; and second, it served as an entry point for me to re-examine my own lenses on not only my own research, but also on how my research was connected to other fields of knowledge, and with other people in the world. Nevertheless, I also had to be careful with what I wrote, as the blog had no restrictions of access. As mentioned earlier, the blog posts were selective, taking into account the sensitivity of the topic, and omitting any personal details of participants to ensure their anonymity.

While opinions of informed outsiders that were obtained from social media were important, they were not ends in themselves, but were used as a spring board to prompt my own thought processes into making new observations and conclusions about the data that had been gathered.

### Students' class work

The qualitative approach to research is one that can heavily rely on reflection and retrospective analysis. However, it is also prudent that the researcher take hard written output as data to analyse. In the Frame 1, students were told to write anything they liked on the story they had done so far in 2 minutes (though these 2 minutes were adjusted accordingly, as per teacher tradition). The students were also told not to worry about grammar, and only concern themselves about what they wanted to write. This was done for two reasons. First, after consultation with the lead teacher, it was decided that we did not want the students to be overly conscious of their grammar to the point where it would obstruct the free flow of writing. Second, as much as I was interested in the vocabulary the students had acquired in their sessions with me, I also wanted to gauge their engagement to the story on an emotional level. I was interested to find out if the students were able to express themselves on an emotive level, instead of the merely talking about events and actions (Greenwood, 2012).

An example of how I analysed the student texts can be seen as following.

Nervous

Scard

AFraid

Shoked

I was walking through the street with Joe an I was scared of the people singing and I'm shoked of people ~~hi~~ walking infront of me and hitting me, I'm AFraid ~~Pa~~ I might be lost and Joe will leave alone and I'm very nervous of how nousi people they are and they ming hurt me. I feel very sad of how I can't found a

place of silence and safety. I try to not think about them. and their face is in my mind and I want to run away.

**Sample 1:** The Silence Seeker – Matthew

Each sample was first transcribed as faithfully as possible to the original text produced by the students, from the spelling right up to how the words were placed. This was to ensure that I captured a snapshot that was rich enough to provide me with multiple layers of analysis. With Matthew's (pseudonym) writing sample, the reader is immediately brought into how the character was feeling at the time, expressed through highly descriptive and emotive words for his level of English proficiency level in comparison to that of his friends. Words like 'scared', 'shoked (shocked)', 'nervous' and 'sad' shine through the writing to illustrate a level of emotional connection between Matthew and the characters in the book. Next, I analysed the writing in terms of the vocabulary use, both general vocabulary, and the also the target vocabulary that had been taught in the lessons. Here I saw the target words 'scared', 'nousi (noisy)', 'silence' and 'safety' being used, as we had done several dramatic activities using these words prior to the writing task. However, it has to be made clear that this was not a test to determine language acquisition, as we did not have a reference point to make as to whether the words that Matthew used had been learnt before or after the relevant lessons. Instead of acquisition, this part of the analysis was interested in 'uptake' (adapted from Lyster & Ranta, 1997), where we are able to gauge if a student has managed to internalise a word and replicate it according to its correct usage. Acquisition on the other hand deals with retention of the learnt vocabulary, which in Case 1 did not have a high validity rating due to the short duration of the programme.

Another aspect that I looked at was grammar, which included language structures. Although the task had not required them to think about the grammar when they writing, an analysis of grammar was still important to analyse in order to gain a measure of the students' language proficiency. Apart from that, I also looked other features of the samples that I deemed were interesting or those that provided me with further insight of how the students thought. As can be seen in this example, Matthew wrote down keywords that he had wanted to put in his writing, even before he had written them. This shows that he had had specific words in his head that he had wanted to use, and constructed sentences around them with deliberation. The data obtained from the analysis formed pieces to the puzzle that created a clearer picture when analysed in context, along with the analysis of other written work, triangulated by other sources of data.

In Frame 3, the writing tasks were analysed using the Jacobs scale (Jacobs, Zinkgraf, Wormouth, Hartfiel, & Hughey, 1981), which enabled both the collaborating class teacher and myself to put numbers to what we thought was the students' ability in writing. However, also due to the limitations imposed by the rolling enrolments, the figures in the Jacob scale were unable to be utilised to contrast learning before and after the applied drama sessions.



### Discussion with co-researchers

Discussion with my co-researchers gave me a wealth of insight that would have otherwise been unattainable. In addition, the reflective practitioner needs guidance to facilitate better understanding and learning through reflection (Emden, 1991; Johns, 1995), and this is even more crucial to me as an emerging researcher in a field where I am not considered an expert. Moreover, one of the dangers of embarking on a journey of reflective practice is that there is a tendency for the reflective practitioner to only pay attention to aspects of practice that he or she finds disturbing. This would mean that aspects in which do not generate enough attention are sometimes sidelined or even go unnoticed (Johns, 1995). This is why a reflective researcher needs guidance, especially from an informed party, or at the very least someone who has an informed outsider's point of view. I had three co-researchers who were directly involved throughout the study. The first was my senior supervisor Janinka Greenwood, who worked with me during the first cycle of research (Frame 1) in NZ, and the second was the collaborating class teacher who worked with me during the Malaysian phase of my research in Frame 2. It is worthy of mention that the teacher was my student in her undergraduate teacher training course, where I taught drama in education. As such, she was no stranger to using certain simple drama techniques, as well as stage drama. For Frame 3, I worked with the teacher of the class, whom I have also designated as the collaborating class teacher, but will specifically denote whether I refer to the NZ or Malaysian class teacher if there are any instances that may cause ambiguity. I was lucky to have had the opportunity to work with this particular teacher, as he was well versed in communicative and task-based learning approaches, as well as being experienced in drama and theatre. However, it was also a bit of a surprise to me that he had never used any drama pedagogy in his teaching, and that he was keen to learn from me.

These discussions happened throughout the research, both during and outside of data collection. During data collection, the discussions would normally occur within the same day of the data collection session if time permitted, or would occur within a few days after. This was to ensure that the insights obtained were still fresh in our minds, and that we would be able to recall specific incidents together if the need arose. However, the reflexive researcher is bounded by the code of conduct to be aware of any factors that could affect the data in any way. With this consideration, it also has to be taken into consideration that not all discussions happened according to plan, and that the researcher and the co-researchers were restricted by demands of time and obligation, as well as geographical location. As such, some of the discussions did not occur within the given time frame, which inevitably leads to the possibility of lost data.

During the discussions, a typical session would include the debrief and feedback of what had occurred in the day's class. The discussions would normally be guided by Gibbs' (1988) model of reflection, using the following six steps in a cyclical order: i) Description (what happened?); ii) Feelings/Thoughts (what were you thinking/feeling); iii) Evaluation (what were the good and bad of what happened); iv) Analysis (What

can you understand of the situation); v) Conclusion (What else could/would you have done?); and vi) Action Plan (what do you plan to do next?).

Using the feedback obtained from the co-researchers, I would critically reflect on the day by going through the model of reflection myself, and make the necessary notes or changes to the next lesson. As my senior supervisor, the first co-researcher had a dual role to play, which in itself provided an interesting mixture of feedback. On the co-researcher level, her feedback was essential for me as an extra pair of eyes in the field, and also as an insider who carried out portions of the research. As my supervisor, she had a more guiding role, and a more critical role in the evaluation stage of the reflection cycle. Inevitably, some of our research meetings would extend to become supervision meetings in their own right, as many dimensions overlapped between the domains of co-researcher and supervisor. Feedback from the collaborating teachers was no less important as they were the class teachers of the participants, who were of the right target demographic for the research, ESL practitioners with a general idea of how to use elementary aspects of drama in the language classroom but still lacked the knowhow to accomplish them.

Additionally, some discussions were not carried out in the field, and would take the form of collegial discussion. These discussions did not have to be specific to whatever was taught in the field, and could even take the form of intellectual discourse regarding a wide variety of topics. However, matters regarding the research were usually given precedence before moving on to other matters.

Apart from co-researchers who were directly related with my research, I also carried out regular meetings in a bounded time frame with two PhD colleagues, one from Canada and the other from China (Nawi, Harasymchuk, & Yi, 2012), as part of a case study using cross-national dialogue research collaboration. In these meetings, each researcher was given 10 minutes to present the aspect of research that he wished to have critiqued and gain insight from the other two collaborators. This would then be followed by a question and answer session. After the session was over, each researcher would be given a week to critically reflect on the information obtained during the meeting, and at the end of the case study period, write up their reflections in a research publication.

## Literature

A comprehensive literature review was one of the first essential steps that had to be taken in order to obtain data in the research. It was of paramount importance for me to ascertain what had already been researched, as to not duplicate anyone's work unnecessarily. It was also important for me to obtain models of past research to as a foundation to build my own.

What I found early on in my literature search was that there seemed to be a sparsity of available literature specifically on using drama in teaching ESL. References were there, but they were few and far in between. The main division in the bodies of literature I was researching lay between two groups of well-researched fields, namely drama and teaching English as a Second/Foreign/Additional language. However, writing that was cross-disciplinary in nature was not readily available, though in recent years, the field of drama in

ESL has started to gain momentum (see Kao, Carlin, & Hsu, 2011; Ntelioglou, 2011; Stinson, 2009; Stinson & Freebody, 2006 among others). On the one hand, the lack of references meant that I had fewer models to emulate, and less theory to draw from. On the other hand this served my needs well, as from the literature review I was able to ascertain that using drama in teaching ESL was indeed a developing field which was unsaturated, enabling me to create a niche in the area.

I mainly utilised (but did not restrict myself to using) Google search, Google Scholar, and a variety of databases that the University of Canterbury subscribes to. Sources came mostly in the form of academic journals, books, and book sections, though there was a mixture of other sources of literature. Interestingly, I found the slightly-frowned-upon Wikipedia to be an extremely useful springboard from which to start a literature search. I am of the school that advocates that Wikipedia entries should not be treated as good academic referencing, and I truly believe that due to the nature of a wiki that can be edited by virtually anyone. However, as a reference point to learning new information, I found the information within to be of utmost value, if utilised correctly. First of all the information in the Wikipedia entries very often presented information that was accessible to the informed layman. This enabled me to gain basic understanding of certain concepts before I started reading higher-tiered literature. Next, many of the Wikipedia entries also provided suggestions on essential reading on the topic, which could be tracked down via basic Boolean search on Google Scholar, or combing the databases provide by the University of Canterbury library website.

## **Analysis of data**

Analysis of my data was predominantly carried out in terms of the lens of critical reflection on my practice and on my ongoing learning. I analytically critiqued what was taking place in the classroom against my planned objectives, remaining open to surprise outcomes as well as evaluated the extent to which intended outcomes were realised. Here I used several research instruments to achieve this, as stated above. I also used my collaborators' feedback (the lead teacher and the collaborating class teachers in Malaysia and New Zealand) and the reactions of my students as reflective lenses. All the interviews were transcribed, and the emerging themes were manually extracted from the transcription. Similar emerging themes that emerged from my research journal, as well as the research journals of the collaborating teachers were also grouped together and coded to enable quicker access to the themes. Samples of the student-participant's writing were converted from writing to word-processed format, and were analysed for emerging themes. These themes were then combined and analysed, using reflective practice as a critical lens of reflection. The insights that were gained from this process informed the learning journey of this study.

## Presentation

I entered the research as an ELT practitioner who works primarily in a Malaysian setting, and it was through this lens that I made my reflective analyses and discussions. Thus it was important for me to ensure that the reader is made familiar with the Malaysian ESL context, especially with the rural teaching context where a major portion of the fieldwork was carried out. Furthermore, the reader is also made familiar with the New Zealand ESL context because parts of the study were carried out here in New Zealand. Because I am tracking my evolving understanding of how to use drama processes in teaching English as a second language I present both my findings and my discussion of their significance within a narrative form. This comprises the three *Frame* chapters. Reporting of what occurred, reflective analysis and discussion are interwoven to convey the way this research is not an outsider's recoding of empirical data, but rather a personal and carefully subjective reflection on a learning journey. These three frames, or Frames as I have chosen to describe them to denote their specific use in this context, are meant to build up on one another, each creating a feedback cycle answering the major research question of this thesis: What have I learned, as an ELT practitioner, about the use and impact of drama pedagogies?

## Ethics

In order to ensure that the welfare and the rights of all the participants involved in the research were taken care of, it was imperative for me to apply for ethics approval from the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee (ERHEC). All relevant documentation such as the research design, information sheets, consent forms and interview questions had to be submitted to be reviewed. This study formally received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury ERHEC in September 2011. For each of the research settings, prior communication was initiated to the principals of the schools in Frames 1 and 2, and the Academic Director in Frame 3. After preliminary agreement was given to proceed with the project in Frame 1, I proceeded to brief the selected students on their rights in during the project. I then gave a copy of the information sheet to each student (Appendix 8), with the accompanying consent form. A separate set of information sheets and consent forms were also given to the students' parents for them to look over and sign. In Frame 2, this process with the students and their parents was repeated. Additionally, the assigned teacher who became the teacher collaborator to my research was also given a separate information sheet and consent form. In Frame 3, my New Zealand teacher collaborator and the students were given information sheets and consent forms to sign. However, because the students were adults, they were not required to get their parents' consent.

# Chapter 3: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

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## Introduction

This literature review identifies the key theories behind the use of drama in English language learning, and also shapes the theoretical framework from which this study is derived. It begins by reporting current use of drama in teaching English as additional language, and then reviews the specific directions of teaching English as an additional language, from the early days of cognitive and behaviourist language teaching, to its application in the present day. Subsequently, literature supporting the use of drama from a brain-based learning perspective will be reviewed, followed by an examination of Gardner's Multiple Intelligence theory and how it relates to learning language through drama.

## Current reports of use of drama in ESL/EFL

In this section, current and seminal literature on drama and ESL/EFL is reported. The literature that specifically covered the niche area of drama in ESL at the time of writing this this thesis seemed to be sparsely populated, requiring me to dip into other related or more general fields.

There has been a sizeable amount of research that informs the field of drama in first language (L1) acquisition (Stinson & Winston, 2011; Wagner, 1998). Using drama to teach EAL, or any other L2 for that matter, can take on many different, albeit related forms. Maley and Duff (1983, 2005) use what they call drama techniques, which, in their usage, are specific techniques that actors use on stage, and transpose them to the language classroom context. Some of these can be as simple as vocalising vowels and voice projection to the more complex acting in roles and overcoming problems in role. Wessels' (1987) work also borders on a very similar concept of using drama techniques in a language classroom, although she generically labels the work as drama. Di Pietro (1987) recommended structured teaching using role-play scenarios that focused on language acquisition during the process of problem solving, and not so much the product. Di Pietro labelled this method of teaching as Strategic Interaction, where the students had full control over the dialogue and the outcome of the scenario. There would be at least two roles that had to genuinely interact with each other, and the students would have to use the language at their disposal to communicate to reach their desired outcome.

Kao and O'Neill (1998) in their landmark publication drew on in-depth, detailed analysis of process dramas carried out in Taiwan. They introduce a comprehensive continuum of drama approaches for L2, where on the one end the discourse is scripted and instructional, and the focus is on accuracy and performance, and as it progresses the discourse becomes more natural and spontaneous, and the focus is

on fluency and communication. The examples of the approaches given, if following this continuum, start from scripted role-play, and progress through dramatized story, language games, simulations, improvisational role-play, scenarios, and finally ending at process drama, which Kao and O'Neill consider to be pinnacle of drama approaches that lead to authenticity and fluency in communication (1998, p.6). Recent research on using process drama to teach additional languages has also demonstrated favourable results in achieving more authentic and natural communication in students (Kao & O'Neill, 1998; Stinson & Freebody 2006; Stinson 2008). However, it has to be noted that process drama itself is still a label, and that other drama approaches, Heathcote's mantle of the expert (1995) being such a one, do exist and many of them are not mutually exclusive. Kao and O'Neill's (1998) work on process drama drew from the analysis of the fieldwork carried out in the Taiwanese ESL context. In Malaysia, only a single study has been documented on the use of process drama in the ESL classroom (see Samat, 2010). Analysis of the survey reported in the study suggested that the students felt a significant rise in their communicative competence in English, as well as a rise in their levels of motivation and engagement in the lessons (ibid).

While contemporary research leans towards the value of real life language in drama pedagogy, Cheng and Winston (2011) take on a different approach by postulating that using Shakespeare in the language classroom can provide a stimulating, fun and liberating experience, with enough richness in language and depth in emotional engagement to provide a stimulating learning setting for learners. The context in which Cheng and Winston's (2011) study, which can be seen as reactionary against the typical bounded learning found in Taiwanese textbooks, sheds some light as to why Shakespeare was chosen as a learning medium. Cheng and Winston use Bakhtin's (1981) political and pragmatic rationale, Cook's (2000) language learning theories, and the raw power of Cicely Berry's praxis (1993) as examples where the dramatic and linguistic elements of Shakespeare justify its use over the conventional textbooks. This reactionary stance towards bounded learning in textbooks forms the foundation of one of the primary teaching methods that I use in the study, called *staging the textbook*. The suitability of the textbook in a language classroom is one that has undergone much debate. Allwright (1981) wrote the provocatively titled article *What do we want teaching materials for?* that questioned the suitability of textbooks for different sets of learners with different needs. However, contrary to the seemingly hard stance against textbooks that the title suggests, Allwright did not call for total abandonment of the textbook. He acknowledged that there was merit in the *deficiency* view where the textbook properly covered the syllabus and contained well-planned exercises to save learners from any deficiency in teachers (pg. 6); and in the *difference* view where the expertise in writing materials is different to that of the teacher, whose expertise lays in interpersonal skills to make the classroom a conducive learning environment (pg. 6). Nevertheless, Allwright follows by stating that these views operate based on the assumption that the best decisions are made by the people with the most relevant expertise, and further goes on to invite the reader to question whether they were indeed the right people for the job. Allwright's view is one of two positions in which the 'anti-textbook' view is divided: the 'strong' view that calls for total abandonment of the textbook in favour of teacher-made resources; and Allwright's 'weak' view that the materials found in textbooks are

somehow inadequate, but can be used if the teacher is able to identify the needs of the students and adapt the material (Harwood, 2005). Interestingly, adapting materials to overcome inadequacies also falls under the pro-textbook position, where the textbook materials become ‘bridges’ to stimulate teacher’s thinking and become the basis for providing the most appropriate classes in their teaching context (ibid). Here, Cheng and Winston’s (2011) position on using Shakespeare is one where they recommend its inclusion as creative bridges in a language programme that is heavily dependent on formal textbooks.

Bodily-kinaesthetic learning, as a part of Gardner’s (1983, 1993, 1999) multiple intelligences theory, features extensively in many parts of drama pedagogy, especially seeing that drama is physical in nature (Maley & Duff, 2005). Gardner’s categorisation of multiple intelligences enables the practitioner and the researcher to better describe their teaching tools as well as what is happening in their teaching contexts. Rothwell (2011) describes the effect of kinaesthetic learning as part of authentic, multimodal interaction that that forms a crucial element in intercultural literacy, which if integrated more consciously in the language classroom, could “stimulate, scaffold and authenticate the verbal participation of beginner learners” (p.575). Bakhtin’s (1981) socio-cultural model of language interaction also anchors Rothwell’s research. According to Bakhtin, language is formed by both the opposing tensions between what is conditioned as the meaning of an utterance, and also what is brought into the meaning of the utterance by the speaker/learner. Kress (2004) builds on Bakhtin’s model by adding that the individual’s power to give a personalised meaning to the learnt utterance paves the way for interest, which in turn compels the speaker to commit to the communication, and draw upon any communicative resources they have at their disposal, whether visual, oral, tactile, kinaesthetic or verbal – thus drawing upon the multimodalities to communicate.

Ntelioglou (2011) also looks at multimodality, as well as situated practice, as part of the multiliteracies pedagogy of a mandatory drama-based ESL course. Teaching using drama pedagogies itself is multimodal, as the teacher and students engage in multiple modals of communication – written text, speech, movement, story, are some examples. Consistent with what is explored by Cheng and Winston (2011) regarding the perceived inadequacies of certain education systems with respect to more traditional ‘one size fits all’ approaches, it has been observed that these education systems fail to cater to the requirements of a student population that is becoming increasingly linguistically and culturally diverse (Cummins, 2001; Pennington, 2004; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Gandara and Rumberger, 2009; as cited in Ntelioglou, 2011). As such Ntelioglou’s ethnographic study draws upon *situated practice* (New London Group, 1996) which utilise the students’ own life experiences to create a powerful, meaningful content with which the students can engage (2011, p.597). Their personal stories become the driving force of the lessons, drawing parallels from Kress’ (Kress, 2010) concepts of commitment to communicate, and an authentic context that is not restricted to one particular modality from which to learn. Gee (1992, p. 1) postulates that language and its meaning is social, where concepts like ‘meaning’ and ‘thinking’ are not the names of “mental entities residing privately in people’s heads”, but are rather the names of “socio-mental practices that extend

beyond the skin to include the world and society”. Sharing and experiencing personal stories in the language classroom through drama pedagogy creates a social learning experience. Roswell’s (2013) findings in her research concur with this where she states in her research that working with multimodality can be an act of story-telling, where the “germ of a text originates from an idea, belief, or concept woven into a story becomes material through modes”, and that the whole process of working with multimodality is collaborative, participatory, and relies on communities of practice.

Parallel to using drama to teach ESL/EFL, using drama pedagogies has also been applied to the teaching of other languages, whether they are first languages, or additional languages. Piazzoli (2011) used drama workshops as part of a third-year Italian language course at an Australian university, and the findings she obtained showed that the participants in the study were able to produce more authentic and spontaneous language, as opposed to ‘scripted’ language one would normally find in a typical language lesson. In the report of the study, this was attributed to the engagement the participants had to the role, contexts that were applicable to real life, and also the dramatic tension that was created in the drama sessions. Magos and Politi (2008) also report their study using role-play to teach Greek as a second language to immigrants in Greece. The stages of using the role-play technique can be summarised as follows: i) Teacher creates story, normally with a problem to be solved; ii) Students voluntarily select the role they want to play, and are encouraged to prepare and practice their scripts; iii) Role-play starts, with students encouraged to display behaviours and real-life responses to the situations they face in the drama/role-play; and finally iv) Feedback, which is given before the end of the exercise.

Additionally, Magos and Politi (2008) also raise the important issue of second language students being unable to engage in authentic spontaneous interaction with each other due to their limited linguistic ability, and thus to certain extent, scaffold the students’ learning with time for text creation and rehearsal. In a publication arising from this research, I also proposed similar tensions between the students’ existing linguistic knowledge, the linguistic knowledge they are supposed to have to complete a drama in ESL/EFL task, and the linguistic knowledge they are supposed to gain during and after they complete the drama in ESL/EFL task, and suggest providing adequate scaffolding for the learners (Nawi, 2013). Additionally, I also suggest that a teacher must strategically find some middle ground between what is typically done in a process drama lesson where students have the freedom to play with the texts, and a more tightly controlled language lesson, where students are given more structure and guidance, though sometimes at the expense of more freedom of expression (ibid). Magos and Politi (2008) found that students in the study valued the teacher’s corrective input, as it provided them with a yardstick of how to speak, and what to say. The teacher’s corrective input took the form of correcting the students’ mistakes in oral speech during the role-play, using the errors in the role-play to piggyback incidental targeted teaching of grammar, syntax and vocabulary. However, this was done in stages, especially in the beginning stages of using role-play, as there was also a focus on making the sessions fun and pleasant (Magos & Politi, 2008; Peregoy and Boyle, 2008) and safe, where the students felt protected in their ‘disguised



selves', and were able to learn in a more relaxed, creative and inventive way (Maley, 1997; Kao & O'Neill, 1998; Heathcote, in Johnson & O'Neill, 1984; Baldwin, 2004; Maley & Duff, 2005, among others). Peregoy and Boyle (2008) sum up the relationship between scaffolding in drama and language proficiency by stating that "drama activities provide students with a variety of contextualized and scaffolded activities that gradually involve more participation and more oral language proficiency; they are also non-threatening and a lot of fun" (p.128).

One of the questions that may arise in response to using drama pedagogies is how much 'art' does the teacher have to know in order to be able to utilise drama pedagogy in the classroom, and utilise it well? Dunn and Stinson (2011, p.618) quote O'Neill (1991/2006, p.121), where she describes the part of the arts educator to be able to have "the confidence to shift both educational and artistic goals where appropriate", which goes in line with Taylor's (1995, p.48) concept of blending "the pedagogical and the aesthetic", and Neelands' (2009) notion that each drama lesson should infuse both elements of being an artistic as well as an educational journey (Dunn & Stinson, 2011). This then leads to other questions such as will the normal ESL/EFL 'lay-teacher' (a trained ESL/EFL teacher with minimal knowledge of drama pedagogies) be able to pick up the drama tools and use them in the classroom as a valid teaching tool, without having to be intensively trained until he or she becomes an expert in the field of drama? Can the skills of drama pedagogy even be passed on to the normal 'lay-teacher'? Subsequently, Dunn and Stinson report two research projects carried out in Singapore, where observations were noted and comparisons were drawn between two groups of teachers – one consisting of experienced drama educators, and the other a group of experienced ESL teachers who were inexperienced in drama. The findings obtained in this report showed that the aesthetic value of the teachers' art, as well as the teachers' understanding of the foundations of drama pedagogies, did indeed influence the lessons. It was observed that without these elements, the teaching and learning experience had the potential to become diluted and reduced to just learning transactional, resulting in a great reduction of quality and depth in the student's learning experience.

This tension between art and examinations is also explored by Stinson (2009), in the same study from which Dunn and Stinson (2011) report. In the study, Stinson (2009) carried out an intervention research project in Singapore to train drama pedagogies to 'non-drama' ESL teachers. Stinson wanted to investigate how in-service training would provide these ESL teachers with enough knowledge and confidence to be able to apply drama pedagogies independently in their own teaching. The research utilised Design Research methodology (Brown, 1992; A. Collins, Joseph, & Bielaczyc, 2004; A. L. Collins, 1992; Kelly, 2004), as a way to make close modifications of the intervention to obtain a deep understanding of the research objectives. In essence, the challenge that was faced was the resistance, and in many cases mistaken ideas about drama, from many of the teachers in research towards implementing drama pedagogies. Stinson writes: "The teachers saw drama as a 'trick' to enliven lessons and a departure from the direct teaching and worksheets that was their normal practice, and struggled to recognise that

learning was taking place when there were fewer written artefacts to verify student progress” (Stinson, 2009, p.231). Additionally, Stinson notes that even the teachers who seemed most comfortable with using drama pedagogies reverted to ‘drill-and-practice’ approaches when examination time came around. However, this practice was not without its justifications, as one of the participant teachers had experienced a bad batch of test results from her students, who she had taught using drama pedagogies. Nevertheless, Stinson reports that there appeared to be no direct correlation between the lower examination results and using drama pedagogies in the ESL classroom, though the connection could have been implied by the respective teachers.

It could be argued that the comparatively poor partial uptake of drama pedagogies amongst teachers mentioned in Stinson’s study was due to the different cultural context in which it was set. However, this does raise certain issues of appropriateness of drama pedagogy in relation to the cultural backgrounds of the students. Magos and Politi (2008) noted that in the Greek as a second language classroom in which they based their study, they observed a distinct difference between the students who were from Russian and Balkan countries, and those who were from Muslim countries. The Muslim students were generally seen to be more reserved in their participation in the dramatic activities. However, this description seems to be overgeneralised, as Magos and Politi compare geographical culture against religious culture (i.e Greek, Russian, Balkan, vs Muslim), which can be argued as potentially misleading due to the difference in the categorisation (country vs religion). Nevertheless, the central observation that can be gleaned from Magos and Politi (2008) is that it cannot be denied that cultural values have to be taken into consideration when implementing a teaching and learning system that is completely different than to what students, or even the teachers themselves, are used to. Lai-wa, Yuk-lan, Yin and Shuk-kuen (2011, p.157) concur by stating that getting learners to respond in the classroom is a major issue in Asia, where “Asian learners are reluctant to participate in classroom discourse, unwilling to give response, do not ask questions, and remain passive and over-dependent on the teacher” (Braddock et al. 1995; Jones et al. 1993; Tsui 1996, cited in Cheng 2000).

However, Cheng (2000) also argues that this explanation should not be a blanket statement, as there may be other causes to the passivity and lack of participation in Asian students. These causes may arise from various sources, including unsuitable methodology (which of course may be heavily influenced by cultural attributes), and, in the context of a language classroom, language proficiency that does meet the required standard. Correspondingly, in a research project carried out in Malaysia, I also observed similar behaviour from the participants, especially in the initial stages, who reported that they found it difficult to adjust to a new way of learning (using drama pedagogies), and also that they had problems carrying out the dramatic tasks due to their lack of proficiency in English (Nawi, 2013). Subsequently, this behavioural challenge paves the way for more questions – how much is reluctance to participate related to actual cultural inhibitions against attracting too much attention to oneself? How much is related to not wanting to try because of a lack of proficiency, which if called out, may also lead to ridicule from peers?

Nevertheless, despite the challenges to implementing drama pedagogies in an Asian context, there is also the silver lining to consider, for both teacher and learner. Stinson's (2009) study showed a common recurring theme that for the teachers involved in the study, drama made lessons interesting and more motivating to their students. The students were described as being 'engaged', 'attentive', 'interested and involved', and 'participating actively' in their classes (p.230). Drama increases motivation while reducing anxiety (Richard-Amato, 1988; Stinson, 2009; Kao & O'Neill, 1998; Maley & Duff, 2005; Rieg & Paquette, 2009; Baldwin, 2012; among others), lowering the 'affective filter' which is essential for a student if he or she is to acquire and retain skills and knowledge that is taught (Krashen, 1982, 1985, 1988; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Other facets of motivation can also be found through the sharing of learning by acting out stories (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008), and also through the development on sophistication of thought in the students (Wright et al., 2007, as cited in Rieg & Paquette, 2009).

When referring to student motivation and interest, Stinson (2009) also states that responses from her teacher-participants indicated that student motivation was partly due to the nature of drama activities that were 'activity-based' and not 'textbook-bound', and partly due to how lessons were normally taught – without much of the play element involved, and focusing on the completion of task sheets (p.230). Stinson's observations affirm the reactions of the students towards textbook-bound teaching reported earlier by Cheng and Winston (2011), and the arguments for and against using the textbook by Allwright (1981) and Harwood (2005).

## **Directions in language teaching**

The following section details the current directions in the field of language teaching. Although trends in this field have shifted and changed with the times, the fundamental theories of language teaching and learning are still subscribed to today. Among the theories that have made a big impact on language teaching are Skinner's behaviourism (1957), Chomsky's universal grammar and language acquisition device (Chomsky, 1955, 2001, 2005, 2007), Gee's sociocultural theories of language learning (Gee, 1992, 1999, 2001, 2012), Communicative Language Teaching (founded on the principles of communicative competence of Hymes (1971), and further developed by Canale and Swain (1980), Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982, 1985, 1988) , and Krashen and Terrell's Natural Approach (1983). Though there are more to mention, these are the main theories that I draw on for my theoretical framework, which focuses on the Malaysian and New Zealand contexts (though with a focus on the former). This section of the review starts by defining language, and proceeds to highlight issues in second language acquisition that have relevance to the field until the present day.

While drawing from both New Zealand and Malaysian experiences, this thesis is primarily concerned with exploring implications for work in Malaysia. English is a second language in Malaysia, which has traditionally been on the receiving end of language teaching trends and practices that have been developed in other countries. Teachers are trained in using the Communicative Approach, or

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which has been popular for the last four decades, but in recent years has seen attacks from academics like Bax (2003), who argues that CLT does not sufficiently take into account the context in which language is learnt and practiced, Beale (2002) who argues that CLT is unsuitable for classroom settings, and Nolasco and Arthur (1986) who posit that CLT assumes a normative view on teaching does not take into account the sociocultural differences in differing language classrooms. In developing this theoretical framework, one of my aims is to explore what works best for the diverse contexts in Malaysia, instead of prescribing to a single doctrine of language teaching.

## Second language acquisition

### Definition of language

An extensive review of the definition of language was carried out by Georges Mounin & James Labadie (1960), where the reader is shown an overview of how the definition evolved from “Language (langage), sequence of words on which each people is agreed; language(langue) in use in a Nation to explain to one another what each person thinks” (Frutière’s Dictionnaire, 1704, as cited in Mounin & Labadie, 1960) to include broader definitions that encompassed sound, communication, and ideas of nationhood. At present, the Oxford English Dictionary (2012) offers seven major definitions of language, each with its own sub-definitions and examples. However, the definitions that would be most relevant to the research context would be:

- i) the system of spoken or written communication used by a particular country, people, community, etc., typically consisting of words used within a regular grammatical and syntactic structure;
- ii) a means of communicating other than by the use of words, as gesture, facial expression, etc.; non-verbal communication;
- iii) the form of words in which something is communicated; manner or style of expression;
- iv) the vocabulary or phraseology of a particular sphere, discipline, profession, social group, etc.; jargon; and
- v) the style of a literary composition; (also) the wording of a document, statute, etc.

Similar definitions are also given by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2012) and the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2009). Even though the definition of language has evolved from Frutière’s definition above, there is an almost negligible element in the definition that holds almost infinite weight, which states that language is a “sequence of words on which each people is agreed”. This would mean that language in itself useless until it meets the conventions of what has been agreed by its interlocutors. James Paul Gee (Gee, 1992, 1999, 2001, 2012) advocates that language is a social construct, and that one never just reads, writes, listens, or speaks; it is always done in a way that means something to the Discourse community to which a person belongs, or aspires to belong. Simply put, there is always a context in language, and that learning a language is not merely learning to decode sounds and text, but

also the implications and appropriacy that that come with it. This view of language sets the course for the language learning that this thesis looks at, which does not only focus on the acquisition of lexical and grammatical forms, but also in the appropriateness in relation to its context.

### **Theories of language learning**

How does one learn language? This question illustrates the first key component that is directly relevant to the research question – theories of language learning. How the human mind learns in general, and learns language specifically, has been marvelled at and studied by linguists and scientists alike, especially during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With so many specialists studying the phenomenon of human language learning, it is not surprising that many different theories of first and second-language learning have been put forward, some coming to loggerheads with each other as to which theory best describes this process.

#### *The Behaviourist – Cognitivist conflict*

One of the most enduring beliefs on learning is that if you learn something time and time again, you will inevitably commit it to memory. This type of rote learning has been carried out by humankind since time immemorial. Perhaps the most famous experiment to be carried out to illustrate learning by repetition, or classical conditioning, was carried out by Pavlov (1927/2009) where he used stimulus-response to condition his dog into salivating on demand. The first American to use Pavlov's ideas on conditioning was John B. Watson, an American psychologist who first started research using animals, but later became involved in human research (Mergel, 1998). Watson's notable contribution to knowledge centred on behaviour modification in terms of human emotion credited to emotional responses to certain stimuli. Watson is also credited as first person to use the term 'behaviorism'[sic] (Ibid).

According to Good & Brophy (1990), the theory of behaviourism concentrates on the study of overt behaviours that can be observed and measured. This meant that whatever the mind learnt as conditioned by stimulus and response could be measured quantitatively, dismissing the possibility of thought processes occurring in the mind (Good & Brophy, 1990; Mergel, 1998; Skinner, 1957). Skinner in his book *Verbal Behaviour* (1957) furthered research on behaviourism by introducing the concept of operant conditioning, which differed from Pavlov's classical conditioning in its implementation. Skinner would put animals in boxes that contained an assortment of levers, and the animals would learn which lever they had to press to obtain food.

Skinner subscribed to the belief that humans, being another animal in the Darwinian sense, would also learn in the same way. Learning through behaviourism would include a combination of social exposure, consistent interaction, and operant conditioning (Skinner, 1957). Hence, learning is achieved through exposure to external sources, and subsequently going through the process of modelling and practice. Consequently, according to Skinner, this paradigm also applies to language learning, where the components that are needed to learn language are identification behaviour-controlling variables, an

analysis of how they interacted with the learner, sufficient exposure to the desired learning outcome (i.e. the language to be learnt), and reinforcement and stimulus to consolidate the learning. In a nutshell, the crux of the behaviourist approach was clear – all learning is acquired externally, and can be measured quantitatively.

However, the behaviourist view was not accepted by Gestalt psychologists and cognitive psychologists alike, who were of the opinion that learning was more than acquired behaviour, and that more processes were going on in the mind. Perhaps the most renowned opponent of the behaviourist view to learning, especially language learning, came from Noam Chomsky (Brovitch, Cullimore, Bramwell-Jones, Massas, & Perun, 2011; Chomsky, 1955, 1959, 1967, 2001, 2005, 2007; Mergel, 1998). In Chomsky's view, Skinner's behaviourist (or as Skinner prefers to say 'empiricist') approach to language learning was flawed on several grounds. The first flaw that Chomsky points out is that Skinner's studies on animal behaviour did not provide enough empirical evidence to show their cross-application on human behaviour. In fact, Chomsky postulated that Skinner almost forces a correlation between the operant conditioning of animals and humans (Chomsky, 1959, 1967).

To add more dimension into the discussion on language acquisition, in 1974, the term 'biolinguistics', was first coined by Massimo Piattelli-Palmerini in an international meeting at MIT which brought together "evolutionary biologists, neuroscientists, linguists, and others concerned with language and biology, one of many such initiatives, before and since, which sought to explore the extent to which apparent principles of language are unique to this cognitive system" (Chomsky, 2007, p. 1). Although the conclusions reached in the 1974 discussions could be seen as a significant cornerstone which shed light on how language, biology and cognition were interconnected with reference to language learning, they were still treated with respectful scepticism as to safeguard from what Charles Sanders Peirce had called an "abductive principle" that "puts a limit upon admissible hypotheses," so that the mind is capable of "imagining correct theories of some kind" (Chomsky, 2007, p. 2). Nevertheless, these discussions formed the basis of the understanding of biolinguistics in years to come, a field in which Chomsky played a key figure.

In accordance with the field of biolinguistics, Noam Chomsky (Chomsky, 2005, p. 2) talks about the language learning faculty (or the Faculty of Language [FL]) as something that is organic, existing as part of the brain in itself. Chomsky advocates that human beings are born with the innate ability to process and understand language, and these abilities are hard-wired in our brains (Chomsky, 2001, 2005, 2007). This carries the implication that human language, as a result of use by human beings, share universal patterns. Chomsky labels these patterns as 'universal grammar' (1955), and because they have the ability to evolve with time as people evolve, with new experiences and new knowledge shaping and forming them, they change language, or 'generate' new language. This, in essence, is what forms the basis of 'generative grammar'.

However, being born with the ‘hardware’ to acquire language does not automatically enable us to acquire any language we so desire. Chomsky (2007, p. 3) states that for language to be learnt, “evidently, development of language in the individual must involve three factors: (1) genetic endowment, which sets limits on the attainable languages, thereby making language acquisition possible; (2) external data, converted to the experience that selects one or another language within a narrow range; (3) principles not specific to FL [Faculty of Language]”.

## **Second language teaching methodology**

Understanding how the mind acquires language is the first step we can take in order to explore and develop our language learning potential. However, throughout the ages, various approaches to teaching and learning language were utilised, each with their own benefits and deficiencies.

### **Historical overview of second language teaching methodology**

At the beginning of recorded history of formal language learning, the approach that was propagated was the grammar-translation method. This method started in the Middle Ages in Europe which was at the time dominated by the learning of Greek and Latin (Newby, 2000), and its popularity lasted well until the 1930s when the method had been adopted to learning other modern languages (Hill, 2000; Newby, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). This method of language teaching began with translating classical texts from Greek and Latin into English (or other languages depending on the mother tongue of the learner), and emphasised the use of dictionaries, explicit teaching of grammar, and placed no importance on communication practice in the target language (Burns, 2000; C. Griffiths & Parr, 2001; Hill, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). This de-emphasis on communication imposed severe limitations on the nature of language learning; among them was the inevitable focus on reading and writing, and not on listening and speaking; and the end product that was not trained for effective communication in the target language. Nevertheless, despite its many perceived weaknesses, and its loss of following in the majority of second/foreign learning contexts, the grammar-translation method is still used today in some parts of the world, for example in Japan, where the need for technology transfer from English, French and German became paramount during the Meiji Restoration period (Koike, 1996; Koike & Tanaka, 1995); and in contexts such as in higher education where it can be used to illustrate the learner’s ability in understanding mechanics of the language (Cherrington, 2000).

In relation to its fall from grace, the limitations of the grammar-translation method led to the reform movement against it in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and this gave way to the direct method in Europe (mainly in France and Germany) until it lost popularity during World War 2 (Holtzer, 2000). However, as with the grammar-translation method, the method is still used until today, though with some variations and modifications. The direct method can be seen as the antithesis of the grammar-translation method, where the fundamental principle is that of how children acquire their first language; with an emphasis on the avoidance of translation. This means that the medium of instruction and the content directly use the target language, with an emphasis on speaking and pronunciation, and grammar is taught inductively and

implicitly, as compared to the explicit teaching of grammar in the grammar-translation method (Holtzer, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Richards and Rogers (1986) recommended the following axioms when teaching using the direct method, which are: Never translate: demonstrate; Never explain: act; Never make a speech: ask questions; Never imitate mistakes: correct them; Never speak with single words: use sentences; Never speak too much: make the students speak much; Never use the book: use your lesson plan; Never go too fast: keep the pace of the students; Never speak slowly: speak normally; Never speak too quickly: speak naturally; Never speak too loudly: speak naturally; Never be impatient: take it easy.

Another approach that was developed partly as a reaction against limitations of the grammar-translation method was the audio-lingual method, or otherwise initially known as the 'Army method' of foreign language learning (C. Griffiths & Parr, 2001). Additionally, this method was also initially developed to train army personnel to be able to speak and converse in a foreign language in a short amount of time, as was paramount during and after the Second World War, where the emphasis was given to teaching using drills, and repetitive overlearning (C. Griffiths & Parr, 2001; Prator & Celce-Murcia, 1979; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Skinner's (1957) behaviourist theories had no small part to play in the theory behind audiolingualism, where it was believed that the more repetition a student goes through in the learning process, the better the language is learnt. To this end, the use of memorising conversations, set phrases and vocabulary was employed mainly using audiotapes, language labs and visual aids; and true to operant conditioning, successful responses were immediately reinforced (Prator & Celce-Murcia, 1979; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Nevertheless, the audio-lingual method also had its challenges stacked against it, notably from Chomsky's (1967) critique of its behaviourist foundations, and Smith's (1967) findings in the Pennsylvania Project, where he compared the cognitive and audio-lingual approaches to foreign language learning. This led to a period in late 1970s and 1980s where "adaptation, innovation, experimentation and some confusion" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 60) were the order of the day, as language teaching practitioners struggled to come up with alternatives to the audio lingual method. Larsen-Freeman (1987) stated that there were at least five different methodologies that were termed as 'innovative' that were used in the late 80s, and they were the Silent Way, Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning, the Comprehension Approach, and the Communicative Approach. The Silent Way taught was taught by first introducing students to the sound system, and then drilled practice using coloured rods, with minimal oral feedback from the teacher. Suggestopedia was teaching inducing a state of receptivity in the students by giving them names from the culture of the target language, sitting in comfortable chairs, listening to soothing music while surrounded with objects belonging to the culture of the target language. Community Language Learning was a learner-based methodology that minimised the teacher's corrective role, taught using the students' own produced language as the teaching materials, and encouraged the use of the students' mother tongue (L1) to enable to students to understand the target language. The Comprehension Approach encompassed several methodologies, among which Krashen and Terrell's (1983) Natural Approach is categorised. The



Comprehension Approach advocated that language production in students should not be forced, and that they would naturally start producing language once they had understood enough. Last but not least, the Communicative Approach was the foundation in which the popular Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is based, where the goal was for students to be able to communicate in the target language, and utilised more group work and discussion in the students, with the teacher taking on a more facilitating role (see Richards & Rogers, 1986, 2001; Larsen-Freeman, 1987). However, it is also important to note that these methodologies were not mutually exclusive, and that practitioners were not refrained from picking and choosing the approach that was right for their own teaching contexts.

### The Natural Approach

Krashen and Terrel (1983) expanded the theory behind the principles of the direct method and the Comprehension Approach in more detail by developing the Natural Approach, which they pioneered in 1977 using Krashen's hypotheses and Terrell's teaching methods. According to them, language learning is communicative, where strong emphasis is placed on learning and using language as set of messages that is conveyed to be understood. This distinction becomes clear in the first of four out of five hypotheses on the Natural Approach that inform this research, which is the Acquisition/Learning Hypothesis. This hypothesis clearly demarcates between what language 'acquisition' and language 'learning', where acquisition is defined as learning to become competent in using language for 'real communication'; and 'learning' being a process where the learner 'knows about' the 'formal knowledge' of the language to be learnt (Krashen, 1985, 1988; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). This meant that according to Krashen the only way to achieve competence in a second/foreign language was through language acquisition, using an unconscious process that is developed through meaningful use of language. This also implied that according to Krashen, grammar should not be taught, as it will be acquired as the learner 'acquires' the language through input gained from 'comprehensible input', which is exemplified by Krashen's next hypothesis, the Input Hypothesis.

The Input Hypothesis postulates that the learner (for lack of a better word in this context) 'acquires' language by understanding input that is placed a little beyond his or her present level of knowledge or ability, or as Krashen illustrates it – ' $i+1$ ', where  $i$  is the present level of input or proficiency, and  $1$  is the level immediately above it. The same principles can be observed in the use of scaffolding (Bandura, 1977; Bruner, 1983; Vygotsky, 1978, 1987), though the focus of scaffolding by Bandura, Bruner and Vygotsky is more focused on social constructivism. However the principles of scaffolding are similar – to lessen the gap between the learner's acquired knowledge and the intended knowledge to be learnt.

Next, the Affective Filter Hypothesis can be very relevant in informing the theory of this research, as it postulates that learning is sifted through the affective filter that is directly influenced by the learner's emotional responses to the learning environment (Krashen, 1985, 1988; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). The higher the level of negative emotions, the higher the filter, which subsequently leads to less acquisition of knowledge. In theory, this would entail that no matter how good the teacher, or how good

the teaching material, if a student is filled with negative emotions such as anxiety, low self-esteem, and boredom, the student could possibly walk away from a class without learning anything. This hypothesis is relevant to the study is because one of the most important reasons as to why drama pedagogies are used is to make sure that students are in a positive learning environment where they are free to use their imaginations, and make choices that they would not usually be able to make within the bounded contexts of their classrooms. To put it simply, drama lowers the affective filter by releasing inhibitions and anxiety, and providing safety in a situated context, paving the way for better learning (Baldwin, 2012; Kao & O'Neill, 1998; Maley & Duff, 2005; Rieg & Paquette, 2009).

Krashen & Terrell champion the methods of the direct method, and also strongly argue that grammar can only be acquired through natural means for the learner to be able to acquire the language. Nevertheless, Krashen also talks about the Monitor Hypothesis, which states that there is also a place for language structures that are 'learnt' (as opposed to acquired). According to the Monitor Hypothesis, the language learner will use these learnt language structures to monitor the output of language, where it makes corrections and adjustments to the language that has been acquired before its actual utterance. Krashen also lists three conditions that have to be met for the monitor to be used: i) the acquirer must know the rule; ii) the acquirer must be focused on correctness; and iii) the acquirer must have time to use the monitor (Krashen, 2003). Furthermore, Krashen (2003) acknowledges that while language acquisition is central for a language learner, it does not provide 100 percent of the source of competence in the target language. There is still a need for learning grammar, spelling and aspects of good writing like punctuation that even native speakers still need to learn. Thus the Monitor Hypothesis provides a workaround to the rule that language can only be acquired, and not learnt, enabling the language teacher to make informed choices on how much to balance between teaching communication and teaching grammar.

### **Communicative Language Teaching in Malaysia**

Communicative language teaching can be traced back to Dell Hymes' (1971) paper entitled *On Communicative Competence*, which was a reaction against Chomsky's theory of linguistic competence. Hymes argued that Chomsky's theory did not explain the linguistic differences found in young language learners (Mohd Amin, 2011). Canale and Swain (1980) further developed the foundation of communicative competence by categorising its four underlying competences, which were grammatical competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, and sociolinguistic competence. Nunan (1991, p. 279) listed five features of the task-based learning of CLT, which were: i) an emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language; ii) the introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation; iii) the provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language, but also on the learning process itself; iv) an enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning; and iv) an attempt to link classroom language learning with language activation outside the classroom. Richards and Rogers (1986, p.64) describe the focus of CLT

being on “communicative proficiency rather than mere mastery of structures”, which raises the focus of the lessons from accuracy to fluency.

The foundation upon which CLT is built provided education policy makers, especially those in Asia, with a teaching method that was divergent from the very structural approach to language teaching that was considered the norm at the time of its introduction (Chung, 2005). Malaysia is a Commonwealth country that, like most other members of the Commonwealth, gained English as a national language, which through a rise in Malaysian nationalism, was later relegated to become the official second language of the country (Foo & Richards, 2004). Subsequently, Malaysia became one of the Asian countries that adopted CLT as the method of choice for language teaching relatively early on, in the 1970s (Chung, 2005; Mohd. Radzi, Azmin, Zolhani, & Abdul Latif, 2007). However, the form of ELT during the time of transition from English to Malay in the national schools led to a wide discrepancy of language learning attainment between urban students and rural students, as the syllabus had been more designed for students who were from English-speaking (as a second or first language) backgrounds (Rajeretnam & Nalliah, 1999). This ultimately led to a review in the of the ELT syllabus to the form of CLT that we know today with the introduction of the KBSM (Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools) in 1988, which was based on a “communicative model of teaching and learning” (Pillay and North, 1997, as cited in Mohd Amin, 2011, p.2) , where the preferred *modus operandi* for teachers for teaching language skills was that they were “encouraged to teach these grammatical items in the contexts of the topics. If extra practice is required for better understanding and retention, items can be taught in isolation” (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2003). Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that in many Malaysian ESL textbooks, grammar is not presented in a way that is representative of CLT (Chung, 2005). Chung’s analysis of Noor Azlina Yunus and Angeline Spikerman’s KBSM English Form Four textbook (1996) revealed that the presentation and practice of grammar in the book still mainly utilised traditional patterns that were more compatible with the audio-lingual approach to language teaching. However, it has to be conceded that one book would not represent the whole range of textbooks available in Malaysia. Nevertheless, through the years of implementation of CLT in the Malaysian school context, English proficiency has been on the decline, throughout the 80s, 90s, and the year 2000 and beyond (Chandrasegaran, 1980; Murugesan, 2003; Talif & Edwin, 1990).

From the literature, it can be gleaned that there exists a weak link in the equation between language learning and language proficiency, whether it can be found in the society at large, or whether it can be found in a more tangible manner in the form of ESL learning in schools. Whatever the reason may be, it would seem apparent that a shift in paradigm could be what is needed to turn the downward trend of ESL proficiency in Malaysia, such as moving from a more ‘traditionalist’, drill-based, and textbook-based learning to one that is more engaging and motivating, such as making use of the creative elements in drama, and catering to more activities with a more hands-on approach to brain-based learning, and more comprehensive in multiple intelligences.

## Drama and the brain

Synapses are structures in the brain, akin to pathways, that permit neurons to allow electrical or chemical signals to other cells (Schacter, Gilbert, & Wegner, 2011). For synapses to form, connections must be made through the communicating neurons, which depend on how developed their dendrites are developed (Diamond, Lindner & Raymond, 1967, as cited in Pilcher, 2012; Smilkstein 2003; Kandel, Schwarz & Jessell, 2000 ). The more they are utilised, that is the more they are made to carry electrical and chemical impulses, the more they grow. It is believed that no time is this more apparent than in the ‘critical period’ of the first five years or so of a human being’s life (Lenneberg, 1967), where the child’s brain undergoes ‘synaptogenesis’ (Huttenlocher & Dabholkar, 1997). This is a process where the brain will grow and prune neurons and synapses that will mainly shape the child’s core learning (ibid). The reverse is also true when neurons are underutilised, or not used in a long while, the brain begins a pruning process where dendrites are pruned, and the synapse is lost (Seeman, 1999, as cited in Pilcher, 2012). Understanding the neurological level of processing subsequently paves the way for an enquiry on how the brain, drama and learning are connected.

Although there has been research carried out on drama and the effects of drama on learning, there is still a large gap in knowledge of the connections between drama and the processes that happen in the brain of learners who are taught using drama. At the moment of writing this thesis, there have so far been no empirical studies that explicitly study the connection between drama and the cortical level of learning; specifically drama, language learning and the brain. Nevertheless, literature that attempts to make connections from referred sources and studies can be seen in the work collated by Patricia Baldwin (2012). Baldwin begins by postulating that it is no coincidence that language learning, synaptogenesis and dramatic play typically happen in the first five years of a person’s life, and that the processes are interrelated (pp.29-30). Though not referring directly to the synaptic level of processing, literature can be perceived to support this claim, where dramatic play is inherent in how children make sense of the world (Ghiaci & Richardson, 1980; Lindsey & Colwell, 1980; Bodrova & Leong, 2005; Benson, 2008, among others); and it is also inherent in how children learn language. They imitate what they hear and see in dramatic play, and the reinforcement they obtain from dramatic play enables them to better learn a language (Hendy & Toon, 2001).

Lombardi (2004) advocates that the brain is both a pattern-seeker and a pattern-maker, and is always seeking ways to connect patterns of new input to patterns of prior knowledge. If it can identify the new input with pre-existing knowledge, the brain is able to absorb the information almost immediately. However, if there is a discrepancy between the two pattern sources (i.e new information and existing knowledge), the learning outcome can become incomplete, and learning is either delayed or disrupted (Lombardi, 2004). In order to make more patterns for the brain, it is important for the brain to build as many connections as possible between existing knowledge and target knowledge. Drama can be used for

this purpose as it is multi-modal in nature, and it provides a learning environment that is rich in context, which may enable learners to overlap these learnt 'patterns' for better learning acquisition.

Another connection that Baldwin makes between learning using drama and how the brain works is through the utilisation of mirror neurons. Mirror neurons are those which fire up both when an animal or human being carries out an action or observes an action carried out by another (Iacoboni et al., 2005; Keysers, 2010; Kohler et al., 2002). The very act of visualising something is the brain's way to prepare the body and mind to imitate an action. The brain fires up the same neurons if the body actually carries out an action, or if it merely perceives how an action is done. This could even suggest that one's brain would not be able to tell apart which actions were done physically, and which ones were done in the mind, provided that proper cues were fed into the mind, engaging as many sensory organs as possible (Grinder & Bandler, 1976; Robbins, 1997). Robbins (1997) discovered through interviews with sports champions that when they were taught to imagine and mimic every action and thought that occurred in their minds at their winning moments, they were able to model the behaviours and achieve the exact same results. Likewise, this would also suggest that students who are engaged in genuine communication in a simulated drama environment may also learn from these simulations, as much as they would in real life.

In addition to copying what is seen in the mind's eye, further research into mirror neurons has also suggested that they also play a part in other more social behaviours such as grasping the intentions of other people (Iacoboni et al., 2005). This ability is advantageous for learning the intent of communication, especially in learning another language that carries with it a new set of imposed cultural, as well as linguistic norms. This concurs with Gee's (1992, 2001, 2012) views that language is almost totally socially constructed, and that the meaning of linguistic symbols do not necessarily relate to the intended or perceived meanings in communication.

Consequently, in making the connection between mirror neurons and how we learn, Baldwin (2004) suggests that there is "a neurological value in pretending, in imagining and acting out" (p.26), where dramatic play (and in extension the use of drama in a classroom) could be seen as both internal and external simulations of a virtual reality. Theoretically, as a child learns in the virtual world, he or she learns in real life. Baldwin quotes research by Pascual-Leone et al. (1995), where three groups of adults who could not play the piano were divided into three groups: the first being the control group that only looked at the piano and did nothing else; the second being the group that physically practiced finger exercises on the piano; and the third being the group that imagined practicing playing the piano in their minds. After five days, it was discovered that the second and third groups experienced similar changes in their cerebral cortex, while the first group did not experience any change whatsoever. From this, it can be deduced that mentally imagining an experience produced similar results to actually physically experiencing it. As previously mentioned, Anthony Robbins (1997) the superstar self-help guru and Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) practitioner also draws on this phenomenon when he talks about how athletes train

to reach their optimum performance. In fact, Robbins goes on further to talk about how he trains athletes to access specific submodalities (miniscule cues that are experienced by human senses) they had experienced during an especially good performance, recreate the experience in their mind's eye, and model specific behaviours based in these submodalities. Each stage reinforces one another, and the prerogative remains that in order for a person to model specific behaviours, it must first be imagined to be real. So how does this relate to drama? The answer is that imagining an experience is at the core of the dramatic experience, which is why the only tool an actor really needs to create and live in different worlds on stage would be his or her body, mind, and the stage. In the drama classroom, an experience that is learned through the imagined world of drama would be learned as if the student were really experiencing the situation, given that the student is able to suspend disbelief of the drama, and take agency in the role being played and in the reality being created.

However, the role of mirror neurons in learning has been has been disputed by Hickok (2009) where he notes the limitations of mirror neuron activity. Hickok (2009) cites the examples given by Gallese, Fadiga, Fogassi, and Rizzolati (1996) and Ferrari, Rozzi, and Fogassi (2005), in which it was observed that mirror neurons fired in monkeys mainly as a response to the action of grasping, as well as with some goal-oriented actions. Furthermore, according to Hickok these neurons only fired up when the monkey observed an action, but stopped firing when the action terminated, which could suggest that potential for learning through the firing of mirror neurons could be less potent than was reported in the literature compiled by Baldwin (2012). Furthermore, it is also important to note that the existence of mirror neurons and their implications in learning have only been properly documented in monkeys and birds, and their causal relationship (in humans) to empathy, language, language learning and learning in general are speculative at best due to lack of empirical evidence (Heyes, 2009; Hickok, 2009; Keysers, 2010). Nevertheless, it is equally important to acknowledge that mirror neurons could very well affect how we learn, and with that knowledge, create a learning environment that caters for brain-based learning, and multiple intelligences. The relevance of brain-based learning and multiple intelligences in my research is that it would suggest merit in using drama in the ESL classroom as a teaching method that engages how students naturally learn.

## **Drama, multiple intelligences and language learning styles**

"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid." – Albert Einstein.

Einstein understood that different people had different abilities, and should not have their intelligence assessed through a single model of learning. The quotation above can perhaps best be seen to reflect the theory of multiple intelligences, proposed by Howard Gardner in 1983. Gardner (1983, 1993) first proposed that there are seven multiple intelligences, which were: logical-mathematical, spatial, linguistic, bodily-kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal and intrapersonal. In order to be considered as category of

intelligence, each candidate had to meet a stringent list of criteria and had to include the ability to resolve “genuine problems or difficulties” (Gardner, 1983, p.60). However, Gardner also conceded that the parameters were not universal and that cultural and personal settings and preferences played a role in this selection process. Gardner (1999) further considered the possibility of a further three categories, which were the naturalist, spiritual and existential intelligences.

So what do Einstein’s statement and Gardner’s multiple intelligences mean for the teacher, and especially in this context, the language teacher? First and foremost, once a teacher acknowledges that students have different forms of intelligences, and that not every student can be taught using the same approach, the teacher would then have to begin to take steps in order to maximise the impact of his or her teaching. In order to strategise teaching, the teacher must first understand the ways in which students prefer to learn, otherwise known as their learning styles. With reference to language learning, Keefe (1979, as cited in Peacock, 2002, p.2) defined learning styles as “cognitive and affective traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment”. Willing’s (1988, as cited in Peacock, 2002, p.2) definition went beyond the learning environment and focussed more on the student, where they employed “natural, habitual, and preferred ways of learning”, and had a “clear, comprehensible and coherent set of likes and dislikes”.

There is research that suggests that drama has the potential to cater to different intelligences and learning styles (Ashton-Hay, 2005; Wagner, 1998). Perhaps the most noticeable feature of drama is that a lot of drama work requires physicality of some sort from both the teacher and the learner. Rarely, if ever, is there a drama session that involves the participants sitting around doing nothing, or sitting at desks and waiting for the director to spoon-feed their lines to them, without even having to get up and do anything themselves. Some of the power of the drama is in its movement. Maley and Duff (1983, 2005), Di Pietro (1983), Wessels (1987), and Kao and O’Neill (1998) touch on the non-verbal aspects of drama, where the movements of the participants give rise to language learning. According to Gardner’s (1983, 1993, 1999) theories on multiple intelligences, the movement in drama has the potential to cater to the bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence, which Gardner (1999, pg. 42) defines as “the potential of using one’s whole body or parts of the body...to solve problems or fashion products”. It also has to be noted that Gardner (1999, pg. 142) expounds the difference between mere movement of the muscles, and using the movement of the muscles to actively solve a problem, the latter being the one using or developing intelligence. In a drama setting, the participants are required to engage in multiple sensory processes, generally with special attention on the physical or kinaesthetic process, which would appeal more to learners who learn better when they engage their bodies in movement rather just sitting down at the places and being handed information on a silver platter.

Also in reference to the physicality found in drama, Wessels (1987) and Kao and O’Neill (1998) make explicit reference to the slowing down of action, where learners have more time to internalise what is happening around them, and to take the appropriate course of action. Kao and O’Neill (1998, pg.30)

describe this process by making a reference to the use of tableau or freeze frame that “releases the students from the demands of an immediate linguistic response, slows down the action, requires co-operation and composition, embodies understanding, and allows a level of abstraction”. This may be particularly useful in the Asian context, as getting learners to respond can become a challenge. To, Chan, Lam and Tsang (2011) point out that research (Braddock et al, 1995; Jones et al., 1993; Tsui, 1996; cited in Cheng, 2000) has suggested that Asian learners are more resistant to participating in classroom interactions, where they are “unwilling to give response, do not ask questions, and remain passive and over-dependent on the teacher” (To et al., 2011, p.157). However, on the other side of the coin, getting the students to move about can be even more challenging than getting them to speak (Nawi, 2008). R.L. Oxford, Holloway, and Horton-Murillo (1992) give examples of some differences between learning styles that typically reflect cultural differences, with the learners being Japanese, Chinese, Russian and a generic western student, and the some of the differences mentioned were on speed of decision-making, seriousness and playfulness in the classroom, and strictness of order of presentation of lessons (p.439).

While using learning styles that require the students to participate in the classroom may be a cultural inhibition in some Asian contexts, reluctance to produce spoken language in an ESL/EFL context may also be attributed to other factors. Krashen and Terrell (1987) in their Natural Approach to language learning, and Larson-Freeman’s (1987) definition of the Comprehension Approach, state that children who are learning a second language may undergo a ‘silent period’, where on the surface it would appear that they are not acquiring any language, but would in fact be internalising language structures and lexicon. After the child has acquired enough competence, they would naturally start to speak on their own accord. However, this would also mean that if a teacher were to subscribe fully to these approaches, in classes that utilised communicative language teaching (CLT), he or she could potentially face a situation where students do not participate in classroom discourse; which could very well be an undesirable outcome in terms of achieving set teaching and learning objectives.

### **Language through emotional engagement in drama**

Apart from the physicality of drama and how it can accelerate learning, it is also important to look inwards to what is happening, not just to the brain, but also to the ‘heart’. Why ‘heart’ has been highlighted is due to the fact that this discussion does not pertain to the physical human heart that pumps blood in the body, but it discusses the emotive heart, where we humans feel and express our emotions. The connection between emotions and learning is one that has been discussed by Gardner (1999) in his multiple intelligences, and Krashen (2003; 1983) in his ‘affective filter’ which aligns with H. C. Ellis, Ottaway, Varner, Becker, and Moore (1997), who propound that students use up intellectual resources when their emotions are heightened. Thus, the management of emotion is of paramount importance to learning (Goleman, 1995).



The management of emotion, emotional intelligence (as first defined by Goleman, 1995), and the application of interpersonal skills are needed in both genuine communication, as well as the simulated context of the drama class. Elliott (2003) advocates that the acquisition and application of interpersonal skills influence the development of learning skills. In genuine communication, there is always an element of emotion that is required of the interlocutors – surprise when receiving new information, anger and indignation when receiving unpleasant and unexpected news, pleasure when receiving news that is perceived to be good. These are but a small list of human emotions that we go through in our communication every day. In a drama session that stresses genuine communication such as process drama, mantle of the expert or dramatic role-play, participants are given the opportunity, and even encouraged, to emotionally engage in the context and characters (Boal, 1985, 1994; Heathcote & Bolton, 1995; Kao & O'Neill, 1998; Miller & Saxton, 2004). DiNapoli (2009) states that for language learning to be effective, activation of both the right and left brains are crucial, and that drama offers a way to balance between the cognitive and affective attributes of genuine communication. Further, Miller and Saxton (2004, p. 2) state that drama offers a medium that “connects and mediates affective and cognitive understandings” and teaches the students how to relate to themselves and to others in their community.

## **Reflective Practice**

The concept of critically reflecting on one's practice came even before the term 'reflective practice' was formally coined. Stenhouse (1975) describes the hallmark of what he labels as 'extended professionals' who engage in continuous self-development through a systematic and rigorous process of self-study. These extended professionals need to be critically reflective of their practice; be committed to questioning their practice to further develop themselves; be committed and skilled enough to study their own teaching; be able to appreciate having their teaching observed and discussed in an open and honest manner; and be willing to question and test theory in their practice (p.27). Noble and Henderson (2008, p. 2) recommend the use of the Learning Circle approach where teachers can get together and engage in 'critical reflection'. The professional needs to be able to engage in a process of continuous betterment of how they carried out their practice. If carried out properly, reflective practice has the ability to provide the practitioner with the tools needed to transform his or her practice for the better (Hobbs, 2007).

However, reflective practice is not without its opponents. Finlay (2008, p. 2) argues that in a time when practitioners are busy and overworked, reflective practice may be watered down and applied in “bland, mechanical, unthinking ways”. Brockbank and McGill (2007) argue the quality of the reflective practice depends on the practitioner's experience, as the practitioner's perception of the problems and the solutions may not necessarily reflect on the reality of the situation. Kilminster, Zukas, Bradbury, and Frost (2010, p. 3) state that there are often implicit definitions of reflection, and these focus on the individual thought process of the practitioner, what they did, thought, or felt, without giving due thought to “context, power dynamics or ideological challenge”. Moreover, Kilminster et al. (2010) also suggest

that these limited forms of reflections happen at an individual level, with little or no acknowledgement of the material reality where the practice place. However, it can be gleaned from the argument that this statement is a reaction against 'limited forms of reflection'. Furthermore, because of the differences between disciplines and intellectual traditions, the term 'reflective practice' may vary significantly (Fook, White, & Gardner, 2006).

Dewey (1910, p. 2) talks about the process of critical thinking through reflection as a process that is "truly educative in value", whereby the practitioner begins with deliberately seeking the adequacy of his or her practice, or the situations that affect the practitioner. Johns (2000) proposes for the reflective practitioner to start by carrying out an introspective examination (or looking in) on one's thoughts and emotions, and how they are significant the improvement of one's practice. The practitioner then starts looking out, exploring identified issues that seem significant in terms of aesthetics, personal feelings, ethics, and empirics. Johns then proposes for the practitioner to make reflexive assessments about now the situation they are in relates to other experiences, how they could have handled the situation differently, and how the experience has changed the practitioner's way of knowing. Gibbs (1988) offers his reflective cycle model, where he encourages the practitioner to think on a critical incident, starting with a description on what happened, leading to a reflection on the practitioner's feelings and thoughts, which then lead to the evaluation of the experience, whether it was good or bad. The practitioner then analyses the situation, makes a conclusion to what else could have been done, and plans a strategy based on what he or she would do if the incident were to happen again.

Greenwood (2013b) makes use of a dynamic three-way relationship between Theory, Practice, and Reflection, where each element has the ability to change the other, and that in a teacher's career, the relationship constantly shifts and changes. This relationship between the three components concords with Griffiths and Tann's (1992) cycle of reflective practice, which is carried out at different speeds and levels of awareness in developing practice. At the beginning of a teacher's teaching career, he or she has been churned out of the mill of teacher training colleges that have ingrained the very best of what theory can be ingrained into as much teaching practice as possible. At this stage of their careers, these new teachers are at a level where theory and content knowledge form the bulk of their understanding, and the practice side of their understanding is still underdeveloped, but is nevertheless part of their thinking process. This is consistent with Green and McIntyre (2011, p. 17), where they postulate that beginning teachers tend to focus on the content they acquired in their training, constantly "measuring themselves against lists of authors, or technical knowledge relating to...syllabuses". Furthermore, Green and McIntyre (2011) talk about how teachers develop a 'personal subject construct', a set of views encompassing their philosophical and educational leanings towards the subject that they teach, and what they wanted to achieve through it. Inevitably, these personal influences cannot help but affect the teaching process in some way, and it is the prerogative of the reflective practitioner to be aware of these influences, and also

to be able to maintain introspection of these influences, and finally to be able to willingly exert force onto these influences.

# Chapter 4:

## Frame 1 – Drama in NZ ESOL

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### Introduction

This chapter details a sequence of work that formed a large part of what might be called my apprenticeship into learning to use drama in teaching English as a second or foreign language. The apprenticeship itself was a combination of different programmes: attending drama workshops and drama classes; planning and presenting drama workshops, attending and presenting at drama and language teaching conferences, and other similar activities. The work that is described in this chapter followed a more conventional apprentice-mentor model, which took place in the form of 90-minute lessons that were carried out once a week, totalling eight sessions over the period of two and half months, taking into account certain weeks when classes had to be rescheduled. At the start of the study, I had come with a set of pre-conceived assumptions about teaching and learning using drama, which had been based on previous exposure to drama in my initial teacher training. These assumptions will be further discussed in the paragraphs below. In the reflective analysis of the study, there are two layers that are present when discussing the findings in this chapter. First, because the nature of this chapter is one that describes an apprenticeship, the first layer of findings is the presentation of insights of learning, elucidated from the lens of an apprentice observing the practice of an experienced drama practitioner. These insights were derived from critical episodes that describe what elements of the teaching were found to be interesting, effective or ineffective, and enabled me to critically reflect on the practice of the practitioner, as well as that of my own practice, when given the opportunity to take the lead in conducting the drama in ESL sessions. These reflections are also situated in the narratives themselves to create a flow of between what is happening in the drama, and what personal learning is taking place. The second layer of reflection is that of an ESL practitioner, which allowed me to step away from the introspective space of apprenticeship to reflect on how the students were learning the language, and how the use of drama pedagogies were influencing them in attaining their results. As such, the guiding questions that I had come prepared to investigate in the study were:

1. What drama strategies would work with this group of students?
2. How could the drama strategies used in this classroom setting be used to inform the teaching in my own Malaysian context?
3. To what extent do the strategies used influence the attainment of set language learning objectives?
4. How does using the drama strategies differ from using my pre-existing learned drama strategies?

The chapter begins with an overview of the roles of reflective observer that I experienced on the way to becoming a reflective practitioner. Subsequently, I present an emerging model of how drama pedagogies

could be used in relation to ESL teaching, which formed the basis of the activities of the work described in this chapter, which in turn led to more development of understanding of the thought behind teaching, and its application, in the work that followed. Next, I describe a set of activities that were used in a teaching unit that had led to most critical episodes of learning, with Professor Janinka Greenwood acting as the mentor and leading teacher (or the Lead), followed by a description of a unit that I had taken over as the lead teacher. Additionally, I explore the concept of ‘uptake’ that is mentioned by R. Ellis (1994) and Lyster and Ranta (1997) that looks at learning vocabulary. I introduce the modified concept of ‘dramatic uptake’ in reference to students acquiring drama objectives. I also introduce a layer of reflection that observes setting learning objectives of creativity based on a model developed by Vandeleur, Ankiewicz, de Swardt & Gross’ (2001). Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the learning and thought that had occurred during the study.

### **Reflective observer, reflective practitioner**

The overarching study is one of reflective practice, and, the work described in this frame formed a stepping-stone in developing a working understanding of how reflective practice is carried out, as well as the implications that go with reflective practice. According to Schon (1983), there are two types of reflection that a teacher goes through: one during the moment of teaching itself, happening in real time, which he calls reflection-in-action; and two, after the moment of teaching where the teacher reflects on what had happened in the class, which he calls reflection-on-action. Schon also postulates that although these two are distinct forms of reflection, teachers use both in their teaching. However, before being able to utilise reflections ‘in’ and ‘on’ my teaching of ESL using drama, it was important for me to be able to reflect on the teaching of the Lead, using what I have called reflection-of-action, to differentiate between the reflection processes. It was through the reflection-of-action that I played the role of the reflective observer, especially before I could reflect on my own practice as a teacher. How I reacted to the Lead’s practice was filtered through my own framework of teachers’ practical theories. According to Handal and Lauvas (1987), a teacher’s set of practical theories is an amalgamation of the personal experience, transmitted knowledge and core values, all of which in this case would have been unique and different from those of the Lead’s, though not necessarily at odds with each other.

Dewey (1933) makes a differentiation between teachers who are reflective, and teachers who are not. Teachers who are not reflective very often employ a ‘what can I do about it?’ mentality, where they accept the limitations of the contexts that they are teaching in, and try to make everything fit within that particular framework. Trying to find a solution that fits in with the school or institutional culture is not necessarily detrimental to one’s practice, as some teaching and learning cultures have evolved from their unique surrounding contexts, such as the beliefs and the priorities of the community, or ones that came about to push a top-down agenda that was integral for a nation-building, for example. An instance of pushing a top-down agenda can be seen in the Malaysian education system through the Razak Report in 1956, which made the recommendation that the Malay language be made the medium of instruction in

national schools. This recommendation was then implemented through an Education Ordinance in 1957 (Unesco, 1973), in which the Malay language became the unifying tool of the Malays and the different peoples that had migrated to what was then British-controlled Malaya. However, the acceptance of how much to allow one's practice to be directed by these external forces should not come from a teacher's blind subservience. Rather, they should be made after critical reflection into the pros and cons of these external forces, and how they affect the teacher's practice, as well as the student's development, taking into consideration all other external forces (school culture, syllabus, etc) and internal forces (students' motivations, etc). This sequence of lessons was the first where I was given the opportunity to observe how all the elements of teaching melded together with the external (the beliefs of the community, the institution, and the Government) and internal (the teacher's own paradigms of teaching) forces of influence, in a totally new teaching context, which was both exhilarating and worrying at the same time.

### **First contact: Setting the ground**

I was apprehensive at first because, like arriving in any new teaching context, the students were unknown entities. All I knew about these students before meeting with them was that they were East Asian, and that they went to the ESOL English classes, which meant that the placement tests had placed their English language proficiency below what was considered necessary for independence in a New Zealand classroom. In the teaching contexts that I had previously experienced as a teacher, I had dealt with a range of East Asian students – from the hardworking though silent group that were only interested in what was to come out in the examinations, to the more unruly Malaysian 'remove class' (a transition class for Chinese-medium educated children to integrate into a National secondary school environment, which relies on Bahasa Malaysia), where the Chinese speaking 13-year old students spoke Chinese with each other, and seemed very difficult to control. Unbeknownst to me, what was waiting for me behind the library door where the Lead and I were walking through for the first time were students leaning toward the latter.

The students were a mixed bunch, twelve students in all, both boys and girls. However, in terms of their ethnic backgrounds, eleven of the twelve students were Korean, and one was Chinese. Two of these students would drop out of the study after two lessons, including the Chinese student. This meant that the entire group was linguistically homogenous, and would be prone to using their L1 at their convenience.

From our first contact with the students, I observed that, while not unruly, it was apparent that the students would be rather difficult to control. Getting them to pay attention to the instructions in class was a challenge, as some of them, especially the boys, very often did not pay attention. They seemed to prefer to do one of three things: talk to their friends in Korean, nudging or poking their friends, or hide under beanbags in the workspace (we were allocated the use of the library) or throw them about. This could very well have been because the workspace for drama seemed to be a new concept that the students were

not familiar with. In my observations of how these particular students were treated by their teachers in their normal classes, I saw that the teachers kept the students in their places, and would reprimand them if they got out of line. They were told to speak English all the time at school, which did not prove to be a problem for the students, as they were mostly placed in different classes from each other. These barriers that they had become used to kept them in line, and it was the order of things that they had grown to accept in normal school life.

Conversely, in our drama sessions, the students were allowed to be relatively free with play. They were in a space that was free from the shackles of desks and chairs, and engaged in activities that actually asked to move about and express themselves. However, being given free space to play in a drama class setting and knowing how much freedom they were allowed was another matter altogether. In her report on the study, the Lead describes the student's behaviour of lounging on the beanbags and throwing them at each other as the misinterpretation of the space to play with ideas as the green light to do whatever they pleased (Greenwood, 2012). This disruptive mannerism was behaviour that I had not yet experienced in my teaching, even with the transition remove classes in Malaysia. A critical episode in learning occurred when I saw how the Lead dealt with the students – she was authoritative and firm, possessing an almost innate ability to differentiate between evasion strategies that the children were used to, for example going to the toilet to escape being in class or throwing cushions at each other, and genuine requests for attention that were relevant to the classroom experience. The Lead explains:

For these kids there was no preset behaviour pattern that distinguished between playing a drama game, and playing their own rumble tumble fighting games. Previous experience had led them to not be able to distinguish those two things. Permission to not sit at a desk or to become physical allowed them to become absolutely physical. So it had to be a way of marking the kind of physicality that acceptable and the kind that wasn't. (Interview – 23.8.13)

In addition to setting the ground and defining the boundaries for the students, there was also another facet to being firm with the students, as the Lead explains:

Even though you said I was being mean in the lesson, and I was always very conscious of this, I always gave the kids a chance to please me. It's a bit like the sheepdog and sheep game. You've always got to leave the gap open, you can't trap them. So my goal was to force them through the gap, and the gap was doing what we said, and to close the gap behind them. And once they got happier, I didn't have to use the sheepdog tactic so much. (Interview – 23.8.13)

While the Lead had done this, the students had responded to her, and they were at the ready level when she was around. At this point in time, there was no indication that the students would not continue with their acquired non-disruptive behaviour in the following classes.

## Students' fears of assessment

One of the first questions that was directed at us was “Will there be a test on this?”, and this seemed to be reflective of the education system that they had started before coming to New Zealand, or one that their parents had grown up with. In Korea, the main focus of studying at school precipitates in the moment where the students have to take their university entrance examination, administered at the end of the final year of high school (M. Lee & Larson, 2000). Getting into and graduating from a high ranking university is seen as the desired path to take, as it determines one’s job, how highly one is paid, how highly one is seen in society, and even if one was a desirable candidate for a good marriage (Bae & Lee, 1988, as cited in M. Lee & Larson, 2000). There was visible relief and celebration all round when the students discovered that there would be not tests. This was also one aspect that had to be kept in mind when preparing for the work I would next undertake in Malaysia. There the situation would be more complex, as I would have to teach according to the syllabus and prepare the students for their examinations. Would they display the same relief if they were to find out that what they were doing was not going to be taken into account for their examinations? Or would it be the other way round, where they did not want to waste time on something that was not immediately related to their examinations, or that they would not be tested on whatever it is that they were to learn with drama pedagogies?

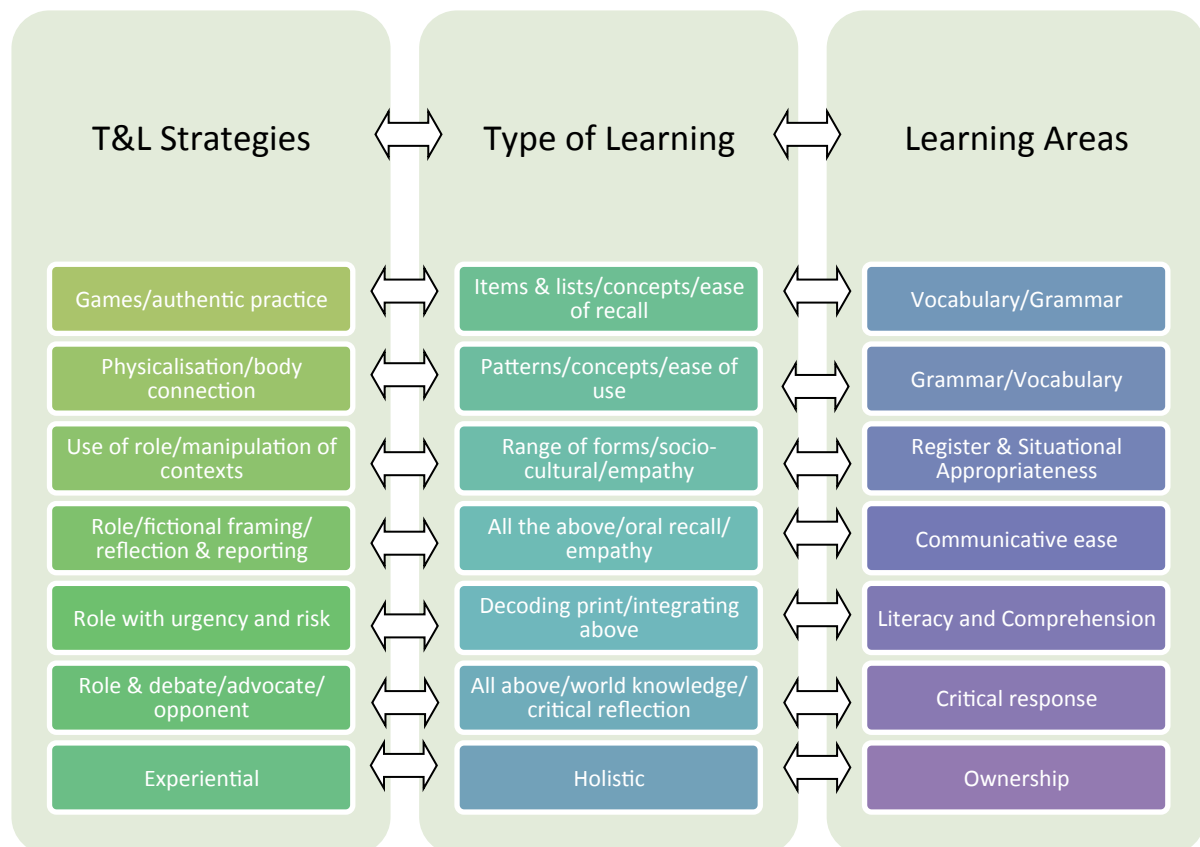
## The emergent model of language learning and drama strategies

A feature that was prominent in the design of the study was that we did not have a syllabus to work from, or work towards. There were two ways in which this could be taken. One, we were given a free rein (within reason) to focus on whatever we wanted, which presented us with a wide range of possible skills and activities to choose from. However, as an ESL practitioner whose practice was based in an examination-based education system, I found the lack of a set of prescribed syllabus a little disconcerting. I was used to having a set of objectives to achieve in my teaching, and making the connections between these language learning objectives to the teaching techniques at my disposal. Nevertheless, there was an element of flexibility that was crucial, allowing us to shift focus when we felt something was not working, or if we felt the students needed to be taught something that was not part of the original lesson plan. For example, after discussion with the Lead, we both agreed that the students somewhat lacked the ability to express language of emotion, and were more comfortable using language to describe actions and events. In order to facilitate better expression of emotions, as well as to explore deeper emotional connections in the students, we changed focus and decided to use Bob Morley’s (2009) *The Silence Seeker*, a context-rich story of a boy who befriends a mysterious immigrant boy.

Although the Lead was the project leader, I was not merely an observer in the planning of the lessons. There were times when the Lead decided what was to be done with the students, but there were also many times when we would confer and discuss the direction of the study, and what activities we wanted to achieve. In the case of *The Silence Seeker*, once we had determined what we wanted to achieve with the



students, it was felt that there was a need for a more structured approach, though we did not want to lose the flexibility of how we were teaching the students. This was done by referring to an emergent model of the learning areas, the types of learning they would accommodate, and the recommended strategies that we had developed prior to entering the field (see figure below). The model was developed as a result of the supervision discussions that the Lead and I had had while we were trying to find connections between drama and ESL teaching.



**Figure 3:** Language Learning and Drama Strategies (Greenwood & Nawi, 2011)

Because this Frame was the first of the series in this study, I wanted to map how creativity was used in planning the drama programme. This was done by overlapping an additional set of teaching and learning objectives on top of language and drama objectives, and analysing which ones the Lead had used in her teaching, followed by the conscious decision to use selected creativity objectives in the sessions where I took over as Lead or solo teacher. These creativity objectives were taken from Vandeleur, Ankiewicz, de Swardt & Gross' (2001) indicators of creativity: a) Generating ideas – ideational mobility, originality, critical thinking, enjoyment, aesthetics; b) Experimenting – risk-taking, and cyclical procedure; and c) Persistence. To shed some light on the term 'ideational mobility', Vandeleur et al. define the term as being able to generate “a large number of appropriate and unusual ideas efficiently”, and being able to “reformulate the problem, to create analogies, to make the problem more abstract or more specific” (Perkins, 1984, p.19, as cited in Vandeleur et al., 2001, p. 269). An example of creativity objectives in

teaching can be found in one of the activities that is described below entitled Danger in the Dark, where the students are put in a flashback of the final moments before they escape from a dangerous situation in the process drama. One of the tasks that they are required to think about is how to escape from the ‘bad men with guns’, which required them to apply ideational mobility and critical thinking. This required them to think of as many creative ideas as they could, but also required them to apply their critical thinking skills to decide whether the ideas were feasible.

## The Silence Seeker

This teaching unit was based on a picture book entitled *The Silence Seeker* by Ben Morley, where the protagonist of the story is a boy named Joe, who lives in a neighbourhood that looks similar to the Bronx in New York as drawn in the pictures. Joe meets a new, unnamed boy in the neighbourhood who does not speak, and when Joe later asks his mother about the boy, his mother replies that the boy is an *asylum seeker*, which Joe misunderstands to be a *silence seeker*. Joe decides that he wants to help the boy find silence in his bustling neighbourhood, and takes the boy around various places all day, trying unsuccessfully to find a place that had silence. The next day, when Joe goes to look for the boy, he finds that the boy has disappeared, which effectively ends the story, leaving it open for interpretation and discussion. In the following paragraphs, some activities have been summarised, where the methods for doing them are explained. This is followed by my reflections of the Lead’s actions, as well as my own reflections on action. In my opinion, the main focus of this unit was vocabulary building, which intersected with the Lead’s opinion that there were also more specific aims that had been inbuilt in the teaching unit. These included using language to express feelings, to describe sights and sounds, to speculate about and interpret the causes and consequences of situations.

In the selection of the teaching text, one of the questions that was raised in my head was that of the choice of *The Silence Seeker* as the book that we were to work from for two or three weeks. What was special about the book? Was it because the book was conveniently available? Was there a further agenda to using this particular book? Understanding the answers to these questions would potentially help in the selection of teaching material in the future.

In reference to Zeichner and Liston’s (1996) traditions of reflective teaching, it seemed that there was a strong social reconstructionist agenda that was being brought into play in using the book. In our earlier sessions with the students, it was observed that the students seemed to be materialistic, and their world views were very much restricted by their limited lived experiences. For example, in one of our first activities with the students, the leading teacher carried out an activity that required the students to enact the freeze frames of their favourite activities that they liked to do in their free time. It was surprising to observe that even though the class was heterogenous class of both girls and boys, their freeze frames were very similar – they were either that of playing video games, or that of play-fighting. Furthermore, in the sessions of the Silence Seeker, the responses that were obtained from the students further exemplified

the limitations of their world view. An example of this limitation was how the students interpreted what was possible and impossible in coming up with solutions to problems, where they were prone to coming up with ideas that were not realistically possible. This perceived limitation on the students' world view will be explored in further detail in some of the activities below. It was precisely within this limitation that the Lead felt that she wanted to affect some change. In my observation, the students did not seem to be able to fully grasp concepts that were outside of their comfortable world of games consoles and iPads, as both the Lead and I had observed that they had a tendency to work with the processes and narratives of these game consoles (Greenwood, 2012; Greenwood & Nawi, 2011). Subsequently, one of the ways to shake them out of the proverbial reverie was through strategically placing them in contextualised situations that were not only new to them, but also required them to interact with the seriousness and depth of the dramatic frame.

In addition, the open-ended nature of the book capitalised on how the teacher was able to interpret the events and subtexts in the book. This required the teacher to dig into the three aspects of reflection, namely personal experience, transmitted knowledge and core values, parallel to Handal and Lauvas' (1987) criteria that shape teachers' practical theories.

### **Building the scene and playing with words**

The first activity that the Lead carried out in the unit was setting the scene, and this she did by showing the pictures of the book, and reading the book aloud to the students. The Lead read aloud the first few pages of the book, which was done in the familiar tone of a story reading session at the library, where the teacher reads and shows the pictures on the pages. This was to activate the students' schemata on the setting of the story, where there was a focus on building vocabulary. It was observed that reading aloud worked well with the children. The usually hyperactive class was able to sit still and listen to the story as it unfolded before them. As a teacher who had mostly taught in the Malaysian secondary school context, I saw this method work as well in this group as it had done in my classes with older children, most of who were to face the stress of examinations at the end of their schooling year.

In the Malaysian English syllabus there is a literature component where the students are given selected literary texts to analyse and critique. In order to comprehend the significance of how these students appreciated the reading of the texts, one has to be aware of how the teaching of literature is normally carried out. Very often the focus of literature lessons would be to maximise the understanding of the text, and the ability to be able to dissect the story in terms of elements such as the plot, the characters, and the literary devices used. Very rarely does the appreciation and enjoyment of the literature text become the emphasis of the lesson, even though one of the major goals of the literature component in the prescribed ESL curriculum in Malaysia is for the students to be able to appreciate literature (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2003). In response to this requirement of being able to state these components of the studied texts on demand in tests, the use of study guides become rampant. There are many study guides that offer

this seemingly effective shortcut to students, and very often, in critical retrospection, Malaysian teachers teach straight out of these study guides at the expense of the study of the actual texts themselves; often negating the very elements of enjoyment and appreciation they are supposed to infuse in the children. Watching the Lead in the role of the storyteller provided a critical reawakening into the universal appeal of the story, and that teachers, even when teaching towards an examination, should not dilute the learning experience for their learners.

The first group activity that was carried out in the Silence Seeker unit was a variation of the hunter-hunted game, where in the original the class is asked to form a circle, and two students are chosen to be the hunter and hunted (Greenwood, 2012). Both of these students are then blindfolded and placed in the middle of the circle, where the goal of the hunter is to hunt the hunted by using his hearing. If any one of them got close the human fence, the fence would click, signalling to the other where the presence of the enemy was. In the adapted version, instead of using clicks, the students used target vocabulary that was fed by the teacher. Ideally, the target vocabulary would be words that the students had been exposed to reading and discussion of the story.

As vocabulary had been decided as the major language focus of the unit, the Lead's decision to use a vocabulary-centric version of the activity was understandable. It was part of the language learning and drama strategies framework that we had previously drawn up (refer to Figure 3 above), where learning vocabulary was paired with language games. This is because learning new vocabulary is enhanced by increasing exposure across learning modalities (Ntelioglou, 2011), with an emphasis on whole-person learning and multisensory inputs (Maley & Duff, 2005), leading to the creation of new pathways in the brain to channel the information more effectively (Baldwin, 2012). In the activity, one of the keywords that we wanted the students to acquire was 'asylum', which was a word that the students had been exposed to in the reading and discussion of the story. Additionally, to layer another level of submodality into the process of association, the use of the word tied in with the subtext of danger and safety of the activity. As a result it was found that all the students were able to recall the word, as well as how to spell the word at the end of the class, and interestingly at the end of the study. This word along with several other words, like 'sanctuary', that were introduced in this activity were words that had remained the most vivid in the students' memories, indicating that acquisition and retention of the words had occurred, which made the activity one that was very suitable for learning specialised words in small numbers.

However, at this stage of my learning, I had some initial reservations of the limitations of this type of activity. As good as this activity had turned out, I had to be critical of the practicality such an activity in a different teaching context, especially one that involved teaching older students of ESL who were preparing for examinations. Even though the use of this game had anchored the words effectively into the student's minds, there was still the time – acquisition ratio that had to be considered. As a language teaching practitioner who is deeply involved in the Malaysian teaching context, there was always the ever-present question of how much the students would learn before they faced their examinations. This

resulted in questions like ‘How many words can be effectively taught this way in how much time?’ and ‘how much time would be left in class to learn other essential language components that were immediately relevant to their assessments?’ which involved the time – acquisition ratio, questioning the possibility that too much time is spent on acquiring too little, as far as language acquisition is concerned. Additionally, there were also limitations as to the complexity of the vocabulary to be learnt, as it seemed that the beauty, as well of the limitations of the game, lay in its simplicity. Nevertheless, the philosophy behind these simple one-shot activities was something that I was familiar with, as they had to a certain extent, been inbuilt into my initial teacher training.

The connected activity, entitled ‘Noises in the City’ (the names of the activities are my own, as the Lead did not label them), was carried out after creating the backstory in the following class (this will be elaborated upon in the next section). In Noises in the City, the Lead Teacher showed a picture in the book that depicted the hustle and bustle of inner city life, and prompted the students to think about the noises they would hear in the picture. Ideally, the noises had to correspond with the places Joe and the boy went to in their journey to find ‘silence’. These noises were written down by the students on separate pieces of paper, and then shared with the class. Subsequently, sounds were discussed, and the onomatopoeic versions of the sounds were elicited from the students. These words and their corresponding sounds compiled, and were inserted into a vocabulary chart. Following the completion of the chart, the Lead started the next phase of the session, with an activity I dubbed as ‘Blind in the City’. This activity built from the previous one, where the students were equipped with the compilation of noises in the city. They were then asked to take positions in various parts of the room, except for two students, where one was blindfolded and became the ‘blind’ person, and the other became the guide through the city. Other students became the noises in the city, and tried to create a ‘threatening’ environment as they saw fit, based on what they read in the book. The blindfolded student was led through the parts of the city and exposed to all the noise and chaos. The roles were exchanged until everyone had a go at being blindfolded. Again, these two activities appeared to be effective in their purpose. It was observed that the students used the sounds that they had come up with, as well as the words they corresponded with, both in the activity and in subsequent lessons.

## **Creating the backstory: using Teacher in Role**

### **Hot-seating: developing backstory**

In a typical hot-seating activity, students will normally take on characters that have investigative roles in the process drama, where they will ask questions to the Teacher in Role (TiR) or the Student in Role (SiR) to obtain information to resolve a problem that has been introduced to the drama. By this point in the programme, the Lead wanted to create more depth for the characters in our drama, and she aimed to achieve this by utilising TiR in a hot-seating activity with the students. It is important to mention here that the students had not had any prior knowledge to hot-seating, and when they were told that they were to expect a special visitor who could tell them more about the boy in the story, it appeared that they

earnestly believed that someone other than their instructors would walk through the door to visit them. Before the Lead stepped out of the room to ‘fetch’ the guest, she told the students to be respectful of the person, to not ask questions that may be too hurtful to answer, and to respect the person’s wishes if the person told them that the topic or question was too sensitive to answer. The Lead then exited the room as re-entered the room as the boy’s grandmother. After getting over what I saw as apparent disappointment at not meeting the real person, the students began to get accustomed to working in role, and started to ask questions about the boy’s past. The Lead as TiR provided answers that led to the theme of being oppressed and running away from oppression, but was vague enough in her answers to allow for personal interpretation about what had really happened to the boy and his family. Another character that was called up by the students was the boy’s mother. I describe my reflections-of-action in the ‘Teaching in Role: a critical reflection’ section below.

### **Danger in the dark: developing backstory**

In the second part of developing the backstory, the students stepped away from their default roles as students, and were put in the shoes of the boy’s family in a flashback of the final moments of their escape from their home.

The first task that they were given as a family running away from all they had ever known was to choose only one item that they were allowed to bring on this long journey to freedom. At first, their answers were limited to one thing – technology. Most of them wanted to bring along their iPhones and iPads, and one student even wanted to bring with him his game console so that he could play games along the way. This choice of object revealed an aspect of the children that we had seen from before, that they were overly dependent on technology, entertainment, and Internet; and that they, at least in my observations, seemed to lack certain abilities to empathise with people whose problems were outside of their own sphere of experience. Interestingly, this group of students were not the only ones who had reacted this way, and that this devotion to technology and the Internet was more universal. Rideout, Foehr, Roberts, and Brodie, (1999, as cited in Subrahmanyam, Greenfield, Kraut, & Gross, 2001) carried out a nationwide American study where students were asked what medium they would bring with them to a desert island. The response they obtained was that more students from eight to 18 chose a computer with an Internet connection. In response to characteristics noted above, the Lead initiated a short discussion on priorities and practicality, as would suit people in their condition. Next, the students were put into the urgency of the situation where they were told that the ‘bad men with guns’ were at the front door, and banging hard on it. The students discussed and made freeze frames about what they felt they could do to avoid being caught.

These activities were designed to enable the students to gain an insight into some questions that they had previously asked in the hot-seating activity, such as where they boy’s family were from, and what prompted them to leave. Furthermore, the activities were also intended to stimulate the students’ creative thinking skills, where they were asked apply ideational mobility (Vandeleur et al., 2001) and think of as

many possible ideas to solve their problem in the drama, and to apply critical thinking to gauge how realistically possible it was to carry out their ideas.

All these activities had been taught in role, which was to become one of my biggest learning episodes in my apprenticeship to learning to use drama in teaching ESL.

### **Teaching in Role: a critical reflection**

Watching a session being carried out by an experienced drama practitioner can be an eye-opening experience to the uninitiated. To unpack this statement first my understanding of drama in ESL itself had to be explored. I began this by asking the question – What is my understanding of drama in ESL? To answer this, it was necessary to reflect upon my own experience with drama, as well as the training that I had been given in teacher training college.

In teacher training college, an elective subject entitled Creative Drama in ESL was taught, where the students were exposed to the basic rudimentary forms of drama tools that could be used in an ESL class. These included the use of puppets, shadow play, masks, along with a few other relevant art forms. This section of the teaching module focused on how stories could be made and presented, and how these could be used to facilitate language learning.

A foundation text that was used in the course was Alan Maley and Alan Duff's (1983, 2005) *Drama Techniques*, which they define as follows:

“They are activities...based on techniques used by actors in their training. Through them students are given the opportunities to use their own personality in creating the material on which part of the language class is based. They draw on the natural ability of everyone to imitate, mimic and express themselves through gesture and facial expression. They draw, too, on student's imagination and memory, and their natural capacity to bring to life parts of their past experience that might never otherwise emerge” (2005, p.2)

The following headings that are taken from Maley and Duff (2005, pp. v-ix) give a picture of the types of activities that were taught in the course: Getting ready; observation; working with mime; working with the voice; working with objects; working with visuals; working with the imagination; working from/into words, phrases, sentences; working from/into texts; working from/into texts; working from/into scenarios and scripts; and finally, into performance. Additionally, these headings were also typical of the other reference material that was used in the course, such as Wessels (1987), and cross-cultural simulation-type activities from Garry Shirts (Shirts, n.d). They were comprehensive activities that were interesting and engaging in their own right, and provided the students with the opportunity to use both verbal and non-verbal communication, and had big focus on using movement and imagination in the process of learning. In tandem with these drama techniques, the trainers were always clear on what the

focus of every lesson was, and the question that would be asked at the end of every class would be: “What is the value of this activity as a language teacher?”

The answers to this question were usually typical answers such as: the activity promoted discussion; the activity provided a rich context that could be exploited in discussion; the activity was communicative; the activity provided a means to focus on specific grammar or lexical items to be learnt; and most of all, the activity is interesting, which bolsters student motivation and engagement, which in turn facilitates language acquisition.

However, the realisation that became salient in this particular critical episode was that my experience of using drama in the ESL classroom had not encompassed learning process drama, and that this was the first time that I had encountered both process drama and teaching in role.

Thus, we return to the original statement of watching a process drama session being conducted by a TiR, who in this case, was the Lead. The first contact that I had with the TiR was that in which the Lead played the part of an elderly lady, who was the grandmother of the boy in the Silence Seeker unit, in a hot-seating activity. The following entry in my research journal describes this encounter:

It was truly an amazing thing. I watched my vibrant and energetic teacher transform into this subdued elderly woman, who looked frail and tired, as if ready to embark on a long slumber. With question the students threw at her, I was transported further and further into the fantasy, or the reality, that was the drama. With each question, I saw what I had perceived to be frailty peel away to reveal a steel resolve, unyielding, unbending. It was the steel resolve of a survivor, who had survived horrors, and would do anything to protect the people she loved. By the end of the hot-seating session, I realised that I was holding my breath. I saw genuine looks of concern and sadness in the girls’ eyes. The boys, however, seemed rather unaffected by the whole affair, except for maybe Jung Su. (Personal journal 27.6.11)

The Lead’s use of role had enabled her to actively construct the world around her and connect it to the story. The students were given a way into the story, manifesting into a more physical form that the students could see and experience what had only been pictured in their minds before. It seemed that for many of the students, the story had become more real, and that they were as interested in knowing more about the people that had actually escaped from a far off land to seek asylum in a country where they were free to be themselves. However, there appeared to be a difference in terms of how well the students were able to temporarily suspend their beliefs, and connect with the characters. One of the observations that was made here was how there was a difference in the way most of the boys and the girls reacted to roles that was portrayed by the Lead, where it seemed that the girls, even at 11 years of age, were able to connect better to the role, and to the dramatic context that they were brought into. This brought about some questions regarding the difference in the reactions between both genders – Are girls able to react



better than boys in response to the drama context? Was this difference common between different teaching contexts?

Further, the Lead seemed to be very comfortable skipping in and out of role whenever the situation required, and this was something that I found fascinating. These shifts in roles are a natural part of the drama lesson. Heathcote and Bolton (1995) state that a drama practitioner should not be afraid of shifting roles if the situation requires it of them, and give the example of a SiR who does not act appropriately in the given situation, and is reminded by the facilitator of the boundaries of which the students in role should not transgress. Miller and Saxton (2004) advocate for the setting of the general rules beforehand, ahead of the class time, where the teacher works through with the students what is considered to be acceptable behaviour or responses in the drama that they are to shape together. With regard to how the students deal with the TiR changing roles, Baldwin (2012) indicates that there is nothing wrong with doing so, provided that the teacher has reached an agreement with the students about specific markers that differentiated the roles, so that there would be no confusion as to which role the teacher was taking on, and what was expected of the students within the boundaries of the fictional frame that directly stemmed from the present role of the teacher.

However, at this stage of my learning, I still had some reservations as to where to draw the line between the multiple roles of the TiR in the dramatic context, as well as the role of the teacher as the facilitator and language teacher. Some of the questions that this action prompted in my mind were – What is the immediate effect of the change in role to students in the fictional frame? Do the students lose whatever agency they had acquired and pumped into the dramatic frame? How will this temporal shift in reality affect how the students perceive the reality of the fictional frame? Will there be a difference in how the students perceive their learning? These questions were important to me because it was observed that the students had taken time to adjust to working in role, and that it did not seem prudent to crumble the illusion of the fictional frame that we had worked so hard to build with the students. If adjusting to the roles took time with a group of intermediate school students who can be considered more open about playing and playacting, then it was not wrong to operate on the assumption that students who older and in a different culture would take an even longer time to accommodate this difference in teaching and learning style.

### **The clash of visions and social reconstruction**

Another facet that needed to be given thought to was the personal experience that each student brought into their understanding of the drama, and the issues that were dealt with in the drama. How much are the students exposed to? How much would they be able to appreciate a drama that was far removed from their own learning contexts and lived experiences? This tension was between what was expected of the students, and the responses that came from them is one that deserves some thought. The first example can be found in one of the activities in *The Silence Seeker*, *Danger in the Dark*. In this section of the class, the students took on the roles of the boy's family as they were about to leave the house in their home

country, before the ‘bad men with guns’ would break through the door and lock them all up. In this activity, the Lead played the role of the grandmother of the boy, and I took on the role of the boy’s father. Taking a page from Boal (1985), the Lead saw an opportunity to prompt the students into thinking about the problem that they were facing, and to explore possible ways of action to resolve the problem. We had built the tension up before we introduced the height of the conflict that was about to be unleashed on the SiR. At the crucial moment the soldiers came knocking on door of family abode, escape was the only option. It was now a matter of life and death, and it was up to the SiR to come up with the best ideas on how to escape. It was here, that the weight of the drama was nearly sunk – by the flippant suggestions that the students gave – to throw Ninja stars at the soldiers when they arrived, to overpower the soldiers with Kungfu, to slash the soldiers with a sword. All of which seemed to be given in jest, and did not reflect the gravity of the situation.

There were three possibilities for the reasons why the students gave answers such as these. One, they were being serious (or as serious as they could be) in giving what they felt was something that they thought was possible, thus showing that they had to ability to apply ideational mobility in their thinking. Two, they were being silly, and the responses were just fun responses; and three, the responses were in light of the imaginative frame that they were in, and that because the dramatic frame itself was imaginary and not grounded in reality, or at least the version of reality that they were familiar with, then the suggestions of fighting off the soldiers would not seem like such a preposterous idea. Reasons one and three would give an insight into what the students faced due to their limited life experience, and as Vygotsky (2004) states that children’s creativity only goes as far as what they have experienced in their lives.

It was then that I could see the Lead’s intent to give exposure to the students to different life experiences, to open their worlds beyond the present confines of their limited imaginations and understandings of the world. This was a clear indication of a social reconstructionist agenda at work (Zeichner & Liston, 1996), which led on to an additional reflective lens, which was that of responsibility (Dewey, 1933). Trying to impose a social change in the students also had to be seen from the light of their intended consequences. Dewey mentions three types of consequences for the teacher to take into account: i) the personal, which affects students’ self-concepts; ii) the academic, which students’ intellectual development; and iii) the social and political, which affect the students’ life chances. We were trying to affect change to all three aspects, which was a worthy goal of us as educators. There was a discrepancy between where we thought the students were and where they should be, and this led me to the following question: to what level do we need to enforce our vision onto the students? An elementary example can perhaps be problematized this way: A teacher who wants to teach a group of blind students how an elephant looks like will want to make sure that the students, in their mind’s eye, would form the image of a great creature, with tusks, big floppy ears, and a trunk. However, a question arises – what if the student does not have that particular picture in his or her mind’s eye, and instead has an image of a zebra, or a giraffe, or an exotic animal as

yet unheard of in the world. Would that mean that what he or she had imagined was wrong? Simply put, how do we deal with the discrepancies between our perceptions as teachers and the students' perceptions as learners?

As a point of comparison, the two activities in the drama had given rise to certain mental images in me. In my mind's eye, there was a distinct Eastern Bloc favour that went into how the lead developed the characters and the backstory behind them. The country where the boy's family seemed to be a dark and foreboding place, with strong military and communist traditions. There was an ominous air of constant threat every second that we were there in the drama. There was a strong sense of urgency that guided the actions of the characters that we had played in the drama. However, all of these mental images were never explicitly stated by the Lead. There was never any hint as to where exactly the family were, much less what social ideology their country embraced. All these were cues that I had perceived based on my own practical theories (Handal & Lauvas, 1987) shaped by my personal experience, transmitted knowledge that I had acquired, and my core values. They were all very much based on my world view. As a reflective observer, reflecting on and of action, I could only assume that the Lead had intended the view to be as I had imagined it, based on my knowledge of her own Slavic roots, as well as her extensive knowledge of the world. However, in a follow-up discussion, I made two discoveries. First, the Lead had deliberately left the context of the boy's roots open so that the students would be able to fill in the blanks with their own images. Second, I discovered that the Lead had not referred to any Eastern Bloc images in her mind's eye, and that she had expected the images to be closer to what was happening in Burma, or even in Israel.

This realisation prompted further questions. What sort of pictures formed in the minds of the students? Perhaps there was some validity after all in their suggestions, as that had come from their 'cartoonish' and unrealistic images of the scenes. As much as I was able to get the Eastern bloc image they got theirs. But did that in any way invalidate their mental images? Was there a standard as to the mental images that we wanted them to form, the feelings that we wanted them to experience, and was there any way that we could steer the students in that direction. And if their mental images did not coincide with the ones that we had planned, did that in any way invalidate the experience that we were trying to feed them, or change the any aspect of the social agenda that we were trying to push? Does there have to be a baseline, a place where our two understandings can meet? Or can the experience of learning be totally unique between each individual, independent from one another? Would a student who learnt something that was totally different than what we had intended to learn be considered as a successful learner? Would our teaching and learning objective have been achieved?

In essence, the reality of the experience is dependent on whose eyes it is viewed through, and which aspects of the experience that was to be highlighted. This was what Zeichner and Liston (1996) had meant when they discussed how the social reconstructionist tradition shaped how a teacher with a social agenda taught. In this case, the reality that was being portrayed by the Lead seemed to be one that aimed

to strip the students of the comforts that they were so used to, being children of affluent immigrant parents to NZ, and forcing them to think about the goings on outside of the boundaries of their technology-infused little worlds. This added layer of teaching was something that I was trained to be familiar with at all times as a teacher in Malaysia, where teachers are supposed to be the living embodiment of the National Education Philosophy (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 1987), being aware of what they teach and why they teach them at all times. This focus on holistic learning in the Malaysian NEP is even more accentuated by the requirement that teachers insert a moral value to be taught in every lesson, formally integrated into the lesson plans prepared. Perhaps what can be taken away from this experience at this juncture would be to make this thinking deliberate so that the teacher is aware that everything he or she teaches has a social and developmental agenda, whether it is from the materials themselves, or from the contexts where the teaching takes place. Once the teacher is deliberately aware of this, then he or she will be able to harness this social reconstructionist agenda into one that is better suited to the learning of the students, or even, in the case of Malaysian education, to become a good citizen, and even more, to become an *insan berguna*, a useful human being.

Subsequently, if the goal of the teacher is indeed to teach a certain agenda, vision, or objective, then the question of how to close the gap between the students' current level of understanding and their intended level of understanding needs to be addressed. As an example, in language acquisition, Krashen (Krashen, 1982; Krashen & Terrell, 1983) talks about the *i+1*, where the intended learning objective is placed just one layer above the students' present knowledge. Bruner (1983) and Vygotsky (1978, 1987) use the term 'scaffolding' to this effect, also symbolising the importance of applying successive layering to bridge the gap between the students' present knowledge and where the teacher wants them to be.

### Language learning and simulated reality

I use the term drama, simulated event, and simulation interchangeably as they overlap in the drama programmes that I carried out in this Frame, and also in the following Frames. One of the merits of working with drama is the simulated reality that facilitates the use of authentic language in the interaction of the characters (Baldwin, 2012; Greenwood, 2010; Kao & O'Neill, 1998; Maley & Duff, 2005; Wessels, 1987, among others). Stinson and Winston (2011, p. 479) state that many significant language theorists such as Bruner, Vygotsky, and Halliday have also emphasised "the importance of context and the socially constructed nature of language". The role of context is one that is central to the use of drama pedagogies, where the rules of conventional discourse is suspended in favour of the simulated event. Students participate in an environment where they become "part of some real-world system and function according to predetermined roles as members of that group", where if the students are properly engaged in the dramatic context of the simulated event, the world outside, or the real world, then inversely become the imaginary (Davis, 1995, p. 313). Scarcella and Crookall (1990) posit that students acquire language through simulation because they are exposed to comprehensible input, are actively involved, and experience positive feelings and attitudes.

In this sequence of work, activities in which the teacher used TiR and the students used SiR were used to simulate events that the students would not normally have exposure to. This simulated chain of events was used to frame target language within a specific context, with the intention to prompt associated features of language. For example, the language to express feelings of despair and desperation (from the students in role in *Danger in the Dark*), and of hope and comfort (from the Teachers in Role also in the same activity), had more impact used in the context compared to being taught in a normal class. Nevertheless, within the confines of the ESL classroom, it is also important to note that students have to be at a certain level of competence before they can be considered to have the ability to effectively engage in the context by interacting ‘naturally’ and ‘authentically’ with the other participants. In ideal conditions, scaffolding the student’s language in classes before these simulated reality sessions should be carried out to ensure that they had acquired the language needed to be able to complete their simulated transactions in communication. This was an aspect that required deliberation and thought if it was to be of any use to the following phase of the research, teaching ESL in a rural school in Malaysia.

At this stage of the research, it was imperative to work out how role would be used to teach in the Malaysian context, as I was aware of the cultural complexities and the limitations in the students’ language proficiency. I further discuss how I developed the use of role specific to the Malaysian context in Frames 2.1 and 2.2.

### Timed writing

With the production of both spoken and dramatic output, it was also acknowledged that there had to be written output, as writing is an integral part of an ESL student’s language development. Written output was important in the development of the program, as well as the students’ language proficiency, as it produced observable feedback as evidence to the students’ learning of what had been taught, or uptake (R. Ellis, 1994; Lyster & Ranta, 1997). However, it is also important to mention the differences between how Ellis and Lyster and Ranta view uptake. Ellis (1994) viewed uptake as more of what the students were aware of learning and were able to report back to the teacher, giving verification, that they had indeed learnt the intended language component or skill. Lyster and Ranta (1997) on the other hand referred to uptake as a response to error correction, where the uptake is the student’s utterance that “immediately follows the teacher’s feedback and that constitutes a reaction in some way the teacher’s intention to draw attention to some aspect of the student’s initial utterance” (p. 49). Either way it is looked at, both definitions draw attention to the language that is produced by the student in response to learning, and it is this definition that I take in this study. Therefore, it was the uptake that was of interest to me in the decision to use timed writing to the students as a written task.

In choosing the type of writing task, the Lead decided to go along with a timed writing format, which she justified by stating that her goal was to remove the inhibitions that students may face when thinking too much about the language and grammar. This choice was in opposition to using a more structured ‘process writing’ approach where the students “think through and organize their ideas before writing” and

“rethink and revise initial drafts” (Applebee, 1986, p. 95), which in my view would have been the better option had we the time to spare. However, considering the practicality of the situation where the contact that we had with the students was only 90 minutes a week, we did not have time to work extensively with the students to develop their writing. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that timed writing would produce an additional pressure on the students to produce their writing, and that it would not be an exact measure of the students’ actual proficiency (Braddock et al. as cited in Caudery, 1990) as they would not have time to think and edit their work (Raimes, 1983). However, it was felt that for my purposes of gauging the students’ uptake of the language and the drama that they had undergone, it was sufficient and practical.

In the task, the students were asked to take the role of one of the boys in the story and were given 5 minutes to write about what they felt about the story at that point. This written task was carried out after the Blind in the City activity, where the students had already been read the story until the point where the Joe had led the boy all around the neighbourhood, but had not been successful in finding a silent place for the boy.

At this point, the Lead and I had differing focuses in the students’ writing, and this will be explained more in the paragraphs below. For me, the focus of the timed writing activity was to be able assess how much the students had understood the story, as well as which words they were able to remember and spell, the responses that were obtained by the students were analysed in according to a grammar, vocabulary, and relevance to the story. Furthermore, the writing would also serve as a diagnostic tool to assess which areas to focus on, in case we were to continue working with the children at a later date.

### **Process of analysis**

As a language teacher, I was interested to see the students’ language abilities in more detail. I wanted to know at what level of proficiency the students were at, and also, as a language professional in the Malaysian context, I was interested to know how the students in this particular NZ context compared to the students that I had previously taught in Malaysia. To gain more insight into their language ability, I carried out an analysis of the timed writing task mentioned above. First, each piece of writing was transcribed as faithfully as possible to the original, keeping the overall form, spelling and corrections that the student had done. Images 1 and 2 show the original form of a writing sample.

Boy  
I was... scared  
It ~~felt~~ feel I'm in  
danger.  
I was thank to Joe.  
I'm sorry because he ~~doing~~<sup>finding</sup> hard.  
for me. I felt I'm stupid...  
I miss my parents.

Image 1: Top half of writing sample

Joe.  
I was sorry to that boy.  
If I was he maybe I will  
scared..  
I hope he <sup>will</sup> find safety place  
with me.  
I felt he ~~is~~ scared, or want  
to crying.  
I was thanks for ~~for~~ following me.

Image 2: Bottom half of writing sample

The writing in the images above was then converted to the digital transcription below.

Boy	
I was ... scared	
If <del>fell</del> feel I'm in danger.	Registered User 23/6/11 11:47 AM <b>Comment:</b> Self-corrected spelling
I was thank to Joe.	Registered User 23/6/11 12:00 PM <b>Comment:</b> Confusion of adjective and verb – Word Form (WF)
I'm sorry because he <del>doing</del> finding hard for me. I'm felt I'm stupid...	Registered User 23/6/11 11:51 AM <b>Comment:</b> Inappropriate phrase. Probably taken from same basis as 'working hard' in terms of structure
I miss my parents.	Registered User 23/6/11 11:52 AM <b>Comment:</b> Verb form
<hr/>	
Joe <sup>1</sup>	Registered User 23/6/11 11:53 AM <b>Comment:</b> ... indicates that student knows about pauses in speech but does not know that they should not be transmitted to writing by ...
I was sorry to that boy.	Registered User 23/6/11 11:54 AM <b>Comment:</b> instead of for. Confusion of prepositions.
If I was he maybe I will scared...	Registered User 23/6/11 11:56 AM <b>Comment:</b> Missing be. Suggests difficulty with verbs to be.
I hope he <u>will</u> <inserted> find safety place with me.	Registered User 23/6/11 12:00 PM <b>Comment:</b> Confusion of adjective and noun (WF). Also missing article at the beginning.
I felt he <del>th</del> scared, or want to crying.	Registered User 23/6/11 11:58 AM <b>Comment:</b> Missing verb to be
I was thanks for few following me.	Registered User 23/6/11 11:58 AM <b>Comment:</b> Verb tense error
	Registered User 23/6/11 11:58 AM <b>Comment:</b> To infinitive error
	Registered User 23/6/11 12:01 PM <b>Comment:</b> Confusion of noun and adjective (WF)

## Sample 2: Sample analysis of timed writing activity.

Once the work had been transferred into digital form, it was analysed for common ESL writing errors, using the categories described by Ferris (2002) as the base for analysis. Saadiyah Darus, Tg Nor Rizan Tg Mohd Maasum, Siti Hamin Stapa, Nazlia Omar, and Mohd Juzaidin Ab Aziz (2007) state that Ferris divides common ESL writing errors into four categories, which are: i) morphological errors (verbs: tense, form, subject-verb agreement; nouns: articles/determiners, noun endings); ii) lexical errors (word choice, word form, informal usage, idiom error, pronoun error); iii) syntactic errors (sentence structure, run-on, fragments); iv) mechanical errors (punctuation, spelling). Language problems would be identified using codes like Word Form (WF) to indicate confusion between word forms such as nouns, adjectives and adverbs, and Verb Tense (VT) to indicate confusion between tenses like past, present and future. Any additional information is also noted in the event that it could be used to identify language errors, as well as to mark potential areas to be developed.

### Analysis of writing

Sample 2 was chosen because I found that the level of proficiency of writing found in Sample 2 could be considered as the average language ability of the whole group. The least-performing student in terms of task completion wrote three words and left the paper empty, and better-performing students filled the entire page. After analysing Sample 2, the salient features of the student's writing were as follows. First of



all, it was clear that the student had a good grasp of the language that had occurred in the preceding sessions. This can be seen in the way student summarised the events that had happened, and on top of that, seemed to be able to focus on the crisis point that made the whole story. Keywords like ‘danger’, ‘scared’, ‘safety’ and ‘follow’ that were used in our account of the story were also markers that the student was able to use them appropriately in the correct context, though problems with the language was clearly evident. In the sample above, it can be seen that the student has problems with many aspects of language such as word form confusion, verb form errors, articles and determiners, and verb to be errors, to name to more consistent errors that were typical across the writing of the whole class.

However, through discussion with the Lead, I found that although we were looking at the same text analysis, we were looking at the analysis through rather different lenses. As an ESL practitioner, I mainly saw problems in the language, and spent a great deal of time and effort analysing them in detail, though I did note down certain criteria like ‘task fulfilment’ and ‘interest value’, as per norm in the marking scheme of most Malaysian test and examination rubrics. However, the focus on the language remained clear. On the other hand, the Lead seemed to see other details that I had only acknowledged in passing. An example of this was in the way the student had written the story from two different viewpoints, namely Joe’s and the boy’s, and how she made them distinct from one another. In my analysis I acknowledged that the student had done this, but the analysis did not go beyond a creative ability to tell a story, which earned the student extra marks in the ‘interest value’ column of analysis. Cremin, Goouch, Blakemore, Goff, and Macdonald (2006, p. 279) advocate the pairing of drama and writing as they had identified three ‘threads’ that appeared to connect drama and effective writing, which were “tension, emotional engagement and incubation and a strong sense of stance and purpose gained in part through role adoption”. This was where another critical episode in my learning occurred. The Lead went on to comment on the student’s ability to write from different viewpoints, as had been discussed by Cremin et al., citing that the student had displayed a high level of understanding of the use of role. Further, this use of role created with it an exploration of a complex range of emotions from both points of view – fear, danger, gratitude, sympathy, empathy, feeling stupid, and missing someone. This was the range of emotions that we had tried to simulate in the activities in the Silence Seeker unit, and seeing them written down gave credence to the non-linguistic uptake of drama, where the student exhibited behaviour that was synonymous with achieving drama objectives that were not necessarily to do with language uptake or acquisition. For the purposes of this study and the overall thesis, I shall refer to this form of uptake as ‘dramatic uptake’ to differentiate between feedback that confirms language uptake as defined Ellis (1994) and Lyster and Ranta (1997).

Sample 3 below is a sample analysis of one of the higher-proficiency students in the group. This judgement is based on observation of more sophistication in the writing, as well as on how well this student was able to communicate verbally in the classroom.

When joe brought a boy to city th lots of people were a mean to him. They were trying to hit him and they made lots of silly sounds and I was very scared. I wanted to have a quiet place and I was very missed my precious s hamburger, KFC, miss my girlfriend, my home and my family, but I couldn't speak English. It was the worst day I ever had. Suddenly joe came to me and said I'll help you tomorrow, I thought lots of people have to be kind to me. I sat on the chair and p stared at my girlfriend's picture. I was crying and I was<inserted> really hurt my sad. I

Registered User 23/6/11 12:04 PM  
**Comment:** Proper noun

Registered User 23/6/11 12:04 PM  
**Comment:** Missing article

Registered User 23/6/11 12:08 PM  
**Comment:** Change in voice, from third person to first. Incongruent.

Registered User 23/6/11 12:09 PM  
**Comment:** Passive – active form confusion

Registered User 23/6/11 12:10 PM  
**Comment:** Direct vs. indirect speech. Does not know how to use inverted commas.

Registered User 23/6/11 12:11 PM  
**Comment:** Minor – article confusion. Indefinite for first mention of object.

appears to have good control over the language, and displays this even in the classroom. However, more times than not this translates to a certain look of boredom. He does manage to use articles, which seem to be a problem with many Korean and Japanese students, though it does need refining.

**Sample 3:** Sample of higher-proficiency student in timed writing task

As can be seen in Sample 3, the student exhibits better control in his writing, which corresponded with his spoken communication as well. The student did not make as many grammatical and syntactical errors as the student in Sample 2. Moreover, it was also clear from this writing that the student also exhibited a high level of ‘dramatic uptake’, which displayed his connection to the feelings of the character in the story. Also, the effects of the activity ‘Blind in the City’ were also apparent in both the writing samples, as the themes of danger, fear and wanting to find sanctuary could be found.

To summarise the writing ability of the class, it was found that although there was a diverse range of language problems in the students’ writing, it was found that the most common errors were that of word form, verb tense, and sentence construction. These were problem areas that needed to be resolved to generally improve the language proficiency of the students, and this was done through the language objectives of the following lessons, and were also stored in the eventuality that we would return to teach this group of students again in a future research cycle. The students (with the exception of the student who only wrote three words) also displayed that they were able to use the vocabulary that they had learnt in context, as well as displaying dramatic uptake when relating to the feelings and emotions of the characters in the story. Identification of these language problems and the vocabulary uptake displayed could be seen as indicators that the students responded well to learning using drama pedagogies. Additionally, I found that the average language ability of this group was perhaps similar to that of their Malaysian peers. Nevertheless, at some undetermined point in the future, I suspect that the students in this group will leap ahead of their Malaysian counterparts in terms of their proficiency, simply because of their exposure to comprehensible language input in their environment, as well as the how much they are

required to use the language in their daily lives. However, this remains a conjecture due to the scope of this study, but could nevertheless provide grounds for future research.

## **The Bully – reflection of a solo flight**

This section unpacks the thought processes that went into the creation and implementation of my first solo teaching experience in the study, which, incidentally was my first solo teaching experience in the mainstream NZ education system.

Schon's (1983) definition of a reflective practitioner calls for reflection-on-action that can be present in the teacher before, during, and after the execution of the lesson. The first of these thinking processes that needed to be unpacked came before the lesson, which was the selection of the teaching material, and how the NZ ESOL context differed to the Malaysian context at the very heart of the teaching experience – the intended curriculum, and how the ends of education were perceived.

In the comparatively rigid teaching framework of the Malaysian context, teachers learn very fast that their worth to the system is measured in how they effectively transmitted the syllabus to the students. This in turn would be translated into the numbers of passes and failures in the students that they taught, and anything more than that would normally be considered a bonus. However, in essence, how well the students fared in their examinations should not be totally discarded when assessing how well they developed in their general learning. In the Malaysian education system, one should not divorce the syllabus and the National Education Philosophy (NEP), which sets the goals of holistic development and lifelong learning. The NEP emphasises four key aspects of holistic development, and they are the Physical (*Jasmani*), the Emotional (*Emosi*), the Spiritual (*Robani*), and the Intellect (*Intelekt*) (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 1987). Additionally, in 1976, a Moral Education committee comprising of respected members of the various major religions in Malaysia was formed, where the committee deliberated on moral values that were inherent in each religion that were to be inculcated in the national education system. These values comprised of 16 umbrella values, which were universally supported by all the religions concerned, are as follows: kindheartedness, self-reliance, humility, mutual respect, love, justice, freedom, courage, cleanliness of body and mind, honesty/integrity, diligence, cooperation, moderation, gratitude, rationality, and public-spiritedness (Suhid, 2008). Teachers are trained obligated to inject a moral value in their teaching every day.

Theoretically, keeping the NEP in mind, when teachers, especially ESL teachers, plan their lessons, they not only plan for the language objectives, but also plan for other skills or values that move them towards the goal of holistic development. However, in the actual implementation of the NEP, it can be observed that some major assumptions seem to have been made by the governing education body, at least as far as state level where the teachers on the ground were concerned. To highlight this tension between what was considered to be the end product of teaching, some teachers teaching in the Malaysian context were interviewed to investigate how of the elements of holistic development and lifelong learning were of

importance in their performance appraisal as teachers. Technically, these interviews were carried in the next (Malaysian) phase of the study, but because of their relevance in providing some insight into the type of reflections I was doing in planning my lessons in NZ, two relevant extracts are quoted below:

It's all well and good if we get them to be good people. I mean that is the end goal of our job isn't it? To mould useful human beings (*insan berguna*). But my performance is not measured by how many people I teach who then go on to change the world. It is determined by how many A's and B's I produce in my subject (Interview 27.9.11 – Pn Kamariah)

I am very conscious of how well my students do in their exam. It's my second year teaching and I really don't want to leave a bad impression on the school administrators (Interview 14.9.11 – Class teacher)

These responses indicated that numbers were ultimately the game that the teachers had to play, and although there were many good teachers in the Malaysian education system who genuinely cared about the holistic development of their young charges, it was how effectively they transmitted the prescribed knowledge of the syllabus, which would translate to the number of passes and failures in the exams, that would determine how well they were perceived to teach. It goes without saying that this facet of education would exert its pressure more urgently in the next phase of the research, which was to be implemented in the Malaysian educational context.

However, being aware of this tension was very important in identifying my own implementation of practice, or what Handal and Lauvas (1987) term as my teacher's practical theories. Handal and Lauvas (1987) posit that there are three main elements that shape teachers' practical theories, and they are personal experience, transmitted knowledge, and values. My acquired work ethic that was the result of my practice based in the Malaysian schooling system meant that I was always aware of the prescribed curriculum that had to be transmitted to the students. This in turn demanded a defined set of guidelines as to what exactly the students were to achieve in my class, so that these criteria could be ticked as soon as they were achieved or left unticked for me to know that I was not successful in achieving my objectives. However, I was also aware of the fact that my practical theories were also inherently 'British' as they were inherently Malaysian, in the sense of being a British schoolboy who had undergone a process of learning that had been comparatively less restrictive, and more open to enjoyment and more creative modes in the freedom of expression. This meant that as far as this amalgamation of values were concerned, it was as important to me for the prescribed syllabus to be effectively transmitted as it was important that the students were enjoying the process of their learning. Consequently, this begged to question of what it was that I was supposed to transmit to the students. Several questions now surfaced: In the absence of a written ESL curriculum, what was I supposed to teach? How do I impose my teaching theories that had been dominantly Malaysian into a New Zealand ESL classroom? Were there

any compromises that had to be set before I was able to reconcile any differences between the two contexts?

In response to the first question, I wanted to work with what I already knew about the children. In the previous session with the Lead, we had observed that the students seemed to have an overabundance of energy, that most of the students, especially the boys, seemed to find it hard to sit still. Additionally, through freeze frames produced during the previous session, we had discovered that aggressive play fighting seemed to be what many of the students considered to be a 'fun' activity to do. Thus, it was not surprising that after a discussion with the Principal, we discovered that there had been an increase in aggressive play after the 7.1 magnitude earthquake and the following aftershocks of September 2010. This provided the entry point that I had been looking for, one that all the students could relate to which also allowed me the ability to harness the excess nervous energy so that they would be able to transform their excess movements into dramatic activity, and in turn create the opportunity for learning specific language skills. In addition at that time, New Zealand was in a state of shock at the emergence of graphic evidence of bullying in the mainstream media. It seemed natural then that the play-fighting that the children favoured, coupled with the excess nervous energy they had, could result in a drama unit about bullying, which had both drama and ESL objectives. The drama objectives were to i) do diaphragm breathing, and to ii) use tableaux/freeze frames to describe events. The ESL objectives were that by the end of the lesson, the students should be able to i) use the irregular past tense 'fought' to make statements of events.

## Square One

Earlier, I had discussed how there had been a time of setting and testing of boundaries when we first initiated contact with the students. By the second lesson, the Lead had managed to control the students to the level where they were able to participate in the lessons to achieve her lesson objectives. It was assumed that the students' level of being able to work with a new authority figure and new learning activities would be automatically transferred from the Lead to me, as I had been with the Lead from the beginning of the project, and she had had time to associate me with the same activities and techniques that had previously been used by the lead. Unfortunately, this assumption was somewhat off the mark, as the students returned to the state of default behaviour before the Lead managed to rein them in. It was back to square one, and like the first lesson, I saw that it was imperative that I took the time to rein the students in to accept my authority as they had done with the lead.

However, unlike the first lesson that the Lead and I had had with the students, I had already planned a lesson with set objectives and a time frame in which to achieve them. In the lesson plan, the students were to be framed in a school playground setting, which was to be done through a visualisation exercise. Next, the students would be divided into two groups, and were to be given instructions that were different from the other. The base activity was to use the freeze frames, as had been set before the lesson. The students were to make four different freeze frames that showed a sequence. In the first group, the

students were to choose two characters, who have a play-fight with each other. Character A beats B, who falls down. Subsequently, everyone, including B, is pictured laughing and having a good time.

The second group, however, had slightly different instructions. Instead of everyone laughing and having a good time, B falls down after being hit, but does so in a strange position. Everyone starts to laugh but then they realise that B's eyes are closed and his mouth is open. The final freeze frame was to portray everyone looking scared, and trying to wake B.

The lesson was planned to end with a discussion on the effects of roughhousing, and was gradually to be built towards the subject of bullying in schools and how it affected students' lives.

Nonetheless, reflection-in-action projected that the lesson would not be completed unless major modifications were made. First, the students needed to be brought under control again and focussed on the lesson at hand, and to do this, I modelled some of actions that the Lead had done in getting the students focussed and attentive. They were engaged in physical warming up activities that focused their attention and got them in to frame of mind where they were attentively listening to my commands. Only after that had been done were the students able to give their attention to my commands, although they were prone to reverting to their default behaviour very quickly if my control over them lapsed even momentarily. As an aside, I saw how the classroom dynamics changed with every tactical move that the teacher makes, especially when teaching in a collaborative effort. This would be an important observation to make as it was relevant to all the work that followed, where a drama teacher would be working hand in hand with a language teacher, and the boundaries and the rules had to be set early on when the students were to work with either of the teachers. It was important that there was an acknowledged transfer of power, even if it resorted to a spoken agreement, that the students would try their very best to afford both teachers the same amount of deference that they did the other.

Second, even after we had used freeze frames in a previous activity, it was apparent that the students still did not have a grasp on the concept of a freeze frame. They moved about as if acting out a sketch, and felt it important that they were able to vocalise some of their actions. Some time had to be devoted for the students to be able to make freeze frames, subsequently elucidating a question that I had noted earlier in the discussion of this unit of work and that I would explore further in the work that followed— How much time does it take students' to grasp the use of relatively simple drama techniques such as freeze frames, even though they were elementary to me?

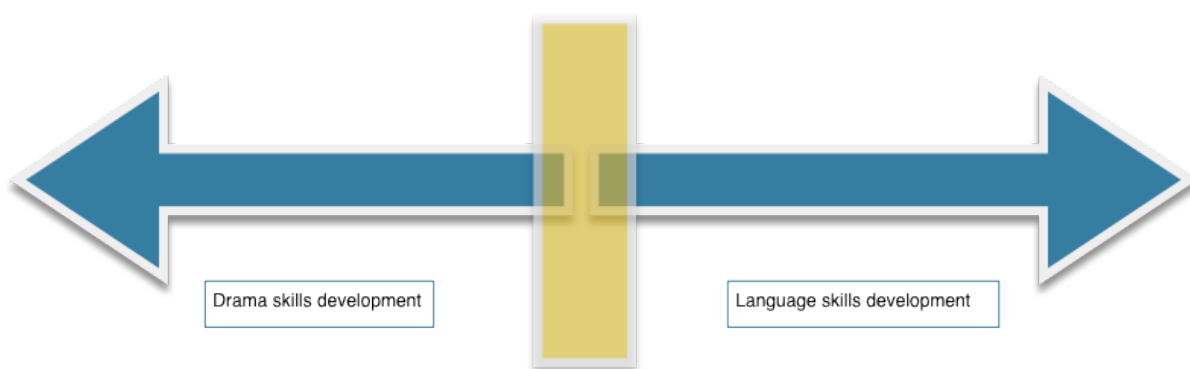
To attempt to answer this question in this particular context, it was imperative that I looked at the students themselves. There existed a major discrepancy between my expectations for what the students should have been able to do, and what they actually knew what to do. For example, creating a freeze frame was something that I had been able to do since I was a child. It was something we would do when we chased each other around the playground, and 'froze' to be 'safe'; it was something we did when we acted out a scene from our favourite cartoons and wanted to dramatise the moment when before one of

our spaceships exploded into a ball of flame. In short, it was not a skill that I had associated only to adults or older children who had had exposure to drama. Therefore, it was based on this assumption that I had mistakenly thought the students would have no problems in creating freeze frames of their own. It appeared that they were unable to see how their actions could be frozen, though they were able to create some semblance of a freeze frame under specific instructions by the Lead at the end of the lesson. Additionally, because they were able to do this, I also operated based on the assumption that once the students were able to make a freeze frame in the first lesson that they would have no problem in creating freeze frames in an ensuing lesson; but this assumption did not hold ground either, as was seen in the description of the solo lesson above. Although it may seem an elementary observation, this led to the conclusion that concepts that are easy for the teacher may not be as easy to grasp for the students.

The next step of reflection would be to investigate why this seemingly simple skill of being able to understand how to create a freeze frame eluded the students in this context. In the paragraph above I make a comparison between how I had been able to use freeze frames when I had been in the same age group as the students to initiate the following question – what was the difference between the contexts where I grew up in and the one these students were in that impeded them from being able to make freeze frames? After piecing together what I knew of the student profiles, that they came from relatively well-to-do families, and that from the earlier sessions where found out that their hobbies were playing video games, an assumption grew in my mind. Could it be that the students' lifestyles were different from when I was growing up that it had affected their ability to engage in creative play? When I grew up, play had normally meant with friends, engaging in imaginative play, as opposed to sitting in front of computers and video game consoles. Perhaps it was also due to their dependence on playing with their electronic toys that they had been less exposed to physical play with their peers (outside of roughhousing). There is still a gap in literature that discusses the effect of videogames on creativity, so my assumptions are speculative. However, there is a growing body of literature that discusses the relationship between violence in videogames and how it transfers into children's real worlds (Anderson, 2004). Additionally, Subrahmanyam et al. (2001) report that parents in a 1999 survey that children with access to a computer (including video games) and television spent an average of almost five hours a day in front of the screen or monitor, which equals to more than a quarter of their total waking hours in a day. It is interesting to note that this was a survey that was carried out before the invention of iPads, iPod Touches, iPhones and smartphones and tablets of the like. Such time is spent in a sedentary state, and usually in the absence of real human interaction.

This was an additional factor that I had not considered, and it would be a good reference point when starting the Malaysian teaching programme in the next phase of research. It would be interesting to investigate whether this initial difficulty creating freeze frames was limited to this particular context, with this particular set of students in this particular age group, or whether older students in the Malaysian context would have as much difficulty in grasping the concept of creating freeze frames.

Returning to the lesson and how the students were less than successful in their initial attempts at making freeze frames, again in a moment of realisation while reflecting-in-action, I re-evaluated the students' needs to be able to make good freeze frames and weighted it against being able to meet my current needs, which was to get the students to focus on bullying in school. This led me to cut down my expectations of what I had expected from their freeze frames, which allowed me just enough time to carry out a debrief session that was geared towards the discussion of violence and bullying in school before the end of the session. Nevertheless, although at this particular juncture in time, I had opted not to get students to make perfect freeze frames, this did raise an important question – how much of the form did I want the students to acquire, and is form that important? To answer this, I believe that form, which in this case is the ability to make freeze frames, is indeed important because it leads to a diverse range of ways to exploit the text, and exploit the drama techniques. Freeze frame is a 'slowing down of action', that allows the student/dramatist to use these frozen moments for deeper introspection, a deeper exploration of feelings and even to think of ways to overcome a problem at different points, pre-crisis, point of crisis, and post-crisis (Kao & O'Neill, 1998; Wessels, 1987). Boal's (1985) Forum Theatre in his Theatre of the Oppressed utilised such a use of freeze frames, where the actors freeze at certain points and participants are invited to give their input as to how they would solve a particular problem. In its own right, each and every drama technique should be aimed to be mastered properly, instead of constantly subscribing to the 'good enough' mentality. However, it is the teacher's call to make to emphasise drama skill or language skill. In the past, I have used the illustration of a dynamic slider where a language teacher who utilises drama pedagogies needs to manipulate both before and during the actual lesson, to suit the needs of the students upon reflection-in-action (Nawi, 2011)(refer to Figure 4). This slider can also be applied between drama skills development and development of teaching content.



**Figure 4:** Dynamic slider between drama and language skills development

At the end of the allotted time, the students had been able to make passable freeze frames, and had used the word 'fought' in their feedback session with me in a short discussion about the issues they perceived had occurred in the activity that they had done. In the discussion, the premise of violence and unintended consequences had been partially explored, and the students each acknowledged the dangers of unrestrained rough play. This partially achieved the set social-reconstructionist objectives that had been



set in the planning of the lesson, but the limited time had not allowed for a more thorough discussion of the subject, which would have led to the specific focus on bullying.

Just before the lesson ended, the student's attention was brought to the irregular past tense 'fought' and they were led through a quick discussion on other forms of irregular past tense words. With that, most the language objective that had been set in the lesson plan had been achieved, as well as partial achievement of the drama objective of making freeze frames.

### Students' perspectives

In the paragraphs above, the perspective of the writing had been of that of a reflective teacher, who was reflecting on the practice of a more experienced practitioner of drama pedagogies, as well reflecting both in and on action in his own practice. In Handal and Lauvas's (1987) developmental traditions of reflective teaching, it is essential that the reflective practitioner also look at how the students themselves had perceived what they had learnt. This also aligns with Ellis' (1994) definition of uptake, where the students are able to describe to the teacher what they had learnt, or what they perceived to have learnt. The following paragraphs describe what the learning through the eyes of the students themselves.

### Combination of drama and ESOL

One of the main objectives that we had set for the study was for students to be able to learn language in applied drama lessons. The Lead and I also wanted the students to be able to connect what they were doing in the drama lessons to their own ESOL classes, in order for them to be able to understand and appreciate the work that they were doing with us. In the final focus group interview, one of the responses that was obtained from the students is as follows:

We learn words here, and we learn how to write sentences in our normal [ESOL] class. So half and half (Interview 7.7.11 – Jung Su)

This statement gave credence to the work that this study had initiated, that the students had in fact felt that they had learnt language, in this case vocabulary, in the applied drama lessons. What was even more interesting was that it showed an active awareness that learning was happening in both the drama and normal ESOL sessions, where this particular student had felt that he had learnt an equal amount of language through both classes, using what was presumed to be 'normal' ESOL pedagogy, and drama pedagogies. This acknowledgement gave rise to some very interesting premises, that learning through drama pedagogies should be used hand-in-hand with some 'normal' ESOL/ESL/EFL/EAL pedagogy. This particular combination led to the formulation of a more structured teaching methodology that combined I call *staging the textbook* which will be described in more detail in the subsequent chapters.

However, the depth of this statement should not be analysed at face value, taking for granted that the 50/50 split between the two methods of teaching is totally black and white, between normal and drama

classes. Being able to understand the class in its entirety, understanding the content that is taught as well as how it is taught, is also of the utmost importance to the students.

Normal class is hard. I don't really understand normal class. Here is good, I understand more. (Interview 7.7.11 – Min Yong)

When probed further, another student responded that the major problem for her, and agreed upon by the others in the group interview, was that a lot of it was due to the teachers themselves.

Normal class is boring because teacher just bla bla bla. I don't get it. (Interview 7.7.11 – Hyo Jin)

Many of the students reported that the teachers were not sensitive to how much the students were able to understand. This reflection led me to appreciate that it is important to incorporate a feedback mechanism that is able to assist the teacher in gauging whether or not the students have understood what is being said or taught. Specifically to this context, the students identified not being able to understand the teacher's oral communication, whether it was the actual speech or the content that was delivered through the speech, as being a major hurdle to understanding their normal classes. Goh (1999) mentions five factors that students believed impacted on their ability to understand spoken text, and they are: i) vocabulary used by the spoken text; ii) prior knowledge about the topic or theme of the spoken text; iii) speech rate the spoken text is delivered in; iv) type of input that is given in delivering the spoken text; and v) the accent that the speaker delivers the spoken text in. Scaffolding each factor would give the ESL student a greater chance of understanding their teacher, which should by default, increase their rate of interest and ultimately, their language acquisition.

Further, Goh (2002) goes on to describe the cognitive strategies that students used for listening drawn from literature (O'Malley et al., 1989; Oxford, 1990 Young, 1997; Ross, 1997, and DeFillippis, 1980 as cited in Goh, 2002), which are inferencing, elaboration, prediction, contextualisation, translation, fixation, visualisation, and reconstruction. One of the assumptions that can be made of the students' ability to understand more in our drama in ESL classes is that, other than the talking styles of both the Lead and myself which we felt were very accommodating to second language learners, there were also the relevant value added bonuses that could be gleaned from using drama pedagogies. We did not just rely on the spoken and written texts for the students to make meaning, but we also relied very heavily on visualisation, physicalisation, as well as contextualisation of the learning material. For example, Goh (2002) elaborates on inferencing as filling in missing information and guessing the meaning of the words, by using contextual clues, using familiar content words, drawing on one's knowledge of the world, applying one's knowledge about the target language, and using visual clues. All of these criteria were applied in our drama classes, and according to the students, paving the way for better understanding of English as a second language.

With respect to acquiring vocabulary, the students noted that they had indeed learnt the intended vocabulary, and that the learnt words were helpful to their normal English classes.

For vocabulary, I can use the other classes your vocabulary, so I can talk more about, like, grammar. (Interview 7.7.11– Min Yong)

I learned, I learned about the right speech, because, because the first time I came here I was not very good, because I was too shy, but now with a play and join with a study, I could do it. I'm good enough to speech and vocabulary and spelling test. (Interview 7.7.11– Elizabeth)

Although the rudimentary language errors were an indication of the students' language abilities, the statements served as confirmation that they felt that they had indeed gained from their time in the applied drama classes. Further in the interview, Elizabeth indicates how she had felt shy in her normal classes, even those outside of ESOL, before she started attending the applied drama classes. If scrutinised carefully, there are several aspects that she mentions in her statement. First, she talks about how she felt that she did not have very good speech, which could have been attributed to low vocabulary that inhibited the content of what she wanted to say, general low proficiency which had to do with a combination of grammar and vocabulary, or it could have also been in part due to her lack of confidence, which she mentions as 'shyness' above. Next, she mentions how joining play and study had been the recipe for her perceived ability to overcome her obstacles to being able to communicate. In fact, this combination of play and study was a prevalent theme that was emphatically agreed upon by all the students during their interviews. Additionally, it has to be noted that the word 'perceived' is used when describing any form of improvement above, as it is seen from the viewpoint of the students, but has not undergone any rigorous testing to empirically validate the claims. However, where relevant, any form of observation or reflection that is thought to substantiate or refute any of the students' claims has been added into the account of this Frame of investigation.

### **Building trust**

In Friere's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Friere, 1996), he suggests that teachers implement a horizontal relationship between themselves and their students for meaningful dialogue to take place. This stepping away from the top-down approach that takes place in drama is aimed to do exactly that through the development of mutual trust (Kao & O'Neill, 1998). Boal (1985, 1994) used building of trust through creating horizontal relationships for the participants of his *Theatre of the Oppressed* to enable them to realise their states of oppression, and to release them from their inhibitions to share their thoughts with the other participants. Similarly, building trust was one of the elements that the Lead and I tried to instil in our lessons. From the very first class until the very last class, even through the minor setback in teacher-student relationship that I had experienced in my first solo lesson, it could be observed that a progression in trust had occurred. The following extract from the focus group interview that was carried out after the final class shows this progression.

Elizabeth: Let's play games. Before you go.

Lead: What games would you like?

Elizabeth: The games from first class.

Lead: But we played them before. Why do you want to play them again.

Elizabeth: Because now we trust you.

Min Yong: Yeah. Now we can enjoy playing.

Elizabeth: And play properly.

(Interview 7.7.11)

It can be gleaned from the extract above that the students had reached a point where they were willing to try the activities that we wanted to do with them without resisting. It can also be surmised at this point that the students had reached the state 'horizontal' with us as the instructors (or least to the point where they were able to let their guard down with us), to enable them to 'enjoy playing', and to 'play properly', which suggests that this state of trust would have been a great booster for teaching and learning should we have decided to continue the lessons in another teaching block.

How had we achieved this level of trust? Was it merely a natural progression of the teacher and student relationship? If not, how would a teacher using drama to teach ESL replicate a similar result when teaching another group of students? The last question was one that was of particular interest to me as I aimed to do so with the groups in the research contexts in the ensuing Frames.

### **The feedback request**

As with my own beliefs on error correction, the Lead also did not appear to believe that the students should be subjected to feedback on every single language error that they produced, as constant feedback on error had the ability to damage students' confidence in learning (Chen & Chang, 2004; R. L. Oxford, 1992), and did not support a natural way of language learning, where the learner needs to be exposed to comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982, 1985, 2003) and go through a process of internalisation, and subsequently, acquisition. Krashen and Terrell (1983) state that communication should be the focus of instruction, and not form; and that error correction, drilling, and explicit learning of grammar plays has very little importance to focusing on understanding messages in the target language.

However, it is also acknowledged that language learners require corrective feedback in order to facilitate language uptake (Lyster, 2002; Lyster & Ranta, 1997), that they also learn through repetition and trial and error (Skinner, 1957)), and that learners may require negative evidence (i.e. information about errors in grammar) in the form of feedback (Panova & Lyster, 2002). Likewise, in the interview, the students shared that they had wanted us to carry out more of this corrective feedback in our sessions.

Olivia: Maybe because we don't have time. But we don't, like, doing enough discussion. We just doing like when are OK and is it OK and we just pass it.

Me: So you want more discussion?

[Agreement]

Olivia: We like to know if we say something correct. Like, if we say something wrong, we want to know.

(Interview 7.7.11)

Error correction had always been an aspect of my teaching that I had thought to be rather well implemented, at least in my own practice, and this approach seemed to be echoed in the Lead's approach to error correction as well, which was that unless an error distorted the meaning of the message, it was not deemed to be strategically sound to be corrected within the tight time-frame that we had. Nevertheless, it has to be noted that we had indeed implemented corrective feedback, with the most common strategies being recasting (implicitly reformulating the students' error), eliciting (obtaining correct form by asking questions), and repetition (repeating the error with a change in intonation to denote focus). I noted that at least one of the students was able to pick up on these cues, as it was observed that she silently repeated words or forms that had been corrected to herself to consolidate her own learning.

Elizabeth strikes me as being on top of the ball when it comes to noticing and repairing errors. I see her silently repeating the words or phrases that she or her friends get wrong after they are identified by the Lead. Also she would follow up with a question to consolidate what she has learnt, and in the question, she would use the exact word or phrase that she had identified as being wrong. I notice that she would speak, and pause just before uttering the target word/phrase, get a look of concentration on her face, and make the correct utterance. (Research journal 29.6.11)

However, this behaviour was not explicitly observed in most of the students in the group, which denoted a difference in their sensitivity to error correction. Panova and Lyster (2002) also talk about the difference in which learners took to corrective feedback by quoting Robert's (1995, as cited in Panova & Lyster, 2002, p.576) report of his research on three adult learners of Japanese, where one learner was able to identify 46 percent of the corrective feedback moves that were carried out by the teacher, another identified 37 percent, and another only 24 percent. It can be assumed here that the students indicated a preference to include more explicit forms of correction (i.e. giving clear indication that the student had made an error in utterance or writing and providing them with the correct form), and more time allotted for active discussion of their errors. This echoed an earlier observation that I had made in the first lesson.

It seems like the students are obsessed with 'getting things right'. Even after they were told that they were not going to be tested on what they learnt here with us, they are constantly looking to us, as if to ask us to validate their utterances. (Research journal 12.4.11)

Initially, I had interpreted this behaviour as hesitance and being unsure of the answer. However, with the extract above, I now relabelled this behaviour as needing the necessary corrective feedback for uptake to occur.

Nevertheless, although it is acknowledged that there could have been more error correction that could have been implemented in the lessons had there been sufficient time, it is also importance to recognise the impracticality of providing such a detailed amount of error correction in a much larger class, say for example a Malaysian secondary school classroom, which would be the focus of the next research cycle. Leki (1991), though talking about corrective feedback in writing, suggests that the expectations of expected learning and focus on error correction be discussed for students to benefit from the feedback.

## Closing the chapter

This chapter presented the first Frame of the research, where I took on the role as an apprentice to using drama in teaching ESL. Through reflective analysis and discussion, I have discussed the strategies (both in teaching drama and teaching in general) that the Lead had used that had formed critical episodes in my learning. Of these strategies, the use of Teacher in Role and Students in Role had been the biggest point of learning that had been outside my scope of experience both as a teacher trainee, as well as a practicing ESL teacher. Completion of set language objectives was also able to be achieved in the lessons, but the applicability of some of the strategies, especially those that had a high 'time : acquisition' ratio, was questioned in other teaching contexts, namely the Malaysian context that had a high number of students in the class. One of the most significant findings was that of the perceived symbiotic nature of drama and normal ESL classes, where both were perceived to play an equally important role in the students' acquisition of language, with drama catering to the students' interest and vocabulary development, and their normal classes catering to their grammatical and syntactical learning. This concept of combining the two types of classes, or as I call them, adjuncts, will be developed further in the following Frame – Drama in Malaysian ESL.

# Chapter 5:

## Frame 2.1 – Drama in Malaysian TESL: Pilot Study

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### Introduction

In this chapter, I describe the second case study or Frame in the research cycle. I begin with a description of the Malaysian ESL context, where I describe important aspects of the history of the language and how it affects English in Malaysia today. The account is then divided into two sections, spread across two chapters – the first reports the pilot study, and the second the main sustained teaching programme. In each of the sections, I describe what went on in the classes, the reactions from the students and the collaborating class teacher, and how the cycles of reflection and fine-tuning of the lessons affected the students' learning of the language. These two sections have differing focuses. The pilot study focused more on gauging the students' reactions to learning ESL using drama pedagogies, and on acclimatising them to using drama pedagogies in the main programme that would follow. Additionally, the pilot study presented me the opportunity to put into practice some techniques and activities that I had learnt in the previous phase of my study, and also allowed me the chance to reflect on some of the questions that had arisen for me during my earlier classroom work in New Zealand.

Next, described in the following chapter, the focus of the main programme was using drama to teach the syllabus as found in the ESL textbook, using an emergent methodology that I have labelled as *staging the textbook*. This teaching methodology looks at adding a layer of drama on top of the existing layer that is already found in the textbook, building on elements of previous work done by practitioners such as Greenwood Greenwood and Sæbø (2010) that focus on drawing texts from books, Miller and Saxton (2004) and Kao and O'Neill (1998) who look at process drama, and Maley and Duff (1983, 2005) drama techniques in ELT. I also detail a sample drama unit entitled *The Internet: Uses and abuses* that was carried out in this phase of teaching, which describes how staging the textbook can be used to teach an ESL class. Subsequently, I discuss the model of transmission that had emerged from the reflective process of the study. This transmission model explores three approaches in layering drama pedagogies and language teaching pedagogy. At the end of Frame 2 (including both 2.1 and 2.2), I summarise these issues, and discuss the insights that I have gained on my research journey.

### Si Tanggang's homecoming: returning to Malaysia

I stepped out of the black compact car, my feet making a crunching sound as they hit the gravel of the uneven parking grounds. I took a deep breath, inhaling the sickly sweet, pungent odours of palm oil vapours wafting from factories over 10km away that originally

made up the industry of this palm-oil settlement. I smiled and allowed myself a quick reminiscence, where a new teacher, fresh out of university, first reported for duty at this very school.

“Dul!” came a voice from near the canteen, with a hint of a Javanese accent peppering the shortened version of my name. I looked up and saw an old colleague, Zul, about 10 years my senior, and a welcome face that reconnected the past and the present. It suddenly felt like I had never been away at all, and as I walked to the school hall for morning assembly, I was greeted by the sight of many other familiar faces, each registering a look of pleasant surprise.

Si Tanggang, the Malay prodigal son of lore, had returned.

(Personal journal 13.4.11)

Returning to Malaysia to trial the methodologies that I had begun to experiment with in New Zealand was both exciting and challenging. Initially I had experienced a strong sense of apprehension about going back to the rural community that I had left for so long, and bringing back with me idea of teaching and learning that would be almost completely foreign to the students and most of the teachers there. However, setting foot in the school and seeing familiar faces seemed to bring about a sense of continuation in my journey of self-development, and I felt ready to begin my work with the students. More importantly, I this connection between past and present helped boost my reflective lenses on my practice at the different stages of development. This connection made clearer the lenses from my understanding when I began as an ELT practitioner fresh with young, newly formed ideas on teaching, to the more experienced practitioner who had gained different ideas on teaching from another country. Additionally, this connection between past and present helped ease the transition I was facing from an informed outsider back to the insider who was familiar with the cultural and academic nuances of the research context.

## **Structure of the lessons**

The pilot was carried out in three lessons over the period of one week. The lessons took the place of the regular ESL classes that the class normally had, which were two double periods lasting 80 minutes each, and one single period of 35 minutes (35 minutes on Friday as class time was shortened by 5 minutes per period to make time for Friday Prayers). Because of the short duration of the pilot, the school had issued a ‘free pass’ for me to teach whatever I wanted, as long as there were clear goals that would support the students’ learning of ESL. In these lessons, I worked closely with my counterpart in the school, whom I have labeled the collaborating class teacher, in the planning, implementation and the reflection processes of the pilot study. Additionally, I was also told by the English Head of Panel that in the main part of the study, because of the long duration of time that I was to work with the students, they were also expected



to be taught what was in the syllabus to prepare them for their examinations. This process of teaching according to the syllabus will be discussed in the following chapter, Frame 2.2.

## **Working with the collaborating class teacher**

The collaborating class teacher (also referred to as simply the class teacher) was an integral component in this Frame, as well as the teaching work that went behind it. The class teacher was the English teacher of the class that had been assigned to my project, and as luck would also have it, was a former pupil of mine at university, where I had taught her what I had once thought were the basics of using drama in the ESL classroom, such as dramatising texts and using drama games. In this project, the class teacher had several roles. First, she was the class English teacher, to whom I would refer when I had questions about the students or what they had been taught so far in the academic year. She also acted as a liaison to the students when I needed to recruit student participants for the interviews and focus group sessions. Next, although I was given full control over the how and what I taught the students, the class teacher also gave critical feedback on my ideas, as well as provided her own input when I was planning what to teach the students. Finally, the class teacher also served as an additional reflective lens to reflect in, on and of action in the reflective practice cycle. The class teacher was also co-teacher and co-actor in activities that required her to do so.

## **Identified issues from Frame 1**

The work from the previous Frame had formed a significant portion of my apprenticeship in using drama to teach ESL. Within that Frame, I had identified the greatest critical episodes, or the biggest learning points that I had experienced, among them the use of process drama and using TiR (Teacher in Role) and SiR (Students in Role) in my teaching. I had also identified the symbiotic nature of drama in ESL classes and normal ESL classes as perceived by the students in the previous Frame to be a critical episode in developing my understanding of how drama could be used to teach ESL. In addition to the critical episodes mentioned above, I also acknowledged issues that prompted some thought in my reflective reasoning while analysing the previous Frame. These issues dealt with i) the practicality of using certain drama techniques in the Malaysian context; ii) the differences between how boys and girls reacted to drama activities; iii) the effect of changing roles in a dramatic frame; iv) the development of the concept of 'dramatic uptake'; and v) the potential difference in reaction to drama pedagogies between the previous research context and the Malaysian research context. In this Frame I discuss the issues identified above where they become relevant to the grounded experience of this context.

## **The pilot**

The pilot study was a pivotal point in the research as it became a point where the transition occurred from apprentice to experimental practitioner in drama in ESL. First and foremost, it provided the opportunity for me to apply what I had learnt in the phase of my apprenticeship that had been described

in Frame 1. It was also a way in for to bridge the gap between myself and the research participants, as well as to gauge their perceptions towards the use of drama in ESL, and if need be, to modify and change any of the planned approaches that I was to apply in the main study of the Malaysian phase of research. To achieve that end, the following guiding questions were formulated:

1. What drama strategies would work with this group of students?
2. How could the drama strategies used in this pilot study be used to inform the teaching in the course I was to design?
3. To what extent do the strategies used influence the attainment of set language learning objectives?
4. How receptive are the students and the collaborating class teacher towards using drama strategies in ESL learning?
5. How does using drama strategies affect the students' motivation levels?
6. How much do the student participants perceive they can learn using applied drama in ESL?

In Chapter 1 I have described the participants of the study, as well as the context that the study was to be conducted in. They are 42 Form 4 co-ed students in a rural school in southern Malaysia, all of whom were Malay Muslim, in a context that was predominantly Malay Muslim. As such, there were several cultural considerations that had to be taken into account before entering the field. Malaysia is a predominantly Muslim country, with Malay Muslims forming 50.4 percent of the population (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2013). This meant that the predominant cultural norms in Malay society are based on Muslim norms. Among the more prominent features of Malay culture are respect towards one's elders, especially respect towards the teacher; another feature of traditional Malay culture is the proximity between men and women, where both sexes are allowed to approach and talk to each other, but physical contact is frowned upon. However, there is a growing difference to how this limitation is viewed. As the country and the people move towards industrialisation and the associated Western values, the values of the Malays are also going through change (Mohamad, 1996). This change is especially apparent in more urban areas, as opposed to more rural areas where culture and religion still plays a strong role. Moreover, I was intimately familiar with the context, as I had started my teaching career as a teacher in the school, and had a general idea of the types of students that I would encounter. Thus, I entered the field with the following assumptions:

The students will generally be of mid to lower proficiency in English. They may also display a reluctance to speak English to each other, as it could be taken as a sign of 'showing off'.

There will be a certain amount of awkwardness in male and female interaction. This is based on their age and also their geographic location, which is situated in a rural area, where Malay cultural and religious values are generally stronger than urban areas.

I further elaborate on the Malay culture and its relevance to the research context in further chapters below.

## Lesson 1

For the first class, I decided to try and build on the work that I had done in the previous Frame, with the theme being on bullying and the consequences of violence. Similar to the lesson on bullying in Frame 1, the drama objectives were to develop a group focus activity by using learning to breathe into the diaphragm, to familiarise the students with working in an imaginative frame, and to familiarise the students with working in role. I also set a simple language objective as to not overburden the students in their first class: by the end of the lesson, the students should be able to use at least two character adjectives to describe a fictional character. According to the syllabus, this was a language objective that should have been achieved by the students before, and thus the drama lesson was to serve as a revision for the language element of the lesson.

The lesson was started with an icebreaking activity where the students had to say their names, accompanied by unique personal gestures. Next, a concentration exercise was conducted, where the students were paired and instructed to alternately say 1,2,3,1,2,3... , and as the activity progressed, the numbers were substituted with other words and gestures. Subsequently, I introduced the concept of working in role to the students by introducing three roles that I would work with as TiR (Teacher in Role). The roles were:

Myself as the teacher/facilitator. I would be in this role when I took off my blazer. This role would be the default 'teacher' role whereby to initiate the drama sequences, and maintain control of the activities.

Mr Mark, the troubled school counsellor. I would be in this role when I put on my blazer. Mark is the neurotic and accident-prone counsellor who is always landing himself in trouble, by not remembering things, misplacing things, and unabashedly asking students for help every time he gets into trouble. He is always afraid the Principal is lurking somewhere, catching him unawares. At the same time I wanted to make him endearing enough so the students would sympathise with him and help him with his work. This would then be the basis of any task or activity within the context.

Mr Boutros, the translator. I would be in this role when I put on a special hat. The students were supposed to limit their interaction to English with me, as teacher and in my other two roles, and also with the class teacher. When they faced difficult words or phrases, or did not understand the instructions, they were to raise their hands and call upon Boutros to translate. This role was an experiment to see how much the students would actually limit their use of Malay and if they would call upon the translator when they needed help in understanding and clarifying instructions or details. I tried to make the character identifiable and accessible to the students by giving

Boutros a funny and eccentric persona, where he was always talking about food, and could always be found in the school cafeteria should the students need him.

Next, the students were divided into groups under Mark's tutelage, and were asked to help him come up with new 'files' for six troublesome students that had to fit the following criteria: i) had to be around their age; ii) had to be someone who had a bit of a discipline problem; iii) in the context, had to be someone in the school. In their discussions, the students were tasked to describe the character they had developed using character adjectives, and present their characters to the class.

### **Boy-girl interaction**

From past experience of teaching in Malaysian schools, this school in particular, I was worried about how interaction would be between boys and girls. However, I was also aware that there were many varying degrees as to the level of interaction between the two sexes, and that no two schools were identical. As expected, when told to get into a big circle for the first activity, the boys stood next to the boys and the girls chose places next to the girls. These two groups seemed to automatically polarise on both sides of the hall. Nevertheless, even though their physical positions were polarised, it was interesting to note that there was generally no visible sense of awkwardness between the opposite sexes. Both genders interacted well with each other: they looked each other in the eye when communicating; they made and laughed at jokes, no matter if it was made by a girl or a boy, and they seemed to be willing to play with each other. This observation may seem strange to western teachers who may not see why boy-girl interaction should be different from that described above. However, a separation between boys and girls is one that potentially affects the dynamics of the classroom, especially in lessons that are proximity or contact intensive like drama. For instance, even though there appeared to be almost no awkwardness in boy-girl interaction, contact was only culturally and religiously acceptable as long as the contact between the members of different sexes was not physical (i.e no touching). This restriction meant that I became aware that I would have to take certain precautions, like making sure that activities that required physical contact would be carried out in segregated groups, or that activities that required physical touch would be modified. Nevertheless, this observation was only in terms of how they interacted with each other in preliminary drama activities, and it remained to be seen if students of both genders reacted differently to different drama activities.

### **Student receptivity and scaffolding**

Participation is perhaps one of the greatest keywords to a drama practitioner; a drama class is a good as dead without student participation. At the beginning of the first lesson, this observation was made:

At the beginning of the class the participants initially did not know what to do. I had planned for the students to initiate an ice-breaking of sorts. The students were required to say their names out loud, and accompany it with a unique gesture that was their own. This was to give a sense of ownership towards their gestures, identities, and the activity as a whole. I was greatly disappointed when the students were reluctant to try the activity. Most

of the student just snickered, and even when they did manage to squeeze their names out, it was a very minute sound that had to be coaxed many times to eventually make itself heard. I had to compensate by making greatly exaggerated movements and facial expressions to elicit some form of response. When they did manage to come up with something, the gestures were pathetically small, and not emphatic in any way. In trying to understand the reason behind this phenomenon, I had to crystallise whether the attributing factors were personal, cultural or otherwise. It was observed that many of the students seemed to feel silly doing this activity. Whatever the reason, I was physically and emotionally drained just 10 minutes into my very first lesson. (Research journal 18.4.11)

At this stage, it was still too early to conclude the reason behind this seeming reluctance to participate in what I saw was the physicality of the drama activity. It was still to be seen whether the reluctance was systemic and was inbuilt in the students due to cultural values; or merely a sign that more scaffolding needed to be carried out. On the other hand, I was also aware that these lessons were a scaffold to the coming lessons in the main program, and as such required time and patience for the students to acclimatise to them.

Nevertheless, it has to be noted that participation did occur, though it was not to the level that had initially been planned, and that it took a copious amount of energy to achieve what had been achieved. This was concurred with by the class teacher, who made the observation that she personally thought that the lesson had gone rather well, and that she had never had that much active participation from the students in her classes before. In retrospect, as a reflection-on-action, this suggested three insights: i) the students had never been required to do activities that were relatively physical in the classroom before, which led to them not knowing how to act; ii) the class teacher had never taught lessons that required much physical participation in her classes, and therefore saw the students' responses differently to how I saw them - that what I saw as little to modest participation she saw as a good amount of participation; and iii) the class teacher did not seem to be aware of how much energy that had been expended to initiate the participation that she had seen, which led to the question - how would I minimise the effort that a teacher using drama pedagogies would have to expend in the planning and implementing of drama lessons?

From these insights, it was apparent that the students were not used to having their classes being taught outside of the accepted norm of a regular ESL classroom. In personal interviews of some of the students, they were asked to describe what they normally did in their ESL classes. The following are some of the responses.

It depends on what we are learning. Mostly, we use what is in the textbook. Sometimes the teacher makes it interesting by bringing in some pictures. (Interview 20.4.11 – Iman)

I'm not sure. I don't really understand what is happening in class. I'm not very good at English.  
(Interview 20.4.11 – Shamsul)

The teacher is nice. She will always tell us the words in Malay. We use the textbook sometimes, and for literature, we use the little literature book. The teacher always photocopies good notes from the [literature] study books so we know how to answer the questions. (Interview 21.4.11 – Ziana)

As indicated in the responses above, it was evident that the students were used to using the textbook in their ESL classes, and that the outcome of their learning seemed to hinge on answering examination questions. This practice suggested that they were not used to being taught in ways that did not somehow involve the use of textbooks or workbooks, and they would thus be relatively unfamiliar with being taught using what they saw as unconventional teaching strategies. Along with the reluctance to commit to doing work that was more physical, it was found that students needed time and copious amounts of explanation on the use of role in the classroom, and working in dramatic context. This was most probably due to the comparatively low level of their technical drama skills (I use this term loosely as I refer to students' ability to use their agency and the needed drama techniques), and thus, it could be gleaned that a greater amount of scaffolding needed to be done in the main study of this phase of the research.

However, there was one response from the class teacher that was pleasantly surprising. In the interview with her at the end of the first day, along with affirming that the level of participation was beyond that which she normally had in her own classes with the same group of students, she stated that the students had genuinely enjoyed the class, and were interested to learn more using drama in their ESL classes. This response helped to answer one of the objectives of the pilot study – to ascertain the receptiveness of the participants towards using drama pedagogies.

### Use of L1

Faerch and Kasper (1983) posit that when L2 learners face a limitation in expressing what they want in their target language due their limited interlanguage, they normally resort to using communication strategies, which are “potentially conscious plans” (p. 36) to overcome communication problems. Two examples of communication strategies are transfer, appeals, paralinguistic means, word coinage, and circumlocution (Faerch and Kasper, 1983, as cited in Paramasivam, 2009).

In the case of the students in this research context, my assumption based on previous experience would be that the students would favour transfer as their communication strategy, where they would use “items from a second language, typically, the mother tongue, particularly the syntactic and lexical, to make good the deficiencies of the interlanguage” (Corder, 1993, p. 26). This meant that I had entered the field with the assumption that the students would use a lot of their L1 in their ESL classes, though I had no idea to what extent. Lower proficiency classes were usually almost exclusively in Malay, as the students did not usually have the needed proficiency meet the standards of the set syllabus. This usually meant that most

of the students in the lower proficiency classes had failed their examinations in the previous years but were promoted anyway because English was not a subject that required a compulsory pass. However, I did not anticipate this class to be the same, as I had been assured by the school that the class was the top class of Form 4, and that most of them had passed their English exams well.

Although I am a believer of Krashen's Monitor Model (Krashen, 1985, 1988; Krashen & Terrell, 1983), where he expounds that language is only learnt through 'comprehensible input' and that translation would interfere with the process of comprehensible input, I also concur with the approach that there are many approaches to learning a language. This means that there was also room in my personal pedagogy for the behaviourist approach to language teaching (Brooks, 1960; Skinner, 1957), and also the cognitive approach to language teaching (DeKeyser, 1998; Faerch & Kasper, 1983; Lightbown, 2008) where students learnt by understanding the rules that lay behind the language. As a means of being able to understand enough to be able to complete set tasks, I acknowledged that L1 transfer should not be taken away as a communication strategy. Thus, as a pre-emptive precaution to avoid confusion in the expectations of the students as to whether or not Malay would be accepted in my classes, the students were told that they were free to use their L1 as a communication strategy when all other strategies failed. This meant that they were expected to try to use English as much as possible, and if they were stuck, to try and explain the word or phrase they were looking for in another way, or to even use sign language, before they tried using Malay. However, this observation was made during the class:

Initially I anticipated that the students would use Malay when they spoke with each other, but perhaps I had slightly expected the students to use more English as they were supposed to be the best that the school could offer. However, as the class progressed, I noticed that the students were engaging in communication with each other almost exclusively in Malay, and only tried to use English when they were aware that I was monitoring their group. It was only then that I saw the students actually trying to use English (more often resorting to sign language), though I noticed something rather odd in the way they did it. After an attempted utterance in English, most of the students seemed to give a rather sheepish smile, as if to express a certain amount of awkwardness. Perhaps it is a matter of not knowing what to say. But I think it goes slightly beyond that; I think they feel uneasy about using English with each other. (Research journal 19.4.11)

From this excerpt, it could be concluded that the students were not used to using English in class, though at this point, it still remained to be seen whether it was because of a lack of lexical ability, a lack of communicative strategies, or even if it was more cultural, that they felt uneasy with each other when talking in English.

### **Incessant clarification requests and teacher translation**

Another linguistic and perhaps cultural barrier lay in the students' tendency to indicate that they had understood instructions, but asking either myself or the class teacher at close quarters to clarify the task as

we went round monitoring the class. This disruptive pattern of behaviour took a significant amount of time that was supposed to be used to proceed with the lesson, and needed to be given attention to. When asked to clarify, as much as I could I tried to explain in simpler English, resorting to gestures when all avenues had been exhausted. The students were also reminded that they could call upon my TiR alter ego Boutros if they were in dire need of translation. However, I quickly saw the concept was alien to them, and generally, they were unable to enter the dramatic frame where they were able to interact with the portrayed roles. Additionally, it was to find out after the subsequent lesson that the class teacher had been translating to Malay when asked to clarify, and that this had been her usual *modus operandi* in her teaching. This practice helped shed some light into why the students were reliant on clarification requests done at close quarters, as well as gave some explanation to why the students had not chosen to utilise the provided language transfer mechanism in the form of Boutros the translator. This overdependence on teacher translation would be likely to limit the students' language learning skills development, which could ultimately impede their language learning as a whole.

### **Hints of technological ability and unmonitored Internet access**

In the activity with Mr. Mark where the students had to come up with a character based on the set criteria, most groups elected to choose one of their own members as the student with the discipline problem, even though they had been instructed to come up with a fictional character. I found this interesting as it seemed to suggest a disinclination to think of fictional settings or characters that were more than slightly removed from the students' present contexts. Nevertheless, there was one group that did not follow the pattern of choosing someone from their own group as their main character. However, it was more than a little troubling to discover that the name they had chosen for their character was Maria Ozawa, a famous Japanese pornographic actress. I knew that the students knew exactly who they were talking about, as they exchanged sly looks of amusement between themselves as they said the name, and proceeded to list out adjectives of the character flaws of their chosen character; among them the use of the adjectives 'naughty' and 'sexy', which carried negative connotations in the Malay culture. What I could gather from this was that even though this display of brashness could be seen as just a group of boys trying to be naughty, it suggested the underlying issue of how the Internet has enabled access to almost anything the heart desired, and there remained little doubt in my mind as to what a curious 16 year-old would desire to do on the Internet, if given the opportunity. However, I do acknowledge that this can only be an assumption, and that there could be a myriad other reasons to why they chose that particular name – i.e peers, media, teenage rebellion etc. Nevertheless, if my assumption were true, this would imply that these students, even though they lived in a rural area, had access to computers and the Internet, and were technology savvy-enough to make Internet searches. This knowledge was new to me, and served as a reminder to how fast access to technology had developed in the four or five years since I had last taught in the area. This realisation also proved very useful in planning a major unit in the main study, which I shall explain in further detail in the following chapter.



## Lessons 2 & 3

In lesson 2, the drama objectives that were chosen were to use tableaux to describe events, and to get the students used to doing a group focus activity by breathing into the diaphragm before the lesson. However, as a step up from the previous lesson, I decided that the students needed to have a more challenging set of learning objectives, which would test their previous knowledge, as well as adding new knowledge. The language learning objectives were as follows – By the end of the lesson students should be able to: i) Use the irregular past tense ‘fought’ to make statements of events; ii) Make at least 5 sentences using Subject + like + verb(ing) or Subject + like + to infinitive; iii) Use at least 5 character adjectives to describe fictional character; and iv) Write a letter from teacher to parents, describing events.

In class, after a quick deep breathing session and a recap of the previous lesson, the students were asked to get into their groups, and the session was taken over by TiR as Mark. They were then asked to develop the ‘files’ of their fictional characters by not only adding on more adjectives, but were also asked to use *Subject + like + verb(ing)* and *Subject + like + to + base form (to infinitive)* for their language structures. After the students had completed this activity they were then asked to share their characters with the class.

Next, the students were introduced to working with freeze frames. After 15 minutes of explaining and training the students how freeze frames were done, they were instructed to come up with their own freeze frames on the sort of activities their characters liked doing, as per their previous discussion. Because of the amount of time spent on working with freeze frames, the rest of the planned lesson was brought over to be finished in lesson 3.

In the third and final lesson of the pilot study, there were 35 minutes in which the lesson had to be completed, though in reality even less than that could be utilised. Consequently I decided that the lesson needed to be a consolidation lesson, rather than to learn new drama or language skills. The drama objectives were narrowed to a single, achievable objective that we had been working on in the previous lesson, that by the end of the lesson, the students should be able to use freeze frames to describe events. The language learning objectives remained the same as the previous lesson to ensure that the students had consolidated the character adjectives and the grammar point they had learnt throughout the week. Originally, the final lesson was planned to be a continuation of the previous lesson, where the students had to finish their letters to parents in class. The lesson had been planned as a team-teaching lesson, where I provided the context to the students through working in role, and the class teacher provided the language and writing skills input to the students. This team-teaching method of teaching was the foundation for the ‘integrated adjunct approach’ of combining drama with ESL, which will be discussed in further detail in Frame 2.2.

### Consistency of behavioural patterns

In the first lesson, the following behavioural patterns had been observed: the students were heavily reliant on their use of L1 and on teacher translation; they were heavily reliant on the teacher to clarify the task

for them at close quarters and not in front of the whole class; and they needed a large amount of scaffolding to enable them to carry out the drama objective. These behavioural patterns were also observed in the second and third lessons as well, and it could be gleaned that these were central issues that needed to be dealt with in the main phase of the Malaysian study.

In terms of English language production in lessons 2 and 3, as expected, it was again noticed that many of the students spoke Malay while carrying out group work, though there seemed to be one or two students who made a conscious effort to come up with a few English words and sentences when I came round to monitor their group. Again, the communication strategy in the form of TiR Boutros the translator was not called upon, presumably because peer-translation and teacher-translation were more direct, and more comfortable for the students, emphasising the need to overcome the previously noted dependence on teacher translation. Once I became aware that the class teacher was translating, I pulled her to one side and asked her to stop doing so, which she immediately agreed to do. She reasoned that she had not known that she was not supposed to translate for the students when they asked her one-to-one, and that that was how she made sure the students understood her class.

Understanding the concept of making a freeze frame was also a challenge with this group of students, as much as it had been for the New Zealand group of students, even though they were from different contexts and were of different age groups. As with the New Zealand group, the students were able to do sketches, where all the players are moving to tell a story, but getting them to freeze at the crucial moment of action seemed to be a challenge.

At the end of the second class, we settled on the students being able to integrate the disciplines of movement in acting with the freezing of the crucial point of action, instead of being brought immediately to the frozen point of action itself. At this point in time, the accuracy of the drama form was not the focus of the lesson, and it was sufficient that the students were able to express their interpretation of the task (describing character objectives). However, this compromise did lead to the question of how much drama form we focus on, and how to divide the emphasis between drama form, task completion, and language learning. This will be explored further in the following chapters. However, at this juncture, the question led back to the previously identified requirement of sufficient scaffolding. In fact, if seen in the progression of the students' learning, this pilot and the techniques that were piloted were both my implementation of the techniques that had been learnt in my period of apprenticeship. Additionally, they were also the tools to provide the scaffolding of basic drama techniques that the students would require for the main stage of the Malaysian phase of research in Frame 2.2.

### **Aligning the dramatic frame**

One of the major features that a participant in a drama needs to enter a dramatic frame is the suspension of reality (Baldwin, 2012), where the participant needs to push past his or her accepted perception of reality. Younger children are normally able to do this when they are immersed in their make-believe

worlds, where they use this spatial and temporal space to make sense of the world around them (Ghiaci & Richardson, 1980; Lindsey & Colwell, 1980; Bodrova & Leong, 2005; Benson, 2008). However, this ability to immerse oneself in another reality tends to become lost as a child grows older, and is told or pressured to conform to the norms of society (Hall, 2007).

In the context of younger children, the presence of an adult entering their imagined worlds is usually welcomed, as long as the adult respects the boundaries and conventions that has been set by the child (Baldwin, 2012). This adult presence in the students' imagined worlds is parallel to how the TiR functions in a dramatic frame. However, in the case of older children, the TiR sets up the imagined world and tries to bring the children into it. In essence, this was what was attempted to be done in using the dramatic frame in the ESL classes.

Nevertheless, it was observed that the students had difficulty in entering the dramatic frame up to the level where they were able to effectively function within it. For example, it was observed that there was major incongruence between the students' body language, facial expressions and the dramatic context they were supposed to be in. To illustrate, a girl who had just been caught cheating on her boyfriend showed as much alarm as a grandmother taking her afternoon nap; and a bully extorting her victim for money showed as much ferocity as a cat yawning. It was very clear that many of the students were not fully engaged in, or what I have chosen to call fully aligned with, the dramatic context; thus making themselves unresponsive to what was supposed to be happening around them. This was one of the areas that needed to be worked on the most – getting the students more invested in their agency within the dramatic context. This need would also imply that much more scaffolding would be required in terms of providing the students with sufficient drama skills in order for them to utilise basic human facial expressions to align themselves with the dramatic context.

In aligning the learning done in the dramatic context with language acquisition in real life, Lightbown (2008, p. 110) offers a concept called TAP, or transfer-appropriate processing, where “information is best retrieved in situations that are similar to those in which it was acquired”. In my interpretation of the term ‘situations’, I have not just limited it to be single-layered, where it is only a situation in a specific time or place. The term includes the feelings, the body movements, and even submodalities (Grinder & Bandler, 1976; Robbins, 1997) that are experienced by the students both in the real world, and in the simulated one of the dramatic context. As such, the closer a student is able to replicate reality in the dramatic context, the closer he or she will be able to access the knowledge and skills that have been learnt to apply in the real-life context. This premise also stresses the importance of the students being able to learn and apply sufficient skills in drama to be able to learn language better, partially answering a question posed earlier - that learning the drama skill is just as important as being able to complete a set task, as well as being able to learn the target language.

## Student and teacher feedback

To provide greater insight into the work done in the pilot study, I also gained feedback from the class teacher and the student participants, though this had to be done upon my return to New Zealand, due to time constraints in the field. I arranged a telephone interview with the class teacher, and asked her to distribute a simple two-question survey using a 5-point Likert scale to the students with the questions:

- i) The classes were interesting.
- ii) I think I can learn English better in the drama classes than I can in the normal teacher's classes.

A blank space under the heading 'suggestions/comments' was also included for the participants to include anything that they wished to share.

After analysing the summary of the telephone interview with the teacher, several recurring themes began to emerge. First was that using drama was seen as difficult, and this concurred with the findings from other drama research in similar teaching contexts, such as Stinson (2009), Royka (2002), and To et al. (2011) among others. Even though the class teacher had undergone a drama training module in her undergraduate teacher training, she confessed that she thought using drama was hard, and that she did not know what to do. Even more so was the fear that she would lose control over the class, which as the research cited above shows is a common fear among teachers who were reluctant to use drama. Additionally, the teacher cited the lack of time as an additional factor as to why she did not use drama with her students; it took too long to prepare a drama lesson, on top of the already heavy workload from the school. From personal experience as a former teacher, and a teacher's husband, I concur and sympathise with the burden of the teacher's workload, as I know that the typical Malaysian teacher is heavily inundated with workload, even up to the point they are required to stay extra hours at the school, and come back home with a bag full of books to mark, and lessons to plan for the next day as well. This lack of time to prepare lessons was something that was to be addressed in the next phase of the research (Frame 2.2), where staging the textbook would be discussed in more detail.

Another theme that emerged was the difficulty of using the target language as the language of input (or 'transmission' from teacher and class materials to students), discussion (or 'operation', that the students used to operate in), and output for the students. According to the class teacher, the students found it difficult to understand the tasks and texts without translation, and this had developed into a vicious cycle between the teacher and the students. According to her, the students asked her to translate in every lesson, else they were not able to complete the required task. Additionally, she indicated that this did not just happen in her classes, but that many of her colleagues, even the more senior ones, applied the same practice. However, contrary to the class teacher's assertions this practice does not seem to be a nationwide phenomenon. In my experiences and interactions with teachers in other schools (especially more urban schools), I had also discovered that many other teachers did not condone the practice of

translation to the students' L1. However, it is also important to note the diversity of the teaching contexts, and how it affects students' initial language proficiency, and their overall exposure to English every day.

Nevertheless, after assisting me with the pilot study throughout the duration of the week, the teacher did have some favourable responses to using drama pedagogies. The biggest benefit she saw was the amount of interest the lessons generated in the students at the end of the week, though she indicated that students had trouble adjusting in the first lesson.

“I think after the second lesson they seemed to enjoy it. In the first one it seemed like everyone was very uncomfortable, and didn't know what to do. Including me.” [Interview 22.4.11– Class teacher]

This concurred with my field notes and research journal, thus stressing the importance of scaffolding the students and their teacher on building basic drama skills first, before getting them engaged in relatively more complex drama tasks. Enjoyment and motivation were also good indicators of the receptivity of the students and the teacher towards using drama pedagogies in the ESL classroom. This was also reflected in the survey responses from the students, where 77 percent of participants strongly agreed that the classes were interesting, and the remaining 24 percent agreed that the classes were interesting. No student indicated otherwise. Next, the following item asked the students if they felt they could learn English better in the drama classes than they could in the normal teacher's classes. Although this item did not gather a unanimous response, the positive response overwhelmed the negative, with 91 percent agreeing that they felt they could learn English better through drama, and of these a large majority of 65 percent strongly agreeing to the statement. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that there could have been a desire to please me or the class teacher with the response. Even so, if this was indeed the case, it could be argued that this showed that the students were favourably inclined towards the unit. Only a small minority of nine percent disagreed with the statement, indicating their preference towards the class teacher's more traditional teaching style, with translations readily available upon request.

In blank 'suggestions/comments', more than half of the students chose not to write anything. However, for the ones that did fill in this section, it was found that they all had positive things to say about their experience over the week. Some of the responses have been translated from Malay and are written below:

I wish you could always teach us

Your classes are fun. When are you coming back?

Interesting

While verbosity was not a strong point in the responses, they indicated a very positive response towards using drama in the ESL classroom.

## Closing the chapter

In the pilot study, the drama techniques that I had used the most were Teacher in Role, freeze frames, as well as several drama games that I had learnt in Frame 1. Through observation recorded in both written and digital forms, it can be gleaned that although there were some difficulties along the way, both the students and the class teacher were receptive to drama pedagogies, and that there was an increase in student participation in the classroom synonymous with an increase in motivation. This was welcome news indeed, as it entailed a smaller barrier to overcome in the upcoming main teaching programme. Subsequently, it can be observed that the participants perceived that they could learn well using drama, though to know by how much requires the use of a more sensitive and complex research instrument.

Furthermore, one of the main purposes of carrying out this pilot study was not merely to answer the set research questions, but also to explore other potential gaps of knowledge to be investigated. Throughout the week spent in collecting data and trying to answer the research questions, several other questions arose. These questions would help me to refine my techniques as a practitioner and my repertoire as a researcher, both in the following Frames, and also in my practice in general. These additional guiding questions are:

How could I transfer more enthusiasm and energy to the students so that I would not be so worn out?

How could I break the cycle of dependency on teacher translation?

How could I better equip the students with the specific drama techniques (technical drama skills) for them to use in class?

How could I equip the students with better enquiry mechanisms to ensure they knew how to ask questions, preferably in English, and not take too much class time in engaging in one-to-one sessions?

Where would the compromise be, between my need to use English, and the students' need to understand in Malay?

How could I get the students to invest more agency into the dramatic context?

What aspects of drama would be most beneficial to the students in their language learning?

How can I reduce the planning time of drama lessons for the teacher by utilising what is already available in the textbook?

These questions informed the planning, implementation and analysis of the main teaching programme of Frame 2, described in the following chapter.

# Chapter 6:

## Frame 2.2 – Drama in Malaysian TESL: The Main Study

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### Introduction

The main study of the Malaysian phase of the research was carried out four months after the completion of the pilot study. The pilot study had served as a diagnostic tool, as it had laid the foundations for drama work in the school, and had primed the students to the concept of working with drama. Upon further reflection, the questions that were asked at end of the pilot study were streamlined into the following guiding questions:

How can teacher planning time of drama lessons be reduced by utilising what is already available in the textbook?

How can the mismatch between teaching using drama pedagogies and students' learning styles be overcome?

How can the cycle of student dependency on teacher translation be broken?

This chapter describes the above focuses and presents observations and findings found in the study. A sample drama unit used in the main study is also described in detail to illustrate how the lessons were conducted.

### Structure of the lessons

The structure of the lessons in this study was more or less the same as the structure in the pilot, but with a slight change in the number of connected lessons per week. In the pilot, there had been three ESL lessons, where two had been double periods of 80 minutes, and one period of 35 minutes. The double periods made teaching flexible as there was time in which to manoeuvre and decide which elements of the lesson had to be extended and which had to be cut. However, in the main study, only one double period was allotted, with the others being three periods, each lasting for 40 minutes. An added challenge was that one of the periods was the first period on Monday, after the school assembly. This meant that students normally came to class late, as it took time for them to get from the school hall to the classroom.

As with the pilot, I was given full control over the classes and what was to be taught within the period of the study. However, it is important to note that the syllabus had to be covered to prepare the students for their upcoming examinations. This meant that the drama units had to be designed around the scheme of work as found in the textbook.

## Sample Unit

The following account of a unit I taught allows me to discuss the rationale behind the development of the unit, the progress of the work and my critical reflections on process and outcomes. This unit was implemented towards the end of the programme, where the students had already become familiar with working with drama. Throughout the programme, the students had learned to understand and utilise drama techniques such as freeze frame (tableau), working in role, working with Teacher in Role, and had become more used to combining physical and seated work in the classroom. To that effect, it was felt that the students were ready for a more intensive and extended integrated drama and ESL lesson. For this unit, Chapter 14 – *The Internet: Uses and Abuses*, was chosen from the English textbook that the students were working on.

The textbook had specific objectives to be achieved. Among them were language for interpersonal use, language for informational use, language for aesthetic use, grammar, sound system, and educational emphases. Because of the interactive nature of drama, it would seem natural that drama would provide rich opportunities to explore language for interpersonal use (Baldwin, 2012; Maley & Duff, 2005). With regard to language for interpersonal use, in the scheme of work provided in the textbook, by the end of the unit the students had to talk about the benefits or dangers of using the Internet; pronounce words clearly and correctly; give opinions on how the Internet can be used beneficially; provide alternatives; and have a discussion. However, language for informational use required more careful planning, with the students had reading listening and writing objectives. For the reading objectives, the students had to follow the sequence of ideas; scan details of text to fill a diagram; read for meaning and inferences; interpret non-linear texts; and draw conclusions. The listening objective for the unit was for the students to note important details and fill in the blanks in text or diagram form, and the writing objective, finally, was for the students to make a report based on an Internet survey. As I planned the work I began to call the process *staging the textbook*. Accordingly my description and reflections here focus on this process of *staging* compared to *just teaching* the textbook. In my account I select highlights from the series of lessons that comprised the unit, selecting strategies and incidents that reflect key points in my development of understanding of the processes, learning opportunities and potential problems involved in using this approach. The description of the unit in this unit sample will not be carried out as a description of all the lessons, but rather as a series of highlights that focus on the main activities of staging the textbook.

The textbook starts off in a very standard way, where the students are greeted with pictures and keywords on the first page of the unit. The first task the students were asked to do was take an Internet addiction test. The premise of the test started by asking the students how they knew if they were abusing their Internet privileges. The questions asked in the instructions were such as: Are you spending too much time on the Internet? Are you having conflicts with your family friends or school because of Internet usage? The students were then asked to assess their level of addiction by answering ten questions in the test. As a communicative activity, the Internet addiction test provided an interesting platform for the students to



gain some agency in learning the content of the unit as it provided a deep level of personalisation. Furthermore, the book provided some form of feedback to the students for them to assess their own level of Internet addiction. However, it was important to note that the scores and the feedback were not really diagnostic tools for Internet addiction, but had been targeted towards providing the students with a baseline to initiate a deeper discussion of the context of the textbook unit. Nevertheless, even though the activity had value in communicative language teaching and learning, it was still restricted by a few limitations. First and foremost, the activity could be seen by students as just another activity, one of thousands that the students had done throughout their time at school. When this happens, students may lose interest and the value of the activity may be lost. Another potential challenge was the very idea of using such a personal 'diagnostic tool' of the subjects as potentially sensitive as an addiction, and asking the students to share their deepest, darkest Internet secrets, may not be appealing to certain students, and perhaps even transgress their rights to privacy. However, on the other side of the coin, while it may be an invasion of privacy to ask students to report their Internet addictions, the process of examining such addiction through a fictional frame paves the way for a significant *life learning* objective.

What was done with the students in staging the textbook was that an additional dramatic layer was placed on top of the textbook activity. A dramatic context was provided for the students, where they all became investigative reporters for a newspaper, *The Enquirer*. I, as teacher, took on the role of the editor of the paper, a J. Jonah Jameson (of Spiderman fame) type character, brusque, demanding and slightly harsh on his reporters, expecting them to give the very best at all times. First, the students were asked to create a character for themselves as reporters. This allowed them to mask any sensitive personal information that they may want to divulge, or even any unorthodox research techniques that they may want to employ throughout the course of the drama. In character, the students were given the Internet addiction test, following the same procedures as textbook, but completed and discussed as inquisitive investigative reporters.

Next, in the textbook, the students were instructed to read an article on the uses and abuses of the Internet, and were subsequently asked to answer comprehension questions about the article. Additionally, in accordance with CLT tradition, the students were asked to discuss their answers. Nevertheless, a question I asked myself as we progressed through the unit is: Does this negate any good learning outcomes that CLT can bring about? Nunan (1991) lists five features of CLT, among them the use of authentic texts, enhancing learning using the learner's personal experiences as important contributing elements, as well as attempting to link classroom language learning with language activities that happen outside of the classroom context. In reflections on my own previous teaching experience, and of other CLT practitioners, I found that a CLT language class can be engaging and interesting to both the teacher and learner. Interesting texts and situations where the students were engaged in real or almost real situations created a genuine need for communication exchange, providing the context in which language learning can occur. However, since good teaching practices can build on each other, and may overlap in

many different areas, I speculated that injecting a dramatic context could be very beneficial to get the students more involved and more absorbed in the reading material, enabling the students to engage with the reading material on different levels – including the aesthetic and the emotional.

To do promote this engagement, a story was introduced to the students. The setting is another day at *The Enquirer*. All the reporters are at their desks, working hard at trying to produce the next big story. The editor comes into the room, ever brusque, speaking in sharp clipped tones. He tells the reporters that they are to expect a guest very soon, and that he (the editor) has to go away to an important business meeting. He tells his reporters that the guest will have a very interesting story to tell them, and for them to get as much information from him as possible, but being very careful to do so in a very nice way. He then exits the building, with all the reporters wondering who this mystery guest might be. They did not have long to wait, for very soon, an elderly gentleman (also the TiR) walks into the building and asks to see the editor. One of the reporters responds by saying that the editor had to step out on an urgent business meeting, and asks the gentleman to take a seat. Another reporter politely asks what she could do for the gentleman, taking care not to sound rude or overbearing, as everyone could see that this gentleman was distraught with worry. This question, however, seemed to be more than what the gentleman could bear, and soon words gushed from his mouth, telling the reporters how worried he was about his teenage son who had gone missing for more than 24 hours.

At this point, as the TiR, I broke character and returned to the role of the facilitator of the drama. I then asked the students to get into groups of four and discuss with their friends the questions that they would like to ask the gentleman. They were to use question forms, especially wh-questions, that they had recently revised in class.

Once the groups had had enough time to formulate some questions, I resumed my role as the distraught elderly gentleman. As the questions came one by one, the story started to unfold. The man's son had apparently been spending a lot of time on Facebook, and according to the gentleman, had begun chatting with a mysterious girl. Beyond that, he had no idea as his son had stopped talking to him ever since his mother died. As the facilitator of the drama I initiated a hot-seating activity where the students had the opportunity to select three characters that they wanted to get information from. These characters were played by both me and the collaborating class teacher.



**Image 3:** Collaborating class teacher in role being interviewed in hot-seating activity

In the process of this lesson, the students were seen to have become immersed in the dramatic context, showing signs of engagement in their level of participation of the lesson, as well as the body language of students who were interested in what they were doing. With the students being at the level of immersion that I had desired, I then brought the students back to the textbook so that they could engage with the text in a meaningful way. It was at this point that the same reading comprehension text was used in a reading lesson, but with the added dimension of providing the students with the *purpose* to read, in the set dramatic context (as investigative reporters). This process was also used to complete other tasks, such as extracting information from the text and filling in figures and diagrams, though with slight modifications to the story or tweaks in the variations of the drama.

Additionally, I looked for and found ways to insert target vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar into my interactions with the students in role. For example, the editor received reports from the police but the meaning of the uttered words was unclear due to bad pronunciation. The editor then tried to rectify this by going through relevant pronunciation items, as required in the textbook and syllabus. This then progressed into a grammar lesson to teach active and passive voice. According to the syllabus progression, the students had already learnt active and passive voice at least once in the past few years of learning ESL, so they should have had no problems with the revision of using these grammar items. To initiate this section, I started a sketch between my character, the editor, and the assistant editor, played by the class teacher. In the sketch, the assistant editor had problems incorrectly using active and passive voice. This made way for the application of a mantle of the expert (Aitken, 2007; Heathcote & Bolton, 1995) type of activity, with the teacher as the apprentice and the students as the experts. I noted that many of the students found this activity rather amusing, as it was most like the first time the tables had been turned on them and their teacher. Nevertheless, the class teacher became fully vested in her role as

the clueless assistant editor, which helped the students to also take their role more seriously to help her. As a result, the students as the reporters taught their assistant editor what she needed to learn, and by doing so, in my observation, revised how and why passive constructions are made as was needed by the work set in the textbook. Finally, at the end of the unit, the students were tasked to produce a unified product that was the culmination of what they had learnt throughout the week. As reporters, they then created a PowerPoint presentation on the story of the missing boy, as well as presented their own views of the uses and abuses of the Internet.

In the process of teaching this unit, I strategically used several features of drama pedagogies and ELT. Several of the key teaching methodologies of drama pedagogy that I had used were TiR, mantle of the expert, process drama, and hot-seating. These combined with key features of CLT, including teaching language in context, using authentic texts (though in this case the texts were adopted but became authentic due to the dramatic frame), teaching language through genuine communication, and using teaching grammar and vocabulary in context.

## **Reflective focus of Frame 2.2**

The pilot study had been a good diagnostic tool to assess where the focus was to be directed in this part of the study. This was done through the three guiding questions that had been streamlined from the eight guiding questions from the pilot. In addition, in accordance to the cyclical process of reflective practice, emerging themes were identified, synthesised and inserted into the reflective cycle. These themes in the reflective cycle are discussed under the matching guiding questions below.

### **How can teacher planning time of drama lessons be reduced by utilising what is already available in the textbook?**

As mentioned above, the main demand of the drama sessions was that they had to fit in with both the agendas of the study, which were to put into practice drama techniques that had been previously learnt, as well as to ensure that the students were taught the prescribed syllabus content that would prepare them for their upcoming examinations. This meant that the textbook would have to be utilised as the main source of the prescribed syllabus content.

In the process of reflection throughout the teaching work, a pattern that detailed how I was to stage the textbook began to crystallise. A transmission model began to emerge where I saw the use of three different teaching approaches that contrasted how the elements of drama pedagogies and language teaching pedagogy could intertwine with one another. This transmission model explores three approaches: i) the adjunct approach, ii) the integrated approach, and iii) the integrated adjunct approach. Further upon reflection, I found that the teaching in all the approaches could be done either by the language teacher alone (provided the language teacher has sufficient basic knowledge on drama pedagogies), or could be taught with a drama teacher (or a language teacher who is well-versed in drama pedagogies). Although they appear separate, these approaches did not appear to be mutually exclusive,

and overlapped in many areas, suggesting that these approaches merely formed the basis for an integrated methodology for using drama pedagogies to teach ESL.

#### Staging the textbook - the transmission model

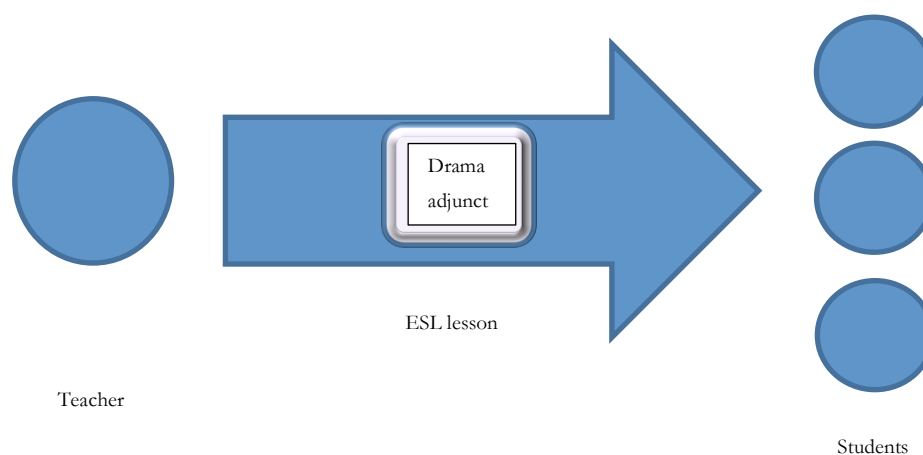
The approaches in the transmission model owe their roots partly to a particular antecedent in language teaching literature, in the form of the 'adjunct model' of language teaching. The adjunct model is a way of teaching both language and content in the same class, and usually associated with tertiary education (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989; Snow & Brinton, 1988). Shih (1986) also uses the term to describe an incorporation of ESL into content that necessitates the collaboration between an ESL instructor and the instructor of the other discipline. The justification behind the model in accordance to the educationists above is that "the activities of the content-based language course are geared to stimulate students to think and learn in the target language by requiring them to synthesize information from the content-area lectures and readings. Since these materials provide authentic content for students to discuss and write about, the adjunct model provides a context for integrating the four traditional language skills" (Snow & Brinton, 1988, p. 557). However, an acknowledged disadvantage of such programmes is that they can be rather limited as it becomes difficult for an ESL or English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course to have "a carefully planned pedagogical or rhetorical rationale when it is dependent on another content course" (Spack, 1998). Nevertheless, the above discussion is based on the adjunct model where ESL/EAL (English as an additional language) are taught as adjuncts to content courses specifically in the tertiary academic setting.

In conceptualising the adjunct approaches pertaining to staging the textbook as found in this study, the limitations were somewhat less constricting. First and foremost, there was no other content subject to teach, though the students needed to be taught specific drama strategies that would be used in the language classroom. Next, it was left to my discretion how much drama or how much language to teach to the class, though each decision to put a focus on one over the other had to be justified. Additionally, the teaching using adjuncts did not require more than one teacher. This meant that I was able to teach the lessons on my own had I needed to, as I had a basic working knowledge of how to teach using drama in an ESL class. However, having the class teacher as a supporting teacher/actor gave me access to more possibilities in how I wanted to teach the class.

In this study, two adjunct approaches and a bridging approach emerged from the reflective teaching process. They were the adjunct approach, where the adjunct component was inserted into the typical ESL lesson, and the integrated adjunct approach, where a language teaching adjunct was inserted into an integrated drama + ESL lesson. These approaches, along with the integrated approach that bridges them both, are explained in further detail below.

## The adjunct approach

This approach stemmed from a teaching method that had emerged early on in my teaching career, where I added small dramatic elements in my ESL teaching. However, it was only through reflective practice that I was able to visualise and formalise the approach. In this approach, the teacher does not necessarily need to have a background in drama education, but should have a basic grasp of some drama techniques to adapt to his or her own teaching. Similar to how I had used it in my own teaching, it is perhaps a better-suited approach for teachers who are beginning to use drama pedagogies, or wish to use drama pedagogies as a tool among other teaching tools. The adjunct approach can be represented in the figure below.



**Figure 5a:** The adjunct approach

Effectively, the drama component becomes an add-on to the main teaching methods used in a normal ESL class. However, this would not mean that the class becomes reduced to rote learning and answering comprehension questions. The ESL lessons would be designed in as much an interesting and engaging way as possible that can stand up as good lessons in their own right. The teacher would thus be free to select an appropriate focus for the lesson, and even free to make it a grammar lesson by teaching the grammar in isolation. As I currently understand the process of utilising drama within an ESL lesson, an underlying principle is that the teacher needs to be deliberate about not only choosing to use drama processes but also of the learning goals that are to be achieved through the use. As I currently understand the model I am evolving, the drama adjunct is added on to the lesson as a supplementing pedagogy, and not as the main teaching method. The size of the drama adjunct is up to the teacher, as this approach allows for flexibility. For example, a 35-minute reading comprehension lesson on a topic on nature could utilise five minutes of the class time doing a visualisation exercise, where teacher instructs the students to close their eyes, breathe deeply, and imagine themselves in the context of where the text focuses on. The teacher could then embed key target words from the intended text as a lead-in or part of a pre-reading activity, before the students actually come into contact with the text. With the visualisation activity done, the teacher could then proceed to teaching the text and the ensuing comprehension activities in the while-

reading and post-reading stages. Although they are not labelled in this terminology I later found examples of drama adjuncts in Maley and Duff (1983, 2005) and Wessels (1987), whose works are more focused on the language teacher wanting to use drama.

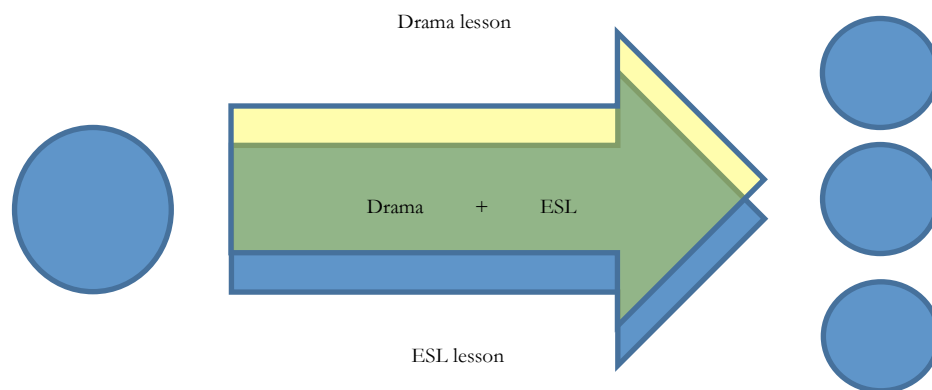
It was part of my own development as a language teacher, to engage drama pedagogy at an initially minimal level and use them as a tool among other tools. In terms of ESL, the approach allowed me to place greater emphasis on explicit teaching of language components, like grammar, vocabulary, or skills like reading comprehension or writing in accordance to the style demanded by the examination requirements. An additional benefit was that this approach allowed for the accelerated teaching to scaffold the students' learning to the level required by a more hands-on drama approach. For example, this approach was used in an instance where I needed the students to be proficient in the past tense in order to carry a process drama that required the students to write a report. This scaffold efficiently brought the students up to speed in the minimum requirements they required to participate in lessons taught using the following hands-on drama approach: what is described in the following section as the integrated approach of using drama in English language learning.

#### The integrated approach

This approach emerged from my observations during my apprenticeship period, among which where I co-taught process drama lessons with the Lead Teacher in the Christchurch intermediate school, as well as attended drama workshops by Miller and Saxton, and Peter O'Connor. This exposure to using process drama (Greenwood, 2005; Kao & O'Neill, 1998; Miller & Saxton, 2004) and mantle of the expert (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995) in teaching allowed me to adapt and refine some of the teaching processes to suit an ESL teaching context. The resulting approach that crystallised, the integrated approach, enabled the students to learn in a more drama-immersive way, where the language teaching lesson was immersed in the drama context. In an ideal integrated approach setting, all teaching and learning activities would occur within context. An example of how this approach was theorised was through the sample unit I had described earlier, *The Internet: Uses and Abuses*. In the unit, I carried out a superimposed dual layer of teaching, the first of the dramatic context, and the other of the language focus. In the process, consistent with a typical process drama lesson, I developed the plot of the story and the characters that played a part in the story. Next, a problem was introduced to the story, and the students had to work together to overcome the problem. This problem-solving approach was used in the work that the Lead Teacher and I had done in our teaching work in Frame 1, and was repeatedly seen in the other workshops and training sessions that I had done in my apprenticeship through drama. The problem-solving approach is consistent with problem-based learning (PBL) that take into account the principles of experiential learning (Dewey, 1933, 1938), and reflecting on the problem-solving process (Barrows & Tamblyn, 1980). Additionally, this approach is also consistent with similar approaches such as the task-based learning (R. Ellis, 2003), and content-based learning (Rodgers, 2006) that I had previously applied in my ESL teaching.

Next, the layer of the language lesson was structured on top of the drama lesson, and the target language of the syllabus is taught within the context of the story. The use of Teacher in Role (TiR) was paramount in this approach, as it allowed me to utilise role to teach different components of the lesson. For example, the TiR character Mr Boutros was developed to explicitly teach vocabulary whenever the students required it. The justification of the development of this role was for teaching to be carried out in context, where the teacher did not have to break character in order to prolong the ‘suspension of reality’, the dramatic frame that the students were actively participating in.

The figure below is based on how I understood the relationship between the ESL and drama lessons in the integrated approach.



**Figure 5b:** The integrated approach

However, upon further reflection, I found that there are certain challenges that this particular approach imposes. Firstly, the teacher has to be more adept at using drama pedagogies, especially process drama, as compared to the adjunct approach. Before going through the various sources of input in my apprenticeship, I would not have been able to visualise teaching using this approach as I had not had enough exposure to process drama and had not learned enough specific strategies. This particular challenge was also echoed by the collaborating class teacher:

It never occurred to me to use drama this way. Even if I had learnt this during my teacher training, I do not think I would be able to design lessons like this on my own. But I think if I watch you enough and see how you do it, maybe I can learn. (Interview 14.9.11 – Class teacher)

Secondly, there is also the question of the teaching contexts, especially in the rural Malaysian teaching contexts, where the many students are not exposed to English other than what they see and hear on

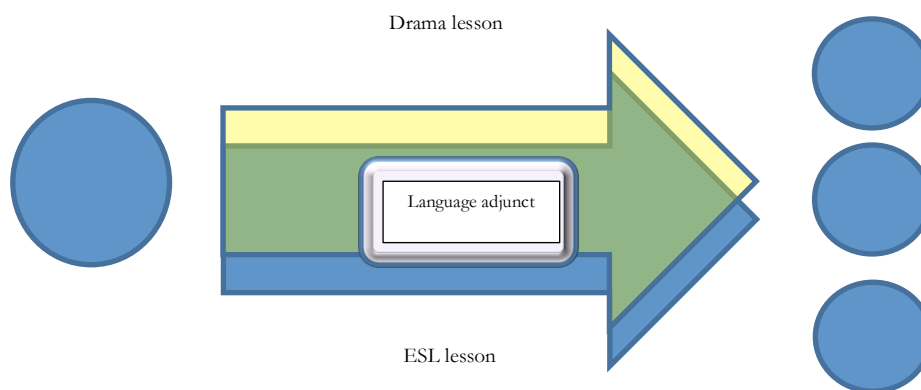


television. In these particular teaching contexts, the language teacher who is utilising drama pedagogies has to take into account the target language, the existing language of the students, and the language of instruction to the students. I shall discuss this complex relationship in one of the following sections.

An important point to note is that the integrated approach is not proposed as a ‘step up’ or the ‘full version’ of the adjunct approach, as in the ESL context there is room for both approaches to be used, depending on the teaching and learning needs of the teacher and students.

#### The integrated adjunct approach

The third approach that emerged from my experience in the study was one that bridged the two previous approaches, where it afforded me the more flexible option of being able to use the role of the language teacher to the maximum while still keeping to the context of the drama that was unfolding. As can be seen in Figure 5c, the language adjunct is placed onto the superimposed drama + language lesson of the integrated approach.



**Figure 5c:** The integrated adjunct approach

How this worked in my teaching was that instead of having to rely on the TiR to achieve certain teaching objectives (e.g Mr Boutros in teaching vocabulary), I was able to insert a language teaching adjunct to achieve this. This was done by stepping out of the TiR role and becoming the language teacher to teach certain language points, and reverting back into the role once this was accomplished. Furthermore, because I was working hand in hand with the class teacher, we were able to carry out this approach by team-teaching, similar to the adjunct approach, where the class teacher as language teacher stepped in when explicit teaching of language was needed, and handed control back to me when the language teaching objective had been attained.

Although the suspension of reality is needed to a certain degree for a drama lesson to work, Baldwin (2012, p. 54) states that drama is about “a willing suspension of disbelief and not about breaking down boundaries between reality and pretend, with children unclear about whether what an adult is saying to them is true or not. Dramatic play and drama are about moving willingly and with agreement, back and forth across recognized boundaries, not about dispensing with them”. I now see this process of going in and out of roles as an essential skill for a drama practitioner to acquire as it offers a flexibility of options to the teacher, to be able to adapt to the multitude of conditions that can occur in the classroom.

### **How can the mismatch between teaching using drama pedagogies and teaching styles that students were used to be overcome?**

At the beginning of the pilot, it had appeared that there was a mismatch between the teaching styles the learners (which potentially affected their learning styles) were used to, and the teaching style that using drama entailed. Studies like those by Griggs and Dunn (1984) and Wallace and Oxford (1992) that investigated the connection between language learning styles and language teaching styles have established that a correct match between the teachers’ teaching styles and the students’ learning styles greatly increases both the learner’s motivation and also the amount of learning that can happen. A mismatch between the two, especially in the case of language learning, has the potential to negate the good that the teacher is intending to do, instead resulting in boredom, disengagement from the lesson and even poor performance in classwork and examinations (Felder & Henriques, 1995; R. L. Oxford, Ehrman, & Lavine, 1991). This delicate balance is made even more unstable as further questions arise: How does the student’s culture come into play? How would the students be aware of a mismatch if they are not exposed to other options of teaching? How can they make informed decisions if they are not given time to get used to other options of teaching and learning?

This prompted further questioning into how compatible drama pedagogies would be to a group of students that had never been taught using them before. There were two dimensions in which the mismatch had the most effect. First was how high the affective filter (Krashen, 1982, 1985, 1988; Krashen & Terrell, 1983) of the students would be when taken abruptly out of their comfort zone, this having the potential to lead to reluctance in participation, as well as ineffective acquisition of language. Second was how any resulting withdrawal from active (especially physical) participation would affect the teacher, who would have to exert a copious amount of energy in trying to coax the students to physically participate in the lesson.

It was important for me to postulate how enthusiasm and energy could be transferred to the students, as it was found in the pilot that they required more than just a little coaxing to participate in dramatic activities, especially ones that were more physical in nature. By the end of the pilot, the students had been exposed to three lessons using drama pedagogies, which had yielded favourable results in terms of their attitudes towards drama. However, the three lessons did not result in enough data to make an informed conclusion to whether or not drama pedagogies were suitable for this particular context. As a result, I

feared that after a four-month hiatus, the students would need to be repeatedly coaxed, with excessive enthusiasm and forced energy, into entering a state that was conducive enough to use drama. I was particularly concerned about several factors that seemed major. First was the students' culture and societal norms, and how these factors affected their way of behaving. Second was the difference in learning styles, or more accurately, the discrepancy between the teaching and learning styles that I wanted to use and those that the students had been exposed to and had become used to. To counter this, I put considerable focus on scaffolding drama skills to the students, and allowing them time to adjust to working with drama.

### **How can the cycle of student dependency on teacher translation be broken?**

One of the greatest issues to arise from the pilot study was the students' reliance on teacher translation from English (L2) to Malay (L1). Raissi and Mohd Nor (2013, p. 876) note that some teachers still prefer "old language teaching methods" such as the grammar-translation method as opposed to more "modern language teaching approaches" like CLT and Task-based Language Teaching. Although this statement cannot be generalised across the board, it does provide some insight into the challenges that language teaching faces in Malaysia. In the context of this study, it was found that teacher translation was an accepted teaching style, though it did not appear that the teachers subscribed to the total use of grammar-translation. Although some teachers would try to implement CLT according to how they were trained, there were many teachers who would translate words that the students did not understand, and very often, translate entire chunks of language or even translate an entire task to Malay. The following are some of the recorded responses that were gained from some of the English teachers in the school by way of informal conversation, and also formal interview. All the names used are pseudonyms. These responses were recorded in the research journal according to the dates they were obtained. Most of these responses have had to be translated, as many of the teachers code-switched between English and Malay, even in the same sentences.

"I don't have time to have students gawking at me not knowing what to do. I have a class to teach" (Informal conversation 19.9.11 – Pn Zaiton, 13 years' teaching experience)

"It takes too long. I know that we learnt that we should always try to use the target language, and to use the target language and mime and gesture to try to get the students to understand. But, that's all it is – things we learn during teacher training. Here, when you try and teach in a real-life situation, then you will know how things really stand [\*Researcher's note: the teacher used the Malay phrase *baru tahu betapa tingginya langit dan bumi*, literally meaning 'now you know how high the sky really is from the ground']" (Informal conversation 19.9.11– Pn Rashidah, 15 years' teaching experience)

“I don’t know. It’s just hard because many of the students, especially those in the lower [ability-streamed] classes, don’t understand anything. (Interview 15.9.11 – Collaborating class teacher – 2 years’ teaching experience)

I was not at all surprised by what these teachers had told me, even more so as I had once been their colleague, teaching at exactly the same school, teaching the same kind of students. As a reflective practitioner, it was also important to acknowledge that there had been a time that I had shared the outlook of these teachers. The lowest ability class that I had had in my teaching there had been a class where some of the students were not even able to complete an essay in Malay, their own language; far less in a language that was as alien to them as a life outside the confines of the oil palm estates. So this was a context that I knew very well, and teacher translation was a problem that I also knew very well. As such, I wanted one of the main focuses of the study to be how to reduce teacher translation in teaching ESL. I discuss the steps that I took in more detail in the insights section ahead.

### **Formation of focus group**

I wanted to deepen the depth of my study starting with this phase of the research, and so I needed to obtain richer data from the field. Therefore I set up a focus group; one that was divided into three categories, based on the students’ general level of motivation in English class, their achievement level that they normally obtained for their tests, as well as their general achievement in English classes. Based on these three criteria, the class teacher was requested to select two students from each category, as she had worked with the students for almost the entire the duration of the academic year, and would have had good knowledge of her students’ abilities. This resulted in the selection of four girls: Mona, Sarah, Anis, Farah; and two boys, Kassim and Muhammad (pseudonyms). Mona and Sarah were the students the class teacher considered to be her cream of the crop. They were very motivated in class, participated well, and scored relatively well in the exams (they averaged B to A-). Anis and Farah were considered to be average by the class teacher, that they were reasonably motivated in class, participated a reasonable amount in classwork, and averaged between C+ to B in their exams. Kassim and Muhammad were slightly different; although the class teacher believed both of them to be of the lower range of the scale, she mentioned that Kassim was not really the type to participate verbally in class, but usually managed to get his work done nonetheless. He normally averaged between C- to C+ in his exams. Muhammad, on the other hand, was seen as problematic by the class teacher. He did not usually participate in class activity, did not do his classwork regularly, and had never passed his English exams, as long as the class teacher had taught him. They were not told that they had been selected based on the criteria above, and were only told that they had been randomly chosen to ask if they would like to participate as ‘research helpers’.

There were two ways that the research group was utilised in the study. First, the focus group students participated in two group interviews, one at the beginning of the project, and one at the end. Next, special observation was given to them in class, where attention was given to analysing, among other criteria, how

they interacted in class, how they completed the set tasks, how engaged they were, and how motivated they were during the class.

## Insights

The following are the insights that were obtained during the progression of the classes and after reflective analysis of data from interviews, observation and my own journal. The students' interview data were obtained through one-on-one and group interviews with the participants of the focus group.

### **Teaching objectives from the textbook syllabus was able to be attained by staging the textbook in as much time as normal ESL lessons**

As discussed earlier, in the Malaysian teaching context it is imperative for the teacher to teach the prescribed curriculum as the students will be tested on it in the national standardised tests. The student participants of this research were preparing to enter their final year of secondary school, at the end of which where they would have to sit their SPM examinations, which would in turn determine which courses they were eligible to take in university, which university they would be eligible to go to, or even if they would manage to get into university. This meant that the onus would be on the teacher to prepare the students with the prescribed curriculum, which leads many teachers to discard any creative and novel teaching ideas in favour of drills and worksheets, tried and tested to prepare the students for any examination. Stinson (2009) closely details her experience in a Singaporean teaching context, similar to that in neighbouring Malaysia, where even after being trained in the use of drama, the teachers fell back to their default drilling method of teaching to prepare their students for examinations. Likewise, one of the concerns that had to be taken into consideration was how much of the prescribed curriculum content could be transmitted in the duration of the study, and if as much content could be transmitted to the student as teaching in the normal ESL classes that the teacher and the students were used to.

Using the content of the textbook chapter as the basis for creating a fictional frame allowed me to cover the intended curriculum goals as well as developing a tool to fine-tune motivation and allow opportunity for students to find their own levels of learning within the intended curriculum goals. The lesson plans of the staging the textbook lessons were planned and drawn up as they would be in normal ESL lessons, complete with learning objectives to be achieved. These objectives were selected from the scheme of work found at the beginning of the textbook, as well as in the textbook unit itself.

- **Language for Interpersonal use**
  - Talking about the benefits or dangers of using the Internet
  - Pronouncing words clearly and correctly
  - Giving opinions on how the Internet can be used beneficially
  - Providing alternatives
  - Having a discussion
- **Language for Informational use**
  - Reading – following sequence of ideas
  - Listening – note important details and fill in the blanks
  - Reading – scan details to fill a diagram
  - Reading for meaning and inferences
  - Reading – interpret non-linear texts
  - Reading – Draw conclusions
  - Writing – Report based on Internet survey
- **Grammar**
  - Passive construction using ‘has’ and ‘had’
  - The sequence connector ‘later’
- **Sound System**
  - /sp/
  - /lm/
  - /m/
- **Educational Emphases**
  - Thinking skills
  - ICT
  - Learning how to learn skills
  - Values and citizenship education
  - Multiple intelligences
  - Knowledge acquisition
  - Preparation for the real world
- **Review**
  - Passive construction
  - Sequence connector ‘later’

**Figure 6:** Sample textbook objectives (taken from Raghavan, Cheah, & Krishnan, 2002, p. xii)

During the debriefing stage of the lessons, a discussion was held with the collaborating class teacher. The completion of the learning objectives were discussed and the success of the lessons were evaluated as they were in a normal ESL lesson, and the degree of completion of the learning objectives had to be agreed upon by both me and the class teacher. At the end of the end of the study, it was found that all the required syllabus had been covered in the sessions. The class teacher remarked:

“I was quite surprised that we managed to cover everything. Originally I thought that using drama would have taken a lot of time, because we have to set the stage up, you know, like providing the context, making the story, making the students participate in the story. But it didn’t take as long as I had thought it would. There were a few lessons that needed a bit more time, like Malik’s disappearance (sample lesson above) because we needed to get the students involved in the story. But I think we managed to make up for

lost time in other classes. It's a balancing act. But then, I do that for my normal ESL classes too." (Interview 10.10.11 – Class teacher)

However, being able to completely teach the syllabus using drama pedagogies (or adjuncts of drama pedagogy, in accordance to the transmission model of staging the textbook) cannot be equated to its sustained use by the ESL teacher. This was also seen in Stinson's account of the Singaporean teachers she had trained, that when faced with the pressure of looming examinations, there was no guarantee that they would not revert back to conventional teaching that they were used to. The class teacher was also asked if she felt that she would discard using drama in her teaching once the study was over. This was her reply:

I don't know if I can give a definite answer for now. I have watched how you do it. I've been part of the lessons. And honestly, it's quite challenging. I mean, it's really interesting, and I've seen how the students react. They're never that like that when I teach. How you made the story up, with the characters, that must really take practice. I'm still not really confident that I can do it on my own. But I also like that the approaches that you have shown me as well (referring to the approaches of the transmission model of staging the textbook). I feel that they are flexible enough for me follow, especially the first one (the drama adjunct approach), at least until I have more experience. (Interview 10.10.11 – Class teacher)

This feedback highlights the need for continuous support for teachers who are beginning to use drama pedagogies in their teaching.

### **Teacher translation not necessary if students are supplied with a combination of sufficiently rich context, clearly enunciated and clarified teacher talk, and coping drama strategies**

One of the biggest themes to emerge from the data was a dependency on L1 translation, both from the students who felt that they needed translation to understand the lesson and the carry out the given tasks, and from the teachers who felt that they could not make the students understand the lesson without whole chunks of language being translated.

I found that the students could gradually be weaned off teacher translation, in as short a time as two weeks through the use of three strategies, all of which were drama specific. First, a rich dramatic context had to be built on the textbook unit; one that provides enough contextual clues for students to scaffold meaning between written text, spoken text, story (Chauhan, 2004; Kao & O'Neill, 1998), with the language that was used in the dramatic contexts being sufficiently rich and emotionally engaging to the students (Cheng & Winston, 2011). This normally entailed using contexts that were not too close to the students' own, which could make the contexts less interesting to the students, and also not too far removed from the students' own contexts that they would be unable to relate. Furthermore, enough pre-

teaching was carried out to ensure that the students had acquired enough of the foundation vocabulary and sentence structures to be able to understand what to follow in the drama unit. This was done strategically at certain points, for example if the target vocabulary had connections to a topic being discussed, as part of the syllabus in the textbook, or inserted in teacher talk at opportune moments.

Second, I found that my teacher talk had to be clearly enunciated and supplemented with matching body language and facial expressions. Although this seems a given, I have noticed in my own school experience that some ESL teachers are still unaware of how their styles of communicating with the students are ineffective, where they do not talk clearly enough, or do not sufficiently attempt to explain words or concepts using dramatic gesture or body language before resorting to teacher translation. I also need to constantly remind myself that teachers are 'on stage' in a public arena much of the time, yet "there is virtually no systematic training for teachers in the effective use of voice" (Maley, 2000, p. vii). In a focus group interview, I directed the students to think about how I did not translate in class, and asked the students if they could understand me. Focus group participants Farah and Mona talk about how they responded to the lack of translation, and contrast it with how their class teacher normally taught in class:

Mona: I understand most of what you teach, and even if I don't understand fully. It's sort of like I do even when I don't. I can guess some words from the activity or story that we are doing. And if I don't I ask my friend who might understand.

Farah: Yeah, and you use gestures and body language when you teach. That's why it's more easily understandable.

Me: What about my accent (referring to use of British accent while teaching, as opposed to the Malaysian accent that the students are familiar with)? Does that make any trouble for you?

Mona: Actually sir, I think I understood it more. You spoke slower and clearer. And you said the words properly. Teacher (the class teacher) just goes \*gibberish\*, and sometimes she speaks quite fast.

Farah: Yeah.

(Interview 2.10.11)

From this exchange, along with coping well with the absence of teacher translation, the students, who were categorised as above average and average in the focus group, also mentioned that they did not have a problem with the use of an accent that they were unfamiliar with, as long as the words were enunciated clearly, and supplemented with gesture and context.

Thirdly, although the teaching was carried out without the use of L1 teacher translation, it was also important to devise a certain technique that allowed some flexibility for the students in case contextual



clues were not enough for them to understand lexical items that were essential to task completion. It was important for the students to understand that they would not obtain translation from the teacher, and that this rule had to be consistently followed through so as not to undermine the effort of removing this crutch that the students had depended on for so long. In order to overcome this, as explained in the previous chapter the role of TiR translator was devised, as described in the pilot study, where the students could call upon the character when they needed translation in essential vocabulary. The character of the translator was named Mr Boutros, and was portrayed as someone who was eccentric and likeable at the same time. He was a gourmand who could always be found at the school cafeteria, had a rather strange accent when speaking, and was always seen wearing a funny hat. This was to make the TiR characters distinct and separate from each other.

In the pilot study, it was mentioned that the students did not call upon the translator because they were asking their teacher to translate for them in one-to-one consultation sessions. However, towards the end of the study, some of the students had already started calling upon Boutros for translations. This showed that the students were able to work within the confines of the ESL classroom, but their agency in the drama strategies had to be scaffolded, and that different strategies took longer for students to acquire and use effectively. However, it was noted that by the second week, the students displayed a better ability to relate to their characters, and were able to display more congruent emotions while creating freeze frames and sketches. This incremental scaffold was consistent with the development of the students' ability to understand and utilise different drama strategies, among which the unorthodox concept of a translator character was only something they were only able to grasp after three weeks of working with drama.

### **Using and allowing for the strategic use of students' L1 improved students' openness to using drama and promoted better task completion**

As stated in the previous finding, one of the emergent goals of the study was to investigate whether the use of drama pedagogies could effectively reduce the students' dependence on teacher translation. However, there is still room for discussion on the students' use of their L1, and also the strategic use of the L1 by the teacher in other areas that were not strictly pertaining to the lesson.

Avoidance of using the learner's L1 has been deemed as an important tenet for teachers who use the direct approach (Richards & Rodgers, 1986), or subscribe to Krashen's Natural Approach (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). At present, in many policies regarding foreign language learning, lessons have to be planned to be as monolingual as possible, though there is a consensus that small concessions have to be made, as Jeremy Harmer (2001, p. 132) puts it: "There is little point in trying to stamp it out completely". Butzkamm (2003) who is a strong advocate for the complete opposite – encouraging the student's mother tongues as a base of reference – introduces ten maxims for using the students' L1. In these maxims, Butzkamm advocates allowing for students to be able to use their L1 in their communication with the teacher and getting the teacher to reply in English, and also using the students' L1 in occasions that are

separate from activity instructions, such as personal remarks to pupils and to engage in light L1 banter to create warmth and acceptance. In this study, it was also found that engaging in light L1 banter with the students came with an additional benefit – an observable rise in task completion. A journal entry two weeks into the study details this:

Using Malay in the in the classes has made the students open up more, both to me and to my work. I don't use Malay to translate *per se*, but I do use it to create a more playful mood in classes, where I joke with the students in Malay, and maybe rib them and playfully poke fun at them. They seem to really enjoy these nuggets of Malay, because they know something funny or interesting is going to be said. Also, interestingly, this has made them open up to me, and to my teaching techniques more. They are less afraid and less self-conscious. Many of the students, especially the boys respond in Malay in completing the tasks and even to me when I ask them a question, and best of all, attempt to rephrase in English when prompted. (Journal entry 22.9.11)

In the journal entry above, the point for the students being able to use their L1 in completing drama tasks is made, which was to contrast an observation made in the first week, where the students were finding it hard to complete the given tasks. This could very well have been because they were not used to being forced to use as much English as they could. Additionally, in completing these tasks, especially drama tasks that required language production, they spent an excessive amount of time trying to comprehend what they were supposed to do, and finding the correct words to meet the requirements of the task. Being able to work in their L1, but guided to produce in L2, was the element that had been needed to close the gap in the mismatch between the work with drama and the teaching and learning styles that the students had been used to.

There has been an ongoing debate on whether L1 translation should be acceptable in the second language classroom, starting from the forming of different language teaching methodologies such as the grammar-translation method that advocated total use of L1 translation, to the direct method, which frowned on it (Bruhlmann, 2012). The classroom is the place where most second language learners are exposed to the target L2, and as such L2 should be maximised and L1 minimised (Cook, 2001; R. Ellis, 2008; Krashen, 1985). Nevertheless, Butzkamm's ten maxims for mother tongue use (2003), and Dodson's (1972) Bilingual Method build a solid case for the use of L1 in the ESL class. However, there is a sparsity in the literature of the use of the students' L1 in a drama in ESL class. It is in this context that I discuss the relationship between drama, ESL learning, and using L1 as a bridge. In retrospect, I began my ESL career based on the maxim that a language teacher should avoid translating as much as possible. However, as mentioned before, this view gradually began to change as I taught lower ability classes in a rural context. In the PhD process, I began to become interested in the theorisation of why L1 could become a valuable resource to ESL students, especially lower proficiency students.

I started by this process by differentiating between the focus of conventional drama classes and conventional language classes. Based on the teaching work that had been initiated by the Lead Teacher in Frame 1, as well as the other exposure to drama, conventional drama classes focus more on content, such as activities, roles, stories, and how students deal and interact with them. The relationship between drama and content can be described as:

Drama → Content

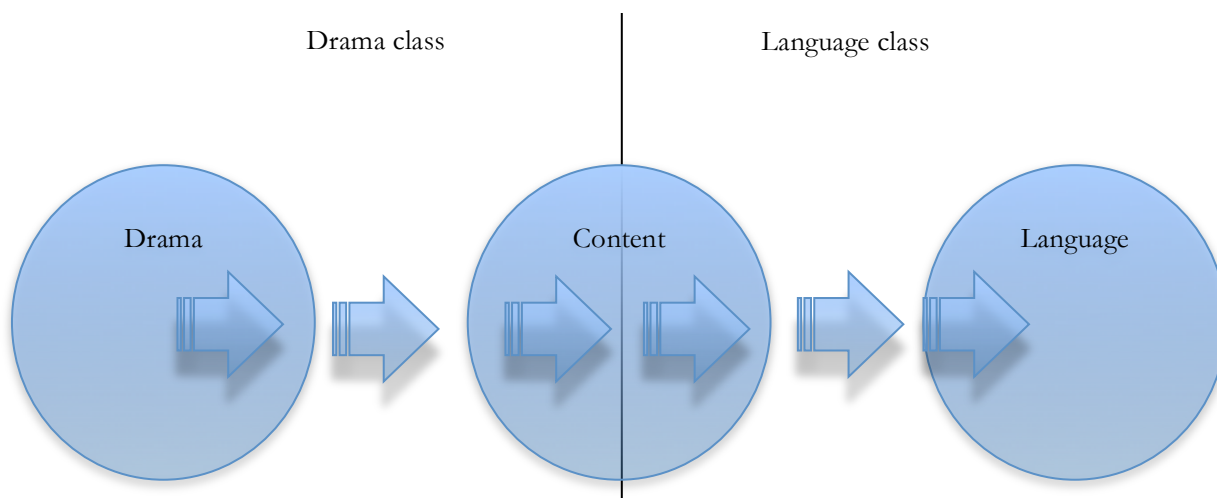
On the other hand, based on my experience as a language teacher, conventional language classes focus on areas of language to be learnt, using the content as a vehicle to teach the language. The relationship between them can be described as:

Content → Language

Surfacing from my teaching work in both this Frame and the previous Frame, in an ESL class that uses drama pedagogies, these elements are juxtaposed on top of each other, with the relationship between them being described as:

Drama → Content → Language

This means that in order for students to learn language in an ESL class that uses drama, there needs to be a transmission of knowledge and skills between all three components, where drama skills are needed to access content, and understanding the context of the content is needed to learn the target language. I began to conceptualise this in terms of three highly sensitive light bulbs (the components – drama, content, and language) that are placed side by side, lighting up as the electrical current (the transmission of knowledge and skill) flows through them. These light bulbs would not be able to light up at the correct luminance if the electrical current was unable to be transferred, or only partially transferred, due to an unsuitable conductor between the contact points. This conductor would be the language of transmission and operation, used by the students in understanding the required task. I label this as the ‘conductivity’ of the operational language.



**Figure 7:** Conductivity of operational language in a drama in ESL class

To add an extra burden to the circuit, the additional resistance found in the second light bulb could also affect the amount of electricity that remains to power the third bulb. This would mean that a) the teacher may find the students less able to meet language learning objectives as they are engrossed in the content or creative objectives of the drama; and b) the teacher may find that because the students are so focussed on not only getting the language right, but even as far as groping for basic words to make sense of the task, they become less able to meet the content or creative objectives of the drama. In order for the electrical current (transmission of knowledge and skill) to be pushed through the resistance found in the connection, two options can initially be considered. First, the intensity of the second bulb can be reduced, resulting in less resistance to the final flow. This may result in the teacher simplifying the content or creative objectives to better accommodate the gap between the students' existing language and their target language. The better the scaffolding of the students' language proficiency, the smaller the gap becomes. The smaller the gap between these points of language, the more demanding the content or creative objectives can be. Greenwood suggests the use of the term *strategic artistry* (Greenwood, 2012) where the teacher employs specific strategies within an arts-based setting to scaffold the learning. Secondly, the conductivity of the connections can be increased, resulting in a stronger current flow. Thus, I began to see that the more operational language that the student has at his or her disposal, the better he or she will be able to carry out the required task.

### **Use of TiR and SiR enabled the students to receive harsh criticism**

In the drama described above, I, the teacher, became the TiR who took the role of the editor of the newspaper. The character of the editor was that of someone who cared about good reporting and expected good quality from his reporters, and this was portrayed through the brusque and stern

mannerism the TiR adopted. On many occasions the TiR editor barked orders for the students in role to follow, directed them to his exact specifications, and gave heavy criticism to the work produced by the students in character. This was something that had not been done in such a manner before with the class, and initially there was a concern that the students would not respond positively to being treated in this way.

However, in the final interview that was carried out for the focus group, it was found that the students did not respond negatively towards the sternness of the TiR editor, as can be seen in the extract from the focus group interview below:

Me: Ok. Now what was it like when the Editor was talking to you?

Mona: Like we were real reporters!

Me: Did it scare you when you were being ticked off by the editor?

Mona: Not really. Felt normal.

Anis: Felt like workers being reprimanded by their boss.

Me: Now do you guys think that being scolded by the editor (TiR) and being scolded by you teacher feel different?

ALL: So different!

Me: Why?

Mona: When the editor scolds you, it's different, its like you know you weren't doing your job properly. But if it is the teacher. Then it is the teacher.

Me: But would it be different though between when the two scold or reprimand you, and I'm talking about really being angry with something you did, would it be different? Would you take it to heart? Would you feel genuinely sad or disturbed?

Mona: The teacher.

Me: Why?

Mona: Because of the 'berkat'

Me: That's it. Right now let's say if I were upset with you as your teacher, how would you feel?

ALL: Agreement with being upset.

Mona: Genuinely upset, because when you are angry with us as you, the teacher, that is reality.

(Interview 12.10.11)

In the above extract, it can be seen that being reprimanded by the TiR editor did not prompt the students to feel hurt, as they were protected by a dual layer of role, one from the TiR, and the other from their role as SiR reporters. This is consistent with what is reported by Kao and O'Neill (1998), Heathcote (1984), Baldwin (2012), and Maley and Duff (2005), among others. When a harsh comment was made, it was made from the staged characters of the editor to the reporters, provoked by a job that was not well done.

Additionally, the students also contrasted between how a reprimand from their teachers towards them as students differed from a reprimand in role. Firstly, Mona used the term *berkat* when she stated that she would feel genuinely sad and feel like she had lost the *berkat* of the teacher if the teacher reprimanded her the way the TiR editor had, as teacher to student. To illustrate the gravity of this statement, one first has to understand the word *berkat*. It is a loan word from the Arabic *barakah*, which means blessing from God, in accordance to Islamic tradition. This infusion of Islamic influence in the Malay culture has been present since the religion was adopted by the Malaccan Sultanate in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Zainal Abidin, 2010). The additional layer of religious connotation raises the teacher on a symbolic pedestal, and to gain their blessings is paramount to perform well in examinations, or even later on in life. However, this statement does not hold true for all student-teacher relationships, and is more commonly found in the rural school environment, or the religious school environment. So important is this element of receiving blessings from teachers that many schools carry out a *majlis restu ilmu* (literally meaning the 'gathering to bless knowledge' of the students) before any major examination, where the students will shake the hands, kiss the hands or hug their teachers (of the same gender) and ask for their blessings and prayers for their success in the examination.

One of the challenges that is present in the Malaysian context is that there exist hierarchical forces that shape how each individual interacts with another (Asma, 1996; Norma & Kennedy, 2000), and that communication is very heavily laced with social boundaries, where there is never any real time student and teacher can sit down and discuss issues on a equal footing. In a traditional Malay context, it is not considered proper to contest what someone who has superior social standing says (Jeannot and Khairil Anuar, 2012, and Mahfooz, Zainal & Rehana, 2004, as cited in Puteh-Behak, 2013, p. 60). Furthermore, Malays often avoid confrontation and usually take an indirect route when trying to convey a negative message (Jeannot & Khairul Anuar, 2012). However, a way was found in traditional Malay culture to overcome this barrier of communication, where the interlocutors would often use poems with foreshadowing as an indirect means for the actual meaning to gleaned from a statement (Dahlan, 1991).

If taken in this context, the interchange that had happened in the interview above sheds some light as to why the communication between the TiR editor and the SiR journalists was particularly effective for

them, and also how they were 'buffered' by the roles that had been taken both by teacher and student. Therefore, there is potential in drama to be used as a means to overcome the intricate layers of subtexts that affect the student-teacher relationship. An additional dimension that can be explored further in future research would be to what extent the students are able to use role as buffering tools to communicate 'indirectly' with their teachers about issues that they do not agree on, all within the safety of the drama classroom.

### **Use of role and character enabled the students to share personal opinions**

Another use of role and character that becomes salient in the exchange above is that the students also felt safety in expressing personal opinions when they were presented with a character that had problems to be solved. An example of this can be seen where one of the textbook units was on health, and the topic of the day was on mental health and how not being truthful could take its toll on a person's mental health. In the textbook, an article was provided, and symptoms that lying brought about, such as guilt and increased stress and blood pressure, was discussed in the article. However, true to textbook form, it was presented in factual way, with the students having to read the article, answer comprehension questions, and discuss if they had had experience in lying and how it made them feel. In my research journal I made a note of how this topic could be seen to be of a sensitive nature, and that sharing personal information such as lying to one's parents or teachers was not what some students would willingly discuss. In order to overcome this, a drama adjunct was layered on top of the lesson, where a character that the students had met in a previous activity, Robin, was feeling all the symptoms that were described in the article. This time, instead of discussing what the students had done wrong, the students worked in their groups to pinpoint the source of Robin's problem, and to see if they could help him in any way. In doing so, they managed to complete the tasks set by the textbook, under the safety of discussing their character's problem. Farah describes her experience with Robin below :

Farah: I like Robin. He's like one of those boys we see in '*Kisah Benar*' (*Kisah Benar* literally means 'True Stories', and is a TV show that shows re-enactments of real-life drama), and I'd think to my self awwwww... poor him. It's like I've seen this happen – to me.

Me: OK. So this is the question that I want to ask. Let's say in the activity, the activity asks you -What is the biggest lie you have ever told? The book is asking you to share your innermost secrets. And then you get the same question from the book, but this time, it's about Robin. What was the biggest lie Robin had ever told? What you feel between those two questions? Which question would be the one you be most likely to answer?

Farah: It's definitely got to be Robin, but in actual fact, it's owning up to our own faults. I can hide behind Robin and say that it was him, when in actual fact it was me.

(Interview 2.10.11)

Agreement to this statement was voiced by at least three other participants of the focus group.

### **Students need to have sufficient agency to be empowered to take action in dealing with superior roles in cultural hierarchy**

As discussed above, there exists an uneven power balance between teacher and student in the Malay cultural hierarchy. In the hot-seating activity that was carried out in the activity described earlier, the teacher took on the role of the father of the missing boy. There were a few perceptions that could be interpreted from both the context of the story, and also mannerism of the TiR elderly gentleman: first was that he was the father of someone who was the same age as the students, and so demanded respect from them as they were considered to be on the same hierarchical level as his son; second was that the TiR portrayed the gentleman to be someone who was significantly older than the students, and even older than the SiR reporters. This automatically meant that whatever the role being played by the teacher, there would always be an element of respect that was due from the students or SiR. This was also emphasised by the Lead Teacher in Frame 1, where she had told the students to be respectful to the grandmother of the Silence Seeker, as she was an elder and she had been through a lot. There was nothing out of the ordinary about this proviso, as it focussed the students on the context and character, and how they would interact with the students in real life.

However, what was not anticipated was that in the Malaysian context, at least for Kassim, one of the students in the focus group, the respect due to the TiR was counterproductive. In the drama, the TiR elderly gentlemen had asked the SiR reporters to help him investigate his son's disappearance, and the SiR reporters had the opportunity to put the TiR in the hotseat to ask him more questions that could help unravel the mystery of his son's disappearance.

With reference to this activity, the following question was asked: "If you had to complete a task, and for the same task, if your teacher had asked you to do it, and like the other day, when Malik's father (the TiR) asked you to help him, was there a difference in how you accepted the task?"

Kassim responded that there was a difference though not in the way that I had initially expected. He replied that he would have accepted the task from both the teacher and the TiR, but would have had difficulty in obtaining information from the TiR elderly gentleman. This prompted me to ask the reason why it was difficult to ask questions to the TiR, upon which the student replied: "I felt shy with the uncle [*Saya rasa segan dengan Pakcik tu*]". This was interesting because Kassim had used the word *segan* which carried the cultural connotation of being reluctant to do something that was considered inappropriate behaviour in society, instead of the word *malu*, which means to be shy or embarrassed. This meant that he had considered it culturally inappropriate for him to be quizzing the TiR, because he considered it to be rude, even though his role as reporter should have given him the agency to complete the task at hand. Furthermore, because he considered it to be rude, he preferred to not be in the know rather than risk confrontational behaviour, as is often preferred by Malay custom (Jeannot & Khairul Anuar, 2012). This



behaviour is consistent with the mapping of Malay culture carried out by Puteh-Behak (2013), where the TiR elderly gentleman was a social superior, and thus demanded respect (Othman, Zainal Abidin, Rahimin Affandi, Nor Hayati, & Norhidayah, 2011), had more authority as a community leader (Hashim, Normahdiah, Rozira, & Siti Sarah, 2012), and was not to be challenged (Lim & Asma, 2001). I realised that I would need to assess which cultural relationships would enable or disable the students in completing their set objectives.

### **Fictional drama context of the integrated approach prompted student engagement.**

Throughout the study, observations of students' engagement in the drama lessons had been recorded by both myself and the class teacher in our respective research journals and lesson plan reflections. Entries such as "most of the students seemed interested in their tasks", and "with the exception of the usual passengers in the groups, the students remained focused on completing their tasks in their discussions, even though the discussions were mostly carried out in Malay" were recorded in my journals which showed that most of the students were engaged in their tasks in the drama lessons, especially towards the end of the study where the students had become used to working with drama. The class teacher, who was playing the apprentice as I had been in Frame 1, offered this entry on engagement:

Students worked in groups and prepared their Freeze Frame. They asked questions to me as usual, like what to do, can I do this and that. This shows their engagement to this activity though I have to say that they were not yet at ease with this kind of activity especially the girls. (Class teacher's journal 12.9.11)

Additionally, observations in our journals and lesson plan reflections showed that many of the students were interested in the fictional stories themselves. However, these observations were also needed to be verified from the viewpoint of the student participants. This verification was obtained in a focus group interview that was carried out a day after the final drama lesson of the research was finished:

Me: What do you feel was the effect of having the story [of Malik's disappearance] in the lessons?

Farah: But sir, before we go on, I just want to say. You know how the story about Malik's disappearance doesn't finish? I want to know what happens! It just ends there! I want to know!

Me: (Laughs) The truth is I purposely made the story that way.

Mona: (laughs) just to make us keep wondering!

Me: Yeah. This would actually mean that you would be hanging on to every single word, and every bit of news you get would make you feel excited.

Mona: Yeah.. but I really want to know!

Me: (Laughs) that you're going to have to ask your teacher to continue. So this made you dissatisfied (unfulfilled) because you really wanted to know how it all turns out.

ALL: Yeah!

(Interview 12.10.11)

The students showed that they were still engaged in the dramatic context even after the unit was over. This was a positive indicator in their levels of engagement in the story, which also revealed their levels of motivation in their participation in the drama classes.

### Focus group epilogue

The insights above explored the impact of using drama pedagogies on the participants of the focus group. There were three pairs of students in the group; Mona and Sarah were categorised as above average, Anis and Farah were categorised as average, and Kassim and Muhammad were categorised as below average. Generally, all the participants gave positive responses to the drama teaching programme in all the interviews, which was corroborated by the observations that both the class teacher and I had made in our journals. Furthermore, in a follow-up telephone interview (Interview 15.11.14), the class teacher reported that Mona, Sarah, Anis and Farah had obtained A's and B's in the district-wide standardised end of year English examination. Kassim obtained a C+ in the final examination, which was in his normal range of achievement for English.

However, Muhammad was not a very active contributor in the focus group interviews, although a personal telephone interview revealed (Interview 3.11.11) that it was the first time he had become interested in English lessons, and that he hoped that the class teacher would continue using drama pedagogies in her teaching. Subsequently, in the same telephone interview mentioned above, the class teacher indicated that Muhammad had passed the district-wide standardised end of year English examination. This was the first time that Muhammad had ever passed an English examination in secondary school, and the class teacher accorded this success in part to the drama programme.

### Closing the chapter

This chapter framed the teaching work and the research that had gone into the main phase of the Malaysian research. It started with the identification of pertinent themes that arose from the pilot study, which were then streamlined into three guiding questions:

How can teacher planning time of drama lessons be reduced by utilising what is already available in the textbook?

How can the mismatch between teaching using drama pedagogies and students' learning styles be overcome?

How can the cycle of student dependency on teacher translation be broken?

After describing a sample teaching unit, the chapter then presented the reflective focus of the Malaysian study. This started with the *staging the textbook* emergent methodology and the model of transmission that utilised three teaching approaches, which were i) the adjunct approach, ii) the integrated approach, and iii) the integrated adjunct approach. Staging the textbook in the teaching work then became the focus of the Frame, upon which the following insights were identified.

First, the teaching objectives from the textbook syllabus was able to be attained by staging the textbook in as much time as normal ESL lessons. This meant that using drama pedagogies did not have to mean missing out on the syllabus, which provides ESL teachers with a very viable teaching tool, potentially even when teaching towards an examination.

Secondly, teacher translation may not be necessary if the students are supplied with a combination on sufficiently rich context, clearly enunciated and clarified teacher talk, and coping drama strategies. A coping strategy that was implemented in the teaching work was by the introduction of a TiR translator, which took the students three weeks to be able to be utilised to some extent. However, a prolonged use of this strategy with a group of students that have had sufficient scaffolding may prove valuable to further investigate its potential in reducing teacher translation.

Thirdly, using and allowing for strategic use of the students' L1 had improved the students' openness to drama and promoted better task completion. In exploring the strategic use of the students' L1, a conceptual model of the 'conductivity' of operational language was developed, using the analogy of an electrical current running through three interconnected bulbs.

Next, the chapter initiated a deeper cultural discussion in reference to how the use of role benefited the students. The use of TiR and SiR enabled the students to receive harsh criticism where similar criticism if given by the teacher would have caused the students distress. Using role and character also provided a buffer to the students which enabled them to share their personal opinions. However, with reference to culture, the students also need to have sufficient agency to be empowered to take action in dealing with superior roles in the cultural hierarchy.

Finally, the fictional drama context of the integrated approach in the staging the textbook methodology prompted student engagement. Their interest in the story was seen both in and outside of class, and was perceived as a positive indicator of their engagement, and also their levels of motivation and participation in the drama classes.

The insights above are specific to a rural Malaysian ESL context, where the students learnt English in surroundings that did not promote its use in everyday life. In the next chapter, we are brought back to

New Zealand, where the Frame looks at the use of drama pedagogies in teaching ESL/EFL in a context where the language learner is saturated with L2 input, both in class and outside of class.

# Chapter 7:

## Frame 3 – Language school in Christchurch

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### Introduction

In Frame 1 I had taken on the role of an apprentice to new pedagogical processes, which I had planned to take home to Malaysia as part of my study, as well as enriching my own repertoire of teaching tools. In the second Frame, I discussed in detail the application of these learnt techniques to my home context of Malaysia, and the impact they had on motivation and contextual learning. I also discussed how the emergent teaching methodology of staging the textbook had been carried out in the Malaysian ESL context. The insights that I had gained were fundamental to the development of my understanding of the use and impact of using drama pedagogies as an ELT practitioner in general, and more specifically, an ELT practitioner in Malaysian ESL.

In Frame 3 I was offered the opportunity to teach again in NZ with adult learners, and this allowed me to bring some of the techniques in which I was gaining confidence into a context that was again outside of my immediate comfort zone to see how I could work with different students who came from different backgrounds. Furthermore, the context in which Frame 3 occurred differed from the preceding Frames. The two biggest differences were that: a) the students were adult students who were highly motivated to learn English; and b) the context in which their learning occurred was one of English immersion, where they heard and spoke English at school, with their friends (except for perhaps friends who came from the same country), and in their everyday lives outside of school. Additionally, the students were heterogeneous with differing linguistic and cultural backgrounds, unlike the student participants of the previous Frames.

Moreover, in Frame 2 I was very aware of my own actions as a teacher, and it was my own questions that dominated it. In Frame 3 I started to feeling more confident about my practice, and found myself in the position where I realised I was becoming more attentive to the students, and I was becoming more curious and open to how they were reacting to the use of drama pedagogies, and how it differed in their previous learning experiences.

In the process of teaching in this context, some of my earlier questions were answered or partially answered, and some new questions emerged, and are discussed in this chapter.

## Structure of the lessons

The students were enrolled in a private college's language program that was divided into three distinct slots per day – textbook, enrichment, and self-study. The students started the day with a two-hour slot in which they learnt the prescribed syllabus in their textbooks. This is where they are taught the core of their language programmes, which they will be tested on before they are allowed to advance a grade. In the case of my students, they were in the 500 level (Upper Intermediate), and using the *Cutting Edge* textbook (S. Cunningham & Moor, 2005). This session was taught entirely by the New Zealand collaborating class teacher, who was obliged to teach the prescribed syllabus that the students had enrolled for. After morning break, the students continued with an hour slot, which was usually used as slots for language enrichment and practice. Sometimes the teachers would use it to continue where they had left off in the morning if they felt that they needed to focus more on the syllabus, or they could provide the students with handouts, or carry out language games with them. There did not seem to be a hard and fast rule to what the teachers could teach in these hour-long slots, and the collaborating class teacher indicated that the students had a say in what they wanted to do. An additional enrichment session was carried out after lunch, after which they students had one final hour of class to do self-directed learning. This was normally done as self-study, and the students were free to choose what they wanted to do. From my observations, some students liked to read, others liked to use the computers for additional learning, and some preferred to go straight home.

My teaching work for this final phase of the research was carried out in slots between one to two hours a week, which averaged contact hours with the students to between two to four hours a week. This was done in the enrichment section of the day.

## Students' previous experiences with ESL/EFL

A unique feature of the participants of Frame 3 was that they were a diverse group, mainly from Latin America and East Asia. They were less homogenous as a group, compared to the groups in the previous Frames, and were very diverse in their cultures, experiences, and language learning outlooks. This diversity prompted me to investigate the students' unique points of view where necessary. What was interesting was that even though their homelands were separated by thousands of miles, they each had a common theme in the backstories of their language learning. The way English was taught in normal or conventional schools in their home countries did not inspire interest, and the teacher normally resorted to some form or other of rote learning, without taking the extra step to keep the students engaged. Kenji, from Japan recalls his English lessons back home:

“Every day, the teacher would come in, and tell us to open our books. After that the whole class would be spent translating English to Japanese, and Japanese to English. We learnt grammar as well. But that was it. It was so boring. I felt like I wanted to die every day.” (Interview 5.5.13)

At the time of this research, Kenji was a third year university student in Japan, who had come to NZ for the summer holidays. He was a rather proficient speaker of English with a pleasant Japanese accent. When probed further, Kenji revealed that he had stayed in NZ for two years when he was 5 years old, following his father who had intended to migrate to NZ, but returned to Japan after he was unable to secure a good job in NZ. Some questions that arose were: how much of the sentiment he had expressed above had been affected by his previous experience in learning in NZ? Would he have had the same response to how he was taught if he had not had previous exposure to different ways of English teaching? These questions also reflected on questions of a similar vein that I had identified in the previous Frame, but seen from the other side of the coin, which asked how the mismatch between using drama pedagogies and teaching styles could be overcome. However, in the previous Frame, the question had been asked with reference to teaching context that was presumed to not have been exposed to any drama pedagogies in English language learning. If this definition of teaching using drama pedagogies is widened to mean creative teaching strategies found more in the New Zealand context rather than the Asian one, it can be inferred that Kenji's response provided a partial answer. This was that in his case, being exposed to more creative teaching strategies highlighted the perceived inadequacies of the typical language teaching approach in his home context.

Further interactions with other student participants from Korea and Japan confirmed that the dominant teaching methodology in their home countries was the grammar-translation method. However, contrasting Kenji's seemingly averse reaction to more traditional, grammar-translation approaches, Ayaka describes how learning language in Japan had benefited her:

“I don't think I hated English classes. Yes, they were boring, and there were times when I felt really sleepy in class, but I think that my grammar is not bad. When I look at grammar books, I do not feel as panicked as some of my Arab friends. But I have to say, I did not really know how to speak. Before coming to NZ and studying here, I was so scared to speak.” (Interview 6.6.13)

Many theorists speak to the importance of grammar in learning a language, and that inappropriate use of grammar can potentially render communication as useless. However, there has always been a great debate in the ESL/EFL world as to how much grammar should be taught, and whether it should be taught inductively (i.e. grammar-translation) or deductively (i.e. Communicative Language Teaching). A further discussion of these differences can be found in Chapter 3.

In relation to learning using translation and grammar, according to participants who were from South America, the situation differed slightly in their own home contexts. Translation did not seem to be high on the preferred methods of teaching English. Juana, a student from Colombia, stated that they only started learning English in high school, and that their learning was mainly limited to “changing verbs to be” (interview, 5.5.13). Out of the group, I considered Juana to be of the lower range of proficiency in the

class, as she had not shown the ability to be able to complete the given tasks well, and struggled to communicate her ideas. When asked about what she thought of her own proficiency in English, she acknowledged that she did not really belong in the proficiency range of the class.

“I just wanted to get as much as I could in my time here. I actually wanted to do a business English class, but I did not pass the proficiency test. And I felt that I had already spent enough time in the 400 class (the intermediate) class” (Interview 5.5.13).

Another participant, Miguel from Brazil, responded by stating that learning EFL in Brazil was “grammar, grammar, and not much else”. Upon further investigation, Miguel further stated that he had found his EFL experience in Brazil boring, and that he did not remember much of the classes, nor what he had learnt. This theme of comparatively low motivation and engagement in normal EFL classrooms occurred in all three case studies conducted in this research, and will be discussed in more detail later.

Nevertheless, the typical language learning experience did not apply to all the participants. Ronaldo is a 25 year-old Brazilian who considers himself lucky to have ‘escaped’ the typical Brazilian school. He recalls:

“I was one of the lucky ones. My family managed to get me enrolled in a school that had a collaboration with a school in the US, and what we studied was similar to what our sister school in the US studied. We learnt things in English. [The subject] English was taught in English, and the teachers made sure that we learnt the language in interesting ways...I did my US experience for a year, as well, and that was really good. So I think my English is not too bad, though I did find it difficult when I first came to NZ. The accent used to drive me nuts. But now I kind of enjoy it.” (Interview 5.5.13)

Further discussion with Ronaldo revealed that although he had gone to a special school, he had not been isolated from the Brazilian way of life. He knew the conditions in which the other schoolchildren had to learn English, and described them as “bad”, and that the students had no real training on the practical use of English, which he accredited to the worldview of his contemporary peers in mainstream Brazilian schools.

“There is no reason for a typical Brazilian to learn English, unless he has English-speaking friends, or wants to go to the US to work. Mostly though, he will choose to stay in Brazil or maybe go to another country in South America. So a Brazilian speaks Portuguese, and is surrounded by countries that speak Spanish. Even for me, my first language is Portuguese, and my second language is Spanish. I am very fluent in Spanish, and I feel like my English is bad when I compare them.” (Interview 5.5.13)

This came as a surprise to me, as I considered Ronaldo to be the most fluent speaker of English of the whole class, who seemed to have very little trouble in understanding the lessons or carrying out the teaching and learning activities. However, this exchange between us made me draw parallels to the



language teaching context in Frame 2, where the participants were rural schoolchildren, who lived in a community where there was no real need to real English, and speaking English could be considered as strange, or a sign that they were ‘putting on airs’.

A student from Chile, who was a qualified veterinarian, offered another insight into her language learning experience in her home country. She said that she would often forget what was taught in class, though she could not pinpoint the exact reason why this happened. When asked how she had learnt English in Chile, she responded it was mainly through reading the textbooks and doing grammar exercises.

To summarise, almost all the participants (with the exception of B2) were current students of English in NZ, who were products of mainstream education in their home countries. Most of them (with the exception of Ayaka) reported that they had not been happy with the way that English had been taught to them, where it was boring, taught in a uninteresting manner, or focussed on what they felt was not the right proportion to their needs (i.e too much grammar, or too much translating).

However, it must also be noted that these reports of accounts of English language learning were personal accounts, and may not necessarily be representative of how English is taught in student’s home countries in their entirety. Nevertheless, they are first-hand accounts that help to inform me of the level of the participants’ proficiency, as well as of their outlook towards using drama as a teaching tool, compared to how they had learnt English from before.

This background information was important for me to assess where the students were at in their attitudes towards language learning, and how they would potentially react to the applied drama lessons.

### **Staging an already rich textbook**

In Frame 2, the main approach to emerge was that of staging the textbook. The textbook that was used in the Malaysian context was sufficiently ‘dry’ that many rich dramatic layers could be added on top of the textbook to enhance to students’ learning experience. In Frame 3, however, I initially found the learning curve to be surprisingly steep, and I discovered that I could not immediately transpose what I had done in the previous cycle to the current cycle that I was working on.

In the majority of the dramatic layers that I used to stage the textbook in the previous Frames, a lot of the activities that I employed had groundings in communicative language learning (CLT), collaborative learning, and real world use of language. However, I quickly discovered that the series of textbooks that the school used were in themselves rich with CLT and authentic (or near authentic) use of language. Below is an example taken from the textbook.

## Real life Responding sympathetically

1 Do you consider yourself to be generally sympathetic or not? Who do you turn to if you need a sympathetic listener?

2 **T2.3** Listen to three short conversations and answer the questions.

- a What is the person's problem in each case?  
b Is the listener very sympathetic, reasonably sympathetic or not very sympathetic? What suggestions does he/she make?

3 a Mark the sentences in the box: \*\*\* for very sympathetic, \*\* for fairly sympathetic and \* for unsympathetic.

Calm down!	Never mind. *
Come on! Pull yourself together!	That sounds awful!
Don't take any notice of him/her.	There's no point in getting upset about it.
Don't worry. It doesn't matter.	Try not to worry about it.
How annoying!	What a shame!
Just ignore him/her/it/them.	You must be really worried.

b Read the situations and choose one or two appropriate responses from the box for each.

- 1 A visitor to your house is embarrassed because he's spilled his drink.
- 2 A child tells you that his best friend said something unkind to him.
- 3 Your best friend phones because she's had a row with her boyfriend.
- 4 Your friend is in tears at the end of a sad film.
- 5 Your friend is worried because his mother is going into hospital.
- 6 Everyone is laughing at your friend's new hairstyle.
- 7 Your friend is too scared to go to the dentist by herself.

### Pronunciation

1 **T2.4** Intonation is important if you want to sound sympathetic. Listen to some of the sentences from the box above. Which two do not sound sympathetic?

2 Practise saying all the sentences sympathetically.

4 Work in pairs. Choose one of the situations in exercise 3b and write a conversation similar to the ones you listened to.

5 Act out your conversation for the rest of the class. The others listen and say which situation you are acting out and whether or not the listener is sympathetic.



Image 4: *Cutting Edge: Upper Intermediate* - Students' Book (p23)

The progression of a lesson (or in this case a series of activities) in the textbook can be seen in the layout of the textbook. In the sample above, the book begins with a set induction that elicits a personal response from the student for activation of schemata. The students are asked to access their previously learnt knowledge in order to make mental connections to what they are to learn ahead; for example here their minds are primed to carry out an activity to do with voicing sympathy. Next are a series of activities of presentation, where the students are given input through listening texts, and are given while-listening

activities to focus their attention. Then the students are given practice activities, which are scaffolded from general response to semi-contextualised practice, where they are given situations in which they need to respond appropriately. The students then are presented with more detailed practice on the phrases that they had learnt in terms of pronunciation. Finally they are then presented with a scaffolded enrichment activity where they prepare a dialogue, combining the elements of the context of the situations, the phrases and the pronunciation that they had previously practiced.

I found that I was familiar with this progression of activities because it was a progression on which I modelled a typical communicative lesson in my own teaching. In ‘drier’ books, such as that which was found in the previous Frame, the textbook did not spend too much time developing and scaffolding connected activities in detail. This usually meant that I added on or modified activities to scaffold the learning, and to provide context in a drama environment. However, as can be observed in the sample above, the textbook used in the language school had covered these elements, and even added more enrichment through paired enrichment activities in supplementary books.

The authors of the book revealed the thinking behind their book in the *Teachers’ Resource Book* (Cunningham & Moor, 1999), where they describe their book as “multi-layered”, and included “a comprehensive grammar and vocabulary syllabus, incorporating systematic work on listening, speaking, reading and writing” (p. 4), and had three distinctive features which were: task-based learning, emphasis on lexis, and use of a ‘discovery’ approach to the teaching of grammar.

This rich abundance of teaching materials, paired with an already rich textbook, prompted the following questions: What can I do to a textbook that I would personally use to teach my own students? How can I add value to what was already a good resource by using drama pedagogies? How can I make my drama sessions go hand in hand with the learning they were already doing in the two-hour slots every day?

### **The transmission model – refinement of approaches**

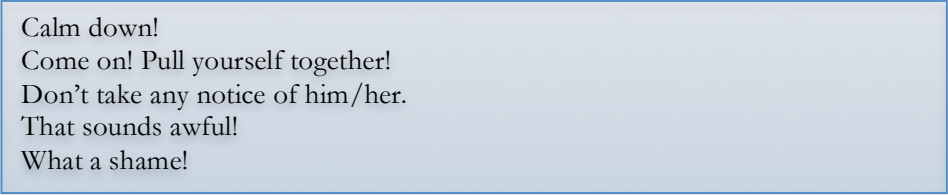
In answering the questions above, I first decided to use my existing transmission model of staging the textbook as the foundation. I wanted to explore the possibilities of further refining the approaches that I had used in the transmission model discussed in Frame 2. The approaches had to be adapted to the differences in the teaching context of the present Frame. One of the biggest differences in my role in this phase of research was my relegation to a more supporting role, rather than being the main language teacher as I had been in the previous frame. This led me to conclude that there was less pressure on me to cover a syllabus than the previous work I had done in Malaysia, and that I could concentrate more on the enrichment of the language the students had learnt in the preceding lessons.

### **The adjunct approach**

In the earlier sessions of the teaching programme of this phase of research, I felt that I needed to scaffold the drama experience for the learners. Similar to the previous Frames, the drama elements of the lesson needed to be introduced small steps, to lessen the jump between the familiar and the unfamiliar in the

students. I started the teaching programme with lessons that utilised drama adjuncts, instead of integrating the drama context with the language one. An example of this can be found in how I taught the lesson in Image 4 above.

The unit that the students were working on was entitled 'Life's ups and downs', and the language focus that the textbook had started to build up was noun and gerund forms. In the initial lesson with the students I had already covered the formation of gerunds, which I had taken from the textbook, and had used a communicative activity that had been suggested to me by the class teacher. In the previous hour before my lesson, the students had been given a list of responses where they had to determine if they were very sympathetic, fairly sympathetic, or unsympathetic. Some examples found in the list can be seen below.



Calm down!  
Come on! Pull yourself together!  
Don't take any notice of him/her.  
That sounds awful!  
What a shame!

**Figure 8:** Examples of responding sympathetically/unsympathetically

I drew the students' attention to the list, and proceeded to insert an elementary drama adjunct by voicing a few examples of the three categories, but adding the dramatic exaggeration. For example, sympathetic responses were said in an overly-sympathetic manner, where I engaged as many facial and vocal muscles as I could, to bring about an exaggerated, almost 'sickly sweet' response. It was observed that the students were immediately amused, interested and engaged in the activity and begun, at first jokingly with their friends, to practice the responses they had learnt in the preceding hour.

Subsequently, I introduced a more complex drama adjunct into the lesson in a modified form of forum theatre. Augusto Boal (1985) used forum theatre as a technique to raise awareness of oppression, and work towards overcoming that oppression. In Boal's forum theatre, actors would act a scene that highlighted the oppression that the participants were facing. The action would then freeze, similar to using a freeze frame, and the audience would be invited to give suggestions as to what would happen next. Members of the audience were also invited to jump in and take up the role of one of the characters if they were unhappy with how the actors themselves were acting out the scene. In my modified forum theatre, I introduced a TiR character called Unlucky Sam, who was described as the unluckiest man in the world. The students were invited to engage in light banter with Sam, even before they were told what the activity was going to be. Once the students were sufficiently comfortable with the character, as Unlucky Sam, I began to tell them my story, where bad luck plagued me from the moment I opened my eyes. The story started with Sam lying down on a makeshift bed. Next Sam woke to the sound of the alarm blaring beside his ear, jumped up, and onto a little toy car that his son had been playing with the night before. The action froze at this point and the students were invited to give ideas about what they thought would

happen next. Sam then acted out the best mishap that had been agreed upon by the students. This cycle of freezing action and acting out the next scene was repeated, and at every interval, students practiced the target language forms of the day by emotively expressing their sympathies to Unlucky Sam after every mishap. By the end of the lesson, I observed that the students had met the set objectives of the day's lesson by practicing the expressions of sympathy that they had learnt, and had also done so in a way that required them to do so emotively within the dramatic context of the drama adjuncts. As I further reflected on how this lesson affected my understanding of using drama adjuncts, I began to see that I had previously limited its exploration in an attempt to keep the approach simple. In the teaching work carried out in the previous Frames, the drama adjuncts that I had normally used in class were freeze frames, mimes, and small dramatisations that lasted between five to ten minutes. However, in doing so, I realised that I had not let myself become more open to the prospect of carrying out bigger, more complex drama adjuncts in the language lesson.

### **The integrated approach + the integrated adjunct approach**

One of the biggest differences between implementing these two approaches was in the comparative ease that I was able to initiate process dramas, compared to my previous Frames. I noted that after two teaching stints using the principles of process drama, I was beginning to develop confidence in designing engaging lessons using the integrated and the integrated adjunct approaches. Nevertheless, planning these lessons posed the same challenge as stated above, where the already rich textbook provided less of a leeway in which to directly stage a layer of applied drama.

There were two ways that emerged in how I was able to stage this drama layer. The first was to base a drama lesson on a smaller piece of subtext. This technique seemed to work best when the texts were not grouped thematically, instead being grouped according to the language learning outcome. For example, in the second week of classes, I created an integrated approach lesson that was based on the 'Day of the Dead' event, where the students had to produce relative clauses in their spoken and written outputs (refer to Image 5 below). The lesson was based on a Mexican tradition on the Day of the Dead, where some families would visit their ancestral tombs, and at times share a meal with the dead. In the lesson, I took on the role of family patriarch, and brought the family members to the tombs of their different branches of the family. The students, as family members, were then asked to write new epitaphs on the tombstones that had eroded, as well as prepare a menu of the meal that they shared with their deceased. In these tasks, the students were required to use relative clauses, which they had learnt in the preceding lesson.


**Language focus 1**  
**Relative clauses**

1 Have you heard of the celebrations in the texts? What do you know about them?

2 a Complete the texts with the phrases in the box.


when children  
when Japanese families  
where the day  
which their children have lovingly prepared  
which became known  
who have died  
which used to be  
which are made into  
who lived away from  
that has special meaning

b **172** Listen and check.




**Children's Day**

A national holiday in Japan since 1948, Children's Day on May 5th, (1) \_\_\_\_\_ known as 'Boys' Day', is the day (2) \_\_\_\_\_ wish their children happiness, good health and success. In Korea, (3) \_\_\_\_\_ has only been a holiday since 1975, there are parades, special excursions and visits to movies and museums.



**Mother's Day**

In seventeenth-century England, young servants (4) \_\_\_\_\_ their families were allowed to visit their mothers on a day (5) \_\_\_\_\_ as 'Mothering Sunday'. Nowadays it's the day (6) \_\_\_\_\_ of all ages treat their mum to something special: it's one of the busiest days of the year for florists and restaurants, and millions of mums enjoy a special breakfast in bed, (7) \_\_\_\_\_.



**Day of the Dead**

One day (8) \_\_\_\_\_ in Mexico is November 2nd, which, according to legend, is the Day of the Dead'. Families gather to remember relatives (9) \_\_\_\_\_ and have a special picnic by their gravesides, with unusual foods including chocolate and sweets, (10) \_\_\_\_\_ a variety of animal or skull shapes.

**Image 5:** *Cutting Edge: Upper Intermediate - Students' Book (p76)*

The theme was similar to the process of utilising the theme of a unit, which I had previously used in Frame 2, where I created lessons based on the theme of Internet uses and abuses. This was the process that I felt more confident in using. However, I observed a difference in the way I planned the integrated approach lessons in the teaching work of this Frame. In the previous Frame, the integrated approach lessons were staged directly on top of the textbook material, using the context of the drama to bridge the activities and teach them within the dramatic frame. Conversely, in context of this Frame, I found that in some of the units I needed to step away from the textbook material to a large degree, only retaining the theme of the unit, as well as the language points and the target vocabulary that was supposed to be taught. Below is an example of an integrated approach lesson that was based on the theme and the target language items of the unit, but only loosely based on the actual texts and activities in the textbook.

The students had already started the module 'Big events', and had learnt the relevant vocabulary, extreme adjectives (i.e. huge, tiny, exhausted etc), and relative clauses. They had just learnt a reading and vocabulary section on food festivals around the world, which gave examples of the Oaxaca Radish

Festival, Stilton Cheese Rolling, the Fiery Foods Festival, and the La Tomatina – The World’s Biggest Food Fight. For the lesson, I focused on the theme of the unit, and the target grammar that the students had done in class prior to the drama session.

I started the lesson by becoming, as TiR, the Minister of Tourism of the country. The minister briefed SiR citizens of the economic crisis they were facing, and that to counter it, the country needed to boost its tourism industry. These villagers were informed that their two villages were chosen to compete for the honour to host a food festival that would attract foreign visitors. The first task, which was given by the minister, was that they had to do was to build sculptures using their bodies. The sculptures had to embody what their festival was about, and all the members of the group had to participate, either as part of the sculpture or as the presenter. During their discussions the students were engaged in two tasks – one to discuss the actual festival, and the other to discuss how they were going to create the sculpture. In creating the sculpture the students focused on the language of giving suggestions and negotiating. The students were also instructed to include at least four of the target vocabulary items they had learnt in their presentations of the sculptures. It was interesting for me to note that there was a difference in the way this group of students differed to the ones in the previous Frame in terms of task completion. These mature students were more proactive, and did not depend too much on the facilitators’ help, preferring to experiment with their peers after being given an example of what they needed to do. Many of them were also able to use the target vocabulary in context, both when presenting their sculptures to the class, and also in the writing task that followed. The analysis of this writing task will be described in a section further below.

In the previous Frame, it had seemed important to me to be able to separate the three approaches of the transmission model in using drama in ESL. This was because I had previously been under the impression that a clear distinction would pave the way for clearer theorisation. However, as I experimented with the integrated and the integrated adjunct approaches, the lines between the two approaches seemed to blur. I found that I did not need to rigorously keep in character for the integrated approach lessons just to satisfy my compulsion for straight lines. I sometimes needed to step out of character and take on the role of the teacher/facilitator when I wanted to monitor the students’ discussions and how they were completing the set tasks. In essence, this combined the integrated and the integrated adjunct approaches, with the only difference being the extent of how much I took on the role of teacher/facilitator. This difference depended on whether I wanted to step out of role when monitoring the students as I did above, or whether I wanted to strategically displace both my role and the students’ role to being teacher and student in order to specifically scaffold the needed language components for the students.

After this stage, the TiR Minister of Tourism called the activities to a standstill and announced that the whole country was ready and eager to see their offerings. First the villagers from Village A were invited to go on a bus trip to visit Village B. What greeted them upon arrival was a magnificent, albeit slightly confusing, sculpture of what looked like two mermen fighting (refer to Image 6 below).



**Image 6:** Village B's sculpture of its 'Find Your Fish Side' food festival

While they were going round and admiring the sculpture, the head of Village B welcomed his honoured guests and explained to them that the festival was a food fight festival, held at the beach, where festivalgoers were invited to 'find their fish side' (the motto of the festival), pick up fish and use the fish to bash other people up. Once the festivalgoers were tired, they would stop fighting and participate in a huge banquet of seafood. In reflection, I observed that the independence of these adult learners was more advanced than that of the Malaysian students, requiring less requests for input from the teacher/facilitator. Also there is a clear distinction between creativity and task completion in the second and present Frames. The present group were able to display drama output that I considered to be more creative based on the bipartite standard definition of creativity put forward by Runco and Jaeger (2012), that creativity requires both originality and effectiveness. I considered the idea of a food fight using fish, and in one of the scenarios fighting using fish on a cruise ship, to be original because as far as I knew, such a festival did not exist. Moreover, I considered the idea effective, as it aligned with the theme of drama which was taken from the textbook, and was also plausible enough to work within the dramatic frame.

Nevertheless, a point of contention also crystallised when I began exploring the difference in creativity and task completion between the present Frame and Frame 1. In Frame 1, I discussed the three possibilities of the divergent albeit inappropriate ideas (e.g ninjas and throwing stars to combat soldiers with guns) displayed by the student participants; one was that they displayed a high level of ideational mobility but were limited by their lack of exposure to what was possible or appropriate in a given



situation. The second was that they were not engaged in the context of the dramatic frame enough to give creative but appropriate answers. The third was that the dramatic frame was seen as imaginary, thus voiding any rules of possibility and applicability. In this Frame, the students in this activity displayed divergent thinking that was appropriately based on the given context, in what Barron describes as “adaptation to reality” (1955, as cited in Runco & Jaeger, 2012, p. 94). This observation led me to hypothesise that, at least in the students of my research contexts, the more experienced the students get, the more they are able to give more answers that are appropriate to a given situation. It could be gleaned that the adult learners had learnt more socially acceptable behaviour and acquired more life experience, where they have had refinement in what Csikszentmihalyi (1996) describes as the three parts of creativity: the domain, the field, and the individual person. These three parts form what Csikszentmihalyi (1988, p. 329) calls “dynamic links of circular causality”, where person’s cultural system (domain), social system (field), and genetic makeup, talents, and experience (individual person) interact with each other. In the case of these adult learners, their experience would have interacted with their social and cultural systems, allowing them access to more faculties from creativity. However, this insight is restricted to the participants of the three Frames presented in this research, and is not generalisable to contexts outside the Frames. The lesson proceeded with a switch of roles between Village A and Village B, followed by a vote to determine which village had the better idea.

After the winners were congratulated, the drama progressed to a news-reporting activity, where I took on the role of a TV newscaster, aided by the class teacher who became the ‘cameraman’. The students were assigned the roles of the festivalgoers, and were asked to create vignettes (a 3-5 second movement expanding from a freeze frame) that represented what was happening in the food festival. They were divided into pairs and groups of three and were told that they could set up their initial freeze frames anywhere they wanted. Everyone took their position in a freeze frame and awaited the next step. When the reporters started their coverage of the story, each pair/group that was approached by the camera would start their vignettes, and the reporters asked them what they were doing. At this point, I had already begun to develop more confidence in manipulating drama pedagogies to suit the needs of the language activities that I was developing. For this activity, I had combined freeze frames, vignettes and a spotlight technique by using the imaginary camera operated by the class teacher. This slightly more advanced version of the freeze frame was new ground for me, and became part of my process of experimentation on what I had previously learnt. I observed that the students did not have any trouble following the instructions that I had given them, and were able to complete the task, producing vignettes that were fun and interesting, whilst managing to insert the target words into their speech when they were interviewed.

In terms of the application of the integrated approach, I was initially apprehensive about how the change in roles would affect the fluidity of the lesson. The students had to change their roles from villagers to festivalgoers, and I had to shift from TiR minister to TiR reporter, with some shifts to facilitator along

the way. However, I observed that the students were able to maintain their roles, and participate in the assigned tasks, thus maintaining the fluidity of the drama. This insight further strengthened the case for me to combine the integrated and the integrated adjunct approaches.

Finally, to consolidate the day's learning, I chose a frame that had served me well in the previous Frame. I shifted roles to become the TiR editor of a magazine and tasked my reporters to write a magazine article reporting what they had seen at the 'Find Your Fish Side' festival. The article had to be as interesting as possible, but at the same time, it was supposed to reflect what they had been learning in their operations manuals (the textbook); this included the use of relevant vocabulary, phrases and grammar structures that they had learnt.

## Insights

### Participants' reactions to using applied drama in the language classroom

After three cycles of research conducted in three different Frames, one of the most salient similarities between them was how the students' reactions towards using drama in the language classroom improved as the lessons progressed. In the interviews about this phase of the study, the participants were asked how they had felt when they first entered the applied drama classes. The responses were similar in nature. The first was a comparison to how a 'good' student behaved in class, especially from the perspective of many East Asian participants. Kanako, a Japanese female mature student who entered the class just after the halfway point of the teaching programme perhaps encapsulates what most of the students had felt initially:

“It was strange. I had never done anything like this before. Usually in Japan a good student will sit down at her own place, and not get up from her chair unless she is asked a question by the teacher. Otherwise, doing all this [waves hands about in reference to actions of drama] is not really done.” (Interview 6.6.13 – Kanako)

But when asked if she felt that the lessons were interesting and if she had gained anything from them, she responded with a strong yes, which I interpreted to be a positive sign of acceptance and a decline in resistance after only 4 lessons (2 weeks) with me. This sentiment was also agreed upon by Ayaka and Manami, the Japanese students mentioned earlier, who had entered the class at the same time as Kanako. However, the research field notes add another dimension to the analysis of the data:

When I asked Manami the question, I was rather surprised at what I perceived to be a slight air of uncertainty at doing all the drama activities. Not a sign of distaste, definitely, but a pause in response just enough to denote that something may be amiss. This surprised me because I had not previously detected any hesitation or overt signs of reluctance when I gave her any drama tasks. She seemed to participate in all of them, and

tried the best that she could. And I think all that I got from her was that she enjoyed them. She echoed Kanako's use of the word strange in describing my drama activities, but she also added "I try [to do all of] them". I asked her if the lessons were interesting, to which she gave a positive response. However, I think, if truth be told, it was just lacking in the usual emphatic positive that I would normally get with most of the participants of all 3 Frames of investigation. (Research journal 6.6.13)

From these responses, a series of connected questions began to emerge: How much of the students' willingness to try on drama was induced by culture, where they were honour-bound to try the methods of the teacher, no matter what their common sense was telling them, no matter how uncomfortable it made them feel? How much of the participation in the applied drama classes was a top-down prerogative? This discussion of culture has parallels with the discussions in the previous Frames, but with each context presenting unique challenges that stemmed from the differences in culture and geography.

The hesitation that some (though not many) of the students initially faced was also documented in my research journal. On more than one occasion, I observed that these students who exhibited a tendency to hesitate did not seem to want to fully participate in activities that that required them to move excessively as compared to their normal acceptable range of motion in a language class, which ranged from 'moving from Point A to Point B' and 'non-excessive movements that could be performed within a space of more or less half a metre in diameter' (Research journal 11.4.13)

Herrington, Oliver, and Reeves (2002) state that there are two ways in which students may take to engagement in a new learning method: willing acceptance and relief; and delayed. While some students may immediately take to the new method quickly, some are only able to engage once they have resolved issues, usually of personality or culture, that they have with the learning method. In my observations of the student participants in the previous two Frames, I came to what I felt to be an important insight into answering the research question on engagement; I surmised that until the student is able to overcome these issues, the teacher should not expect the students to be fully engaged. However, it was interesting to note that this observation did not apply to many of the students in the context of Frame 3, and that no matter what they may have felt inside, many of them had engaged well in the drama lessons, starting from the second session that I had with them. Nevertheless, similar to the students in Frame 2, a period of adjustment did also occur in the students in this Frame, but seemed to reach its peak in the first lesson itself, with the students becoming more open to the use of drama pedagogies, and more engaged from the second lesson onwards.

This theme of engagement will be further explored in the following section.

## Motivation and engagement

It has been argued that students who are motivated learn better compared to those who are not (for example Cameron & Pierce, 2002; R. E. Franken, 2007; Kunter et al., 2008; Patrick, Hisley, & Kempler, 2000; Rieg & Paquette, 2009). Krashen (1985, 1988), describes the affective filter in a student, which rises in negative situations such as when the student is uncomfortable, ill at ease, or does not trust the teacher. Consequently, the higher the affective filter of a student is, the more difficult it is for new knowledge to filter through, which is why the best situations to promote learning happen when the student is comfortable and enjoying him or herself. Jones (2009, p. 24) talks about learner engagement, and how “students need to be engaged before they can apply higher order, creative thinking skills. Blumfeld and Paris (2004) describe three types of engagement: behavioural, cognitive and emotional. Behavioural engagement involves positive conduct in class; behaving in a non-disruptive manner; being actively involved in learning tasks instead of sitting back and becoming a ‘passenger’. Emotional engagement involves positive emotional reactions, like showing happiness or interest, to the task being performed. Cognitive engagement involves the students being psychologically invested, which can be displayed by showing a desire to learn, and evaluating learning when carrying out learning activities. Nevertheless, even though these three types of engagement have been presented as different categories of engagement, Blumfeld and Paris (2004, p. 61) also caution that the three categories are ‘dynamically interrelated within the individual’, which can be taken to mean that these categories can only be taken as a guide when gauging engagement, and may not be mutually exclusive from each other. In Frame 2, I had gauged the student’s levels of engagement through observations made as a teacher who had had classroom experience, and these observations were shared with and verified by the collaborating teacher in our discussions. However, after further reflection, I surmised that my research in this third Frame would benefit from a more transparent research instrument with clearer criteria of engagement. Experientially, I felt that the students were learning the content, and were engaged and motivated while doing so. Nevertheless, I wanted to see whether using these additional research instruments would give me any other information. To that effect, I saw Jones’ Student Engagement Walkthrough Checklist (see Figure 9 below) as a helpful tool, and used it as a guide for my observations.

## Student Engagement Walkthrough Checklist

### OBSERVATIONS

	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
<b>Positive Body Language</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students exhibit body postures that indicate they are paying attention to the teacher and/or other students.					
<b>Consistent Focus</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All students are focused on the learning activity with minimum disruptions.					
<b>Verbal Participation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students express thoughtful ideas, reflective answers, and questions relevant or appropriate to learning.					
<b>Student Confidence</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students exhibit confidence and can initiate and complete a task with limited coaching and can work in a group.					
<b>Fun and Excitement</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students exhibit interest and enthusiasm and use positive humor.					

**Figure 9:** Observations section - Student Engagement Walkthrough Checklist taken from Jones (2009, p. 31)

I also added another criterion, and that was Contextual Engagement, which was to observe how well they connected to the context of the drama activity. This checklist was not used as a standalone research instrument to obtain raw data that could be quantifiably analysed. I wanted to use it as a litmus test to assess my interpretation of how the students were engaged in the activities, subsequently leading to reflective practice cycles of continuous improvement through reflections in and on action. If the findings revealed that the students' engagement dropped below the norm, I would revisit my research journals and lesson plans to re-evaluate what had gone wrong, and to see if I was able to learn something from it.

To a certain extent, it was an observation of emotional engagement (Blumfeld & Paris, 2004), but I hesitated to limit the observation criterion to just emotional engagement because not all of the tasks required the students to get emotionally connected to the activity; some of the activities were discussions, or required them to 'get into the spirit of things' even though they were not fully engaged in dramatic context. Table 1 illustrates the students' levels of engagement as a summative evaluation by me at the end of each lesson, based on the six criteria listed above.

**Table 1:** Student engagement levels

Criteria\Lesson	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	L6	L7	L8	L9	L10	L11	L12	L13	L14	L15
Positive Body Language	4	4	4	4	5	3	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	5	5
Consistent Focus	4	4	4	4	5	3	5	4	5	5	5	4	3	5	5
Verbal Participation	2	4	4	3	4	3	5	4	4	5	5	3	5	5	4
Student Confidence	2	3	4	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5
Fun and Excitement	3	4	4	3	5	3	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	5	5
Contextual Engagement	2	4	4	3	4	3	5	4	5	5	5	3	3	5	5

Key: 5 – Very High

4 – High

3 – Medium

2 – Low

1 – Very low

From this table, I observed that the only time a low score was observed in student engagement was in the first lesson itself. Generally, the students displayed behaviour that was consistent with positive body language and consistent focus from the beginning until the end of the lesson. This showed me that they were at least treating both me and the lesson sequence with cautious interest.

However, in the first lesson I noted that there did not seem to be much verbal participation or confidence from them in communicating with me. I surmised that this was because it was my first session with them, and I had not completely gained their trust yet, a pattern explicitly observed in Frame 1. This was also the reason why I had not opted for a drama-intensive lesson at the beginning of the teaching programme, as the students would have needed the first contact with me to not deviate too much from their comfort zones (i.e teaching styles they were familiar to).

It was interesting to observe that, similar to the students in Frame 2, these students were quick to adjust, and I found that their engagement levels were high to very high starting from the second lesson onwards. This observation was very important in answering one of the research questions that runs through the whole study: What is the level of engagement in the students while undergoing a drama in ESL course? Additionally, I had also found that this group of students was more willing to try new things, and displayed less resistance compared to the Malaysian secondary school students in Frame 2. As mentioned earlier, I attributed this to the age of the students, the maturity level of the students, and the culture of the students. In Frame 2, the students were teenagers who were at the age and maturity level where they cared a lot about not wanting to take the risk of looking silly on front of their peers (especially because it was a mixed-gender class). Additionally, the situations were also different; the students in Frame 2 had to deal with the consequences of any actions they did for the whole year or even potentially for the following year, as most of them would end up in the same class. This did not apply to the students in Frame 3, who were enrolled in the language program from anywhere from a few weeks to a few months.

As can be seen in the table above, I considered Lesson 6 to least meet my expectations of student engagement. This was a lesson where the students had to take on characters who were members of Mensa, and had to meet each other in a gathering. Before the meeting they met each mingled with each other they had to create a backstory, and had to use the language focus of the day, the passive voice, when they were talking about their achievements. It was observed that the students showed lapses in their concentration and focus, as well as a drop in their levels of fun and excitement. I reflected in my research journal:

Today's lesson came as a bit of a disappointment to me, but at the same time there were many lessons to be learnt. I found out that I am still capable of making some rather rookie mistakes, but there were also some reasons as to why they happened. First the students were rather 'cold' when I got them to do the activity. Not cold standoffish but cold as in their engines had not yet started. This resulted in a slow start to the activity, and I noted that the students were not properly engaged in the activity until after about 10 minutes into the lesson. (Research journal 24.4.13)

From this I deduced that they had not been properly warmed up, and that even after more than a decade of teaching, this was still a rookie mistake that I had carelessly done. This had been a lesson that had started slightly later than scheduled and I had had concerns over task completion. As a result I had foregone a more physical warming up session in favour of light elicitation of the students' knowledge of Mensa, which they had come across in the textbook lesson prior to the drama class. This decision had impacted on the students' ability to fully participate in the drama. The class teacher also voiced a similar concern in our post class discussion:

“I thought the lesson was good overall, but I think the students needed to get warmed up first before an activity like this. Do you remember the mirror reflection exercise we did last week? That worked really well, and the students were engaged from the start right until the end” (Post-lesson interview 24.4.13)

This feedback and reflection on action prompted me to reprioritise physical warm-ups in my practice, and that any drama lesson would benefit greatly from physical warming up, instead of purely relying on oral exercises.

## Energy flow

In my practice, I have found that there is a certain flow of energy that radiated by both the teacher and the student, and that if the energy fluctuation is charged on one side it has the power to resonate with the other. In Frame 2, I make a note of how I was disheartened by what I had perceived to be a lack of enthusiasm from the students in the first lesson. Although both the teacher and student have to power to affect each other's energies, I realised that as an education professional, it was important for me to acknowledge that the onus fell almost exclusively on my shoulders to make it work. The energy level had

to be pitched at the right level from me, taking care to maintain the energy flow and transmit it to the students. Patrick et al. (2000, p. 219) refer to the term intrinsic motivation in both student and teacher when talking about the transmission of positive energy, where “a student’s intrinsic motivation can be facilitated through the mere perception that the teacher is intrinsically motivated”. Another term that can be associated with the teacher’s positive energy is teacher enthusiasm, and this has been shown in education literature to affect such criteria as students’ achievement (Brigham, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 1992, as cited in Patrick et. al., 2000), instructional behaviour (Kunter et al., 2008), and student engagement (Turner et al., 2002).

However, I propose that the term ‘energy flow’ also differs from enthusiasm. This is because I have found that even though I am enthusiastic, if the lesson was not planned as effectively as it could have been, the energy that I radiated was not fully reciprocated. I use an example from a follow-up lesson to the relatively unsuccessful ‘Mensa lesson’ (L6 on Table 1) that I have mentioned above. In the follow-up lesson (L8 on Table 1), the students were asked to resume their Mensa characters to give an acceptance speech, in line with a prescribed speech-giving activity in the textbook. This lesson was taught as an integrated approach lesson, where I took the role of the TiR Mensa chairman, who welcomed the members (the Students in Role) back for their award acceptance speeches in front of thousands of their peers. To transmit the required language components to the students for them to accomplish their task, I worked with the class teacher to insert a language-learning adjunct. In the adjunct, the class teacher was required to play the part of a TiR famous speech coach. In theory, this should have enabled the teaching of specific language forms that could not ideally be transmitted by me due to my role as the chairman. Up until this point, I had gauged the energy level in the room to be excellent, as I had previously warmed up the students with visualisation and physical exercises to prepare them for their task. However, as soon as I introduced the class teacher as the speech coach and called him to take the stage, something that I had not anticipated happened; the class teacher took the textbook and started teaching the forms *as himself*, the language teacher, and not the Teacher in Role, and immediately, I sensed that the energy flow of the lesson had dissipated. The students fell back to their default behaviour of normal students in a normal classroom, and learnt the target language in the form of a learning drill. This reaction prompted me to reflect on the reason for the ebb in the students’ energy flow. I came to the conclusion that it was because in the transmission model that had crystallised in the previous Frame, I had shifted out of my TiR character to prompt language learning sections without sacrificing the energy or momentum that the students had acquired in the lesson. Further reflection suggested that my energy flow as the TiR and that of the adjunct teacher needed to be synchronised before control of the lesson was handed to the teacher of the language adjunct. In other words, if the lesson had been built to a level where the students were laughing and happy, the adjunct teacher needed to be *in sync* with the mood and adjust his teaching style accordingly. In order to achieve *simpatico*, part of the teachers being in sync with each was a matter of better communication between them, as well as being able to gauge the ambient mood of the room.



## Analysis of written output

As stated above, I had felt that the students were responding well to the drama sessions, and seemed to be learning the target language well. However, I wanted to see if I could obtain more information about how well they were learning, to affirm that I was on the right track. Along with my observations and the students' responses during their interviews, an analysis of the students' written work also provided me with a more sensitive litmus test to gauge my interpretation of how well the students responded to my teaching programme. In retrospect, although I felt that I had marked and analysed the students' written output in Frame 2 as an English teacher would have done, my reflection-on-action suggested that I was missing a formalised system of analysis. I felt that I needed an indicator that would give me enough freedom to apply impressionistic marking to the written output, but at the same time was rigid enough to contain a generalisable structure.

To do this, I experimented with using the Jacobs Scale (Jacobs et al., 1981), which I applied to the output of three writing tasks in this case study. Additionally, to assess the 'artistic' aspect of writing that was missing from the Jacobs Scale, I added three extra criteria – aesthetics, creativity, and relation to drama, to form what I call a Modified Jacobs Scale for Dramatic Activity (refer to Appendix 1). Due to the limitations imposed on the conditions of the study, I found that it was not possible to obtain consecutive writing samples from the same students to compare any changes in learning. As a way around this, I analysed each output as a standalone, to gauge the displayed proficiency of the students, how much creativity and aesthetics had gone into creating the output, and how much their output related to the drama activities that they had undergone. The scores with which I rated the students helped to provide me with an insight into which areas the students excelled in, and which areas they needed to develop. Two examples of how this was done can be seen in Samples 4a and 4b below. As mentioned in the description of the integrated approach lesson above, the students were asked to write a magazine article based on their experiences in the food festival that they had developed in the dramatic activity.

I felt that I also needed a yardstick to measure from, to assure myself that I was not too far removed from the standards that were accepted by my teaching community. I wanted to ensure some form of standardisation and consistency of the scores in the analysis of the written work. To achieve this, two samples of each writing task were marked by a second marker, who was also an experienced ESL/EFL practitioner. Samples 4a and 4b were the two samples that had been randomly chosen to be marked by the second marker. Before the samples were given to the second marker, I carried out a training session using one sample script, where the second marker was made familiar with the rubrics. I utilised Facebook chat as a real-time communication channel with the second marker, and she was able to provide me with real time feedback. In her first run, her marks differed by 1 point in almost all the criteria, except for the bottom three. I gathered that this was because I had not properly briefed her on the students' proficiency level and the background of teaching unit and learning activity. I immediately rectified this by providing her with the required information, but was careful not to force her to change anything by first asking

what level her students were (the basis on which she was marking), and telling her that the students that I was working with were intermediate – upper intermediate. Additionally I provided certain pictures for some of the activities (for example Image 6 above) and did a step-by-step explanation of the lessons so she could obtain a clearer picture of the activities that I had done with the students.

After this briefing, the second marker refined her marking and ended up with a score closer to mine. This was done without me telling her how I scored the student. Subsequently, she continued to mark Sample 4b, and continued to mark two random scripts from each task. The marks that she gave have been highlighted in the brackets in blue in the samples.

The objectives of the Writing Task 3 were for the students to: i) write a magazine article in a creative and interesting way; ii) use relevant vocabulary from unit; iii) use relevant grammar items from unit; and iv) relate the article to the drama activity. The following are written samples from the students' work in Writing Task 3.

#### THE FOOD FESTIVAL OF A LIFETIME

Today, I report about the most strange food festival in the world. It's called "Fish Fight Festival", which took place in Ryoshi village. Ryoshi village is a **tiny** village, and the inhabitants make it their profession to fishery. The **bizarre** festival held on the first Saturday of May. I took a ship which fare is free for the festival to go there. I found a big statue immediately after I got off the ship. I couldn't understand what the statue symbolizes at first. One of the festival staff explained the meaning of it to me. The statue was shaped like two fishes, two mermaid, and a person. The motto "Find your fish side" was placed at the front of the statue. A person observe two fishes to find her "fish side", and a mermaid, which already found her "fish side", have a fight. Actually the visitors have to fight with a great number of people by the unusual way. They used fishes as arms [weapons - *\*researcher's comment!*] It's really strange spectacle that I have ever seen. After that, they felt **exhausted** with fighting, they returned to the sea. Because they should have found their "fish side" through the battle. If you want to face your "fish side", it's a good way to join the Fish Fight Festival.

#### Scale

Content – 3(3)	Organisation – 3(3)	Vocabulary – 3(3)
Language use – 2(2)	Mechanics – 3(2)	Aesthetics – 3(3)
Creativity – 3(3)	Relation to drama – 4(3)	

\* score in brackets denotes score from second marker

#### Sample 4a: Writing Task 3 – by Ayaka

In the first sample, Ayaka displayed a slightly above average range of marks according to the modified Jacobs scale. The content was relevant and the composition was organised in a way that flowed well. In terms of the vocabulary, it was interesting to note that Ayaka had managed to insert three words (in bold) that had been part of the vocabulary sections she had done in class, and she had managed to use them in

the correct context. This led me to the probability that she had mastered the three learnt lexical items. Additionally, she used words such as ‘inhabitants’ and ‘spectacle’, which were lexical items that were not in the most common group of words. Her language use and mechanics were not her strong points, and the marks given reflect this. However, in terms of the aesthetics and creativity, both the second marker and I had found that Ayaka had put in the effort to make her writing interesting and creative, giving a relatively pleasant reading experience to the reader.

Next, I scored Ayaka highly in terms of how the writing related to the preceding drama activity. She had utilised some core ideas that had been displayed during the drama – the sculpture, the motto, and the vignettes that they had created, and had combined it all neatly within the brief of the writing task. The design of the instrument did not allow for isolation of variables and thus it was not possible for me to determine whether or not the drama programme was the main contributor to the students’ achievement. However, as a litmus test, it did suggest that I was on the right track with this particular student, and that the drama programme, working in conjunction with the EFL programme offered by the school, appeared to be effective in promoting task completion and creativity. This insight shed some light onto my research questions regarding student proficiency in the course of the drama programme.

#### THE FOOD FESTIVAL OF A LIFETIME

One of the most **bizarre** food festival in the whole world. That’s how a seafood fight festival from a Japanese humble village is gaining media exposure in an uncountable number of countries.

Food Monthly had the opportunity to participate and will tell you the myth, the combats of this traditional festival.

First of all, if you are one of those who doesn’t like the **pungent** smelling of a fish this festival **isn’t for you**.

It all started 200 years when 2 fishermen started to fight for the last fish caught. A legend widely spread out, not only in the village, says that a mermaid enchanted the 2 poor men for its own pleasure.

Since then, every year, lots of people go there and replay the original fight followed by a **hilarious** native dance called Rasuto Twist.

After that, traditional Japanese dishes are prepared with the remaining fish used in the combats.

I tried and I must confess I threw all up.

That’s the tradition real meaning

#### Scale

Content – 3(3)

Language use – 3(3)

Organisation – 4(3)

Mechanics – 3(3)

Vocabulary – 4(4)

Aesthetics – 4(3)

**Sample 4b:** Writing Task 3 – by Ronaldo

In the second sample, Ronaldo, a Brazilian student, shows much better control over his content and organisation, though his ideas could have been developed a little more. I found that the highlighted vocabulary (in bold) were also interesting choices, in that they were generally different to the ones in the previous sample. To begin, all of the lexical items and phrases highlighted were found in the unit, and this suggested to me that Ronaldo had acquired the target language in previous classes. On top of that, the choice of the lexical items and phrases seemed to be more targeted at enabling Ronaldo to express himself in a more colourful way. Next, although content could have been developed more, he presented an article that had greater aesthetic value, and displayed greater creativity by including a backstory to the festival, which suggested that they had been developed by the sculpture and the vignettes of the drama activity.

In short, the samples implied to me that both students had displayed learning of the unit in terms of the vocabulary, the theme, and also incorporated the drama activity to add a creative edge that made the magazine article interesting to read. This implication lends an insight into the first sub-question of the research, which was in terms of the changes in the students' language proficiency after undergoing the drama programme. I found that drama could in fact raise the students' proficiency, with the added advantage of the students working on their creativity and aesthetics. Moreover, in relation to what I learnt as an experimental drama in ELT practitioner, I surmised that this implication also suggested that these elements of language acquisition and dramatic uptake were also generalisable to the other units in the drama programme. These steps that I had taken in staging the textbook had been trialled in two different contexts, using the following steps as the general guidelines: i) refer to syllabus for key points to be focused on; ii) 'distil' the key points and look for context-setting opportunities such as story, tension, and characters and ask questions such as: Is there a story? Is there a pivotal point where the story can be devised (e.g. event, theme, or topic)? Who are the characters and what makes them interesting? Are any problems that can be created from the context? Can the problems lead to discussion-based activities?; and finally iii) overlap or *stage* the dramatic context over the distilled language points. Although each teaching context is different, these guidelines enabled me to replicate certain steps across different research contexts and across different themes and topics.

### Comprehensible input - output loop

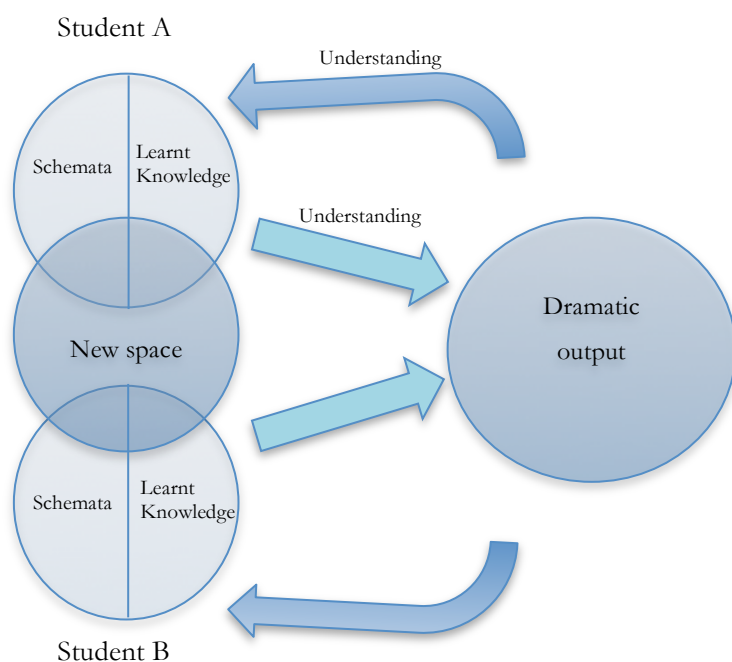
Different drama processes may have different learning outcomes, and may draw on different learning skills. However, in the course of my teaching in the three Frames, I came to a realisation that there had to be some middle ground to where drama pedagogies, or drama activity in general, can affect language learning. In the following reflective analysis, I have based the discussion on the technique that I employed

the most in the course of Frame 3, and also on more than a few occasions in the previous two Frames, which was using freeze frames (tableau) in a dramatic context.

I observed that in order to create the freeze frames the students had to first understand the context. These components of understanding spread across a wide range, among them mainly the understanding of meaning; understanding of vocabulary; and understanding of grammatical structure, all of which converge into language proficiency/competence. Next, in my perception, these components of understanding would be achieved across several layers: the first layer would come from their own understanding of the text using past experience (schemata); and the second layer would come from what they actually learnt and understood in class through the teaching and learning activities initiated by the teacher. I was able to theorise these two layers from the theory learnt in initial teacher training. However, the third layer was one that required more thought into how the schema and learnt knowledge of individual students came together in the collaborative process of creating freeze frames.

A particular example comes to mind in a freeze frame that a group of two Korean and two Brazilian students had to create a freeze frame about how they saw the word “mind”. While observing this group I realised that the Koreans and the Brazilians started their discussion referring to different parts of the body. The Koreans placed their palms on their hearts, and the Brazilians placed their index fingers at the side of their heads. This initial difference between the students prompted them to initiate a discussion to understand how their differences were brought about, and how they would navigate through these differences to create a freeze frame that was acceptable to both parties. In essence, the students engaged in a third layer of comprehension through the collaborative process, from a shared *new space*, where the students’ schemata and the knowledge that they each learnt in the lesson poured into a space where they melded and took shape in the forming of the freeze frames.

In trying to understand the complex interplay between these layers of understanding above, I created the figure below.



**Figure 10a:** Loop of understanding using the *new space*

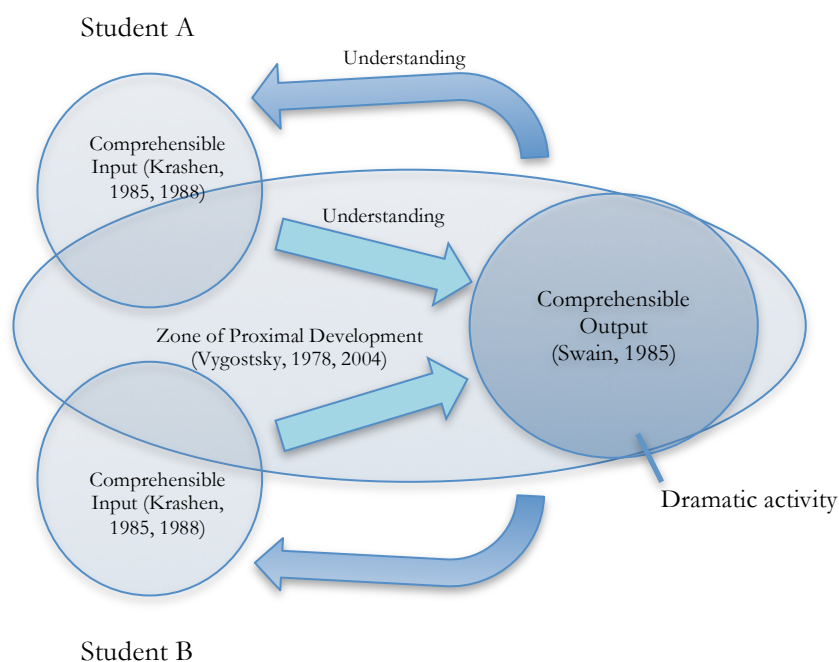
The example that was cited above came from a difference between cultural concepts of the same word, which was resolved in the process of creating the dramatic output (i.e. during the discussion). This reflection prompted me to ask a further question: would the output itself have the potential to facilitate comprehension/understanding in the student participants?

To unpack this question I used the same example above, where the students are in the *new space*, navigating through the meaning of the word 'mind'. Here, although it can be argued that the difference is one of cultural-based semantic variation, I have chosen to limit the scope of accuracy in the meaning of 'mind' to one that pertains to the brain, instead of the heart. This decision was made based on the general usage of the word in English-speaking countries, as well as the unit in which the word was introduced, which talked about the differences in the brain between men and women. Because of this, the definition taken by the Koreans was seen as inaccurate, being a direct translation of the Korean language, and was one that required rectification. This process of rectification was observed in the tableau-making session mentioned above, where the Brazilians suggested a freeze frame with their index fingers pointing to their heads. In my understanding, this freeze, although not the finalised version, had already become part of the output process. After a short period of initial confusion shown by the Koreans, they engaged in dialogue, trying to make sense of the output that was shown. Subsequently, they reached an understanding, which could have only been achieved by being exposed to comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985, 1988; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). This example of the difference in the understanding of words and concepts generated a number of questions about the interrelationship of connotations and words, and how different languages use words. Though I do not pursue these further queries here, they still tantalise me as a language teacher

who has a keen interest in how languages work. However, at the moment, these questions lay outside my scope of inquiry.

I sought to better comprehend the relationships between the layers of understanding in the collaborative process of creating the freeze frame. To do this, I delved back into the literature on second language learning. Krashen (1985, 1988) talks about comprehensible input in his Input Hypothesis, where students acquire language skills when they are exposed to input that is placed just one step up from their current level of comprehension. This is shown in the equation  $i+1$ , where ‘ $i$ ’ represents the most recently acquired linguistic and extra-linguistic knowledge, and the ‘+1’ being just a level above it (Krashen, 2003). As well as the role of input, language teachers cannot discount the role of output in language learning. In the strictest sense of the term, especially where language learning is concerned, output usually refers to the Output Hypothesis theorised by Swain (1985), where she theorises that there is no better way to display acquisition of input (linguistic or otherwise) than to produce the knowledge in a productive way, whether it is “explaining a concept to someone (i.e. teaching)...or in the case of language learning getting even a single idea across, and doing so...he might try out for that he had not used before” (Zhang, 2009). However, in reflection on my drama lessons, I suggest that this definition can and should encompass other forms of output that may not overtly seem to be linguistic in nature, such as creating a drama form. So in the case of the Output Hypothesis, the students need to have had comprehensible input (by its very definition, knowledge that has been learnt) for them to meet the specifications of the task to create the drama form (producing output). Because each student may enter the task at a different level based on their understanding, they negotiate meaning and try to achieve equilibrium (i.e a level playing field where all the players have shared all the required knowledge to complete a task) in the Zone of Proximal Development – the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978, 2004); and only when they have done this can they create the drama form. This complex interplay of negotiation of meaning was observed in the example of the ‘mind’ above. In the process of achieving equilibrium the students would have needed to understand specific vocabulary, sentence structures and meaning pertinent to the task. If there are gaps in knowledge in one of the students, then it can be filled during the process of making the drama form, or even from the comprehensible output found in the actual drama form itself; both components fall into the same ZPD.

I propose that the relationship between output and input is almost identical to Figure 10a above, with the exception of adding a second language acquisition (SLA) lens on top. Figure 10a can be juxtaposed on a language-learning/language acquisition framework as seen in Figure 10b below.



**Figure 10b:** Comprehensible input-output loop

The example describes how creating freeze frames in a dramatic context affects language learning. However, I also propose that the same concepts could apply to most of the kinds of dramatic form I discussed earlier.

## Closing the chapter

This Frame focused more on the central research question that ran through the thesis: What have I learned, as an ELT practitioner, about the use and impact of drama pedagogies? As I was completing the fieldwork that is reported here, I also looked back on all my experiences that had encompassed my learning journey, particularly those of the Christchurch intermediate school, and the secondary school in Malaysia. The techniques that I had used throughout the teaching programme were those that had initially been learnt, trialled and developed in the preceding case studies as described in the Frames 1 and 2. With the process of refining these techniques through the reflective process, some insights emerged, identifying places where I felt relatively confident, where I felt added on to what I had previously learnt, and where there remained challenges in my continuing learning of drama pedagogies. In the process of completing the fieldwork, I found that certain drama techniques were more universally applicable to my teaching contexts as an ELT practitioner. These included the use of freeze frames and its variations, using Teacher in Role, and staging a layer of process drama on top of textbook sections. The reactions to these techniques among the students, not only in this Frame, but in also in the other preceding Frame, were positive in nature. However, the ease of how the students became acclimatised to them was to a very large degree dependent on their cultures, and as discussed in the Frame, their level of experiences.



As I approached the completion of this phase of my learning journey, my reflective questioning began to shift from what I had learnt as an ELT practitioner who was experimenting to use drama pedagogies, to one of a teacher trainer who would venture out to impart what he had learnt to other people. What would be the ways in which other teachers could benefit from what I had learnt? How could the learning I had acquired be used to benefit the language acquisition process of language students in general, and Malaysian ESL students in particular? These questions were among those that I hope to address in the final concluding chapter of this thesis.

# Chapter 8:

## Conclusion

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As an ELT practitioner and a teacher trainer, I began this study with the notion of finding alternative or supplementary teaching methodologies that could enhance the teaching of ESL in the Malaysian context. This notion arose from the weaknesses that I had perceived in ESL teaching in my own experiences as a student in the secondary ESL classroom, and later as an ESL teacher, and finally a teacher trainer in Malaysia. These perceived weaknesses were also substantiated by studies conducted by Nalliah and Thiyagarajah (1999), Hazita et al. (2010), and Carol Ong Teck Lan et al. (2011), where it was found that the standard of English was facing a continuous decline, and that many Malaysian school leavers were unable to communicate well in tertiary education, as well as in the job market. Within my own teaching context (Nawi, 2005), the problems that were identified were that: i) the majority of the students did not get enough comprehensible language input (Krashen, 1982); ii) the surrounding environment was not conducive in practising English as it is not generally used in everyday life; and that iii) teachers were biased to more 'traditional' forms of teaching, which usually meant teacher in the front and student sitting down facing their books (Nawi, 2008).

This led to my journey into the investigation of the use of drama in education, initially drawing on drama techniques to teach language such as those taught by Maley and Duff (1983), and Wessels (1987), and subsequently experimenting with more advanced techniques used in various forms of process drama such as those proposed by Heathcote and Bolton (1995), Kao and O'Neill (1998), Miller and Saxton (2004), and Greenwood (2005). As the research unfolded, a research paradigm began to crystallise as I engaged in continuous cycles of self-reflection and evaluation on the development of my own understanding of applying drama pedagogies in the language classroom. I was carrying out reflective practice (M. Griffiths & Tann, 1992; Zwozdiak-Myers, 2011).

The central research question that bound the whole study was: What have I learned, as an ELT practitioner, about the use and impact of drama pedagogies?

To guide me in answering this research question, several sub-questions emerged, and these were:

What are changes that in the students' level of English proficiency after undergoing a drama in ESL course?

What are the changes in the students' level of English language appropriacy after undergoing a drama in ESL course?

What is the level of engagement in the students while undergoing a drama in ESL course?

What changes have I made, am making, and have still to make in my practice?

In navigating this research journey, I investigated three projects in different contexts, as well as different stages of my own personal and professional development. In the first stage of research, I was an apprentice in learning to use drama in teaching ESF/EFL. This apprenticeship was an amalgamation of different learning events that included attending workshops and drama classes; planning and presenting drama workshops; attending and presenting at drama and language teaching conferences, and other similar activities. These learning events also enabled me to learn and exchange ideas from contemporary drama educators such as Greenwood, O'Connor, O'Toole, Miller and Saxton, Dunn, Stinson, and Winston, to name a few. Frame 1 reports the work that formed the bulk of my apprenticeship, learning how to teach using drama under an experienced drama practitioner for the duration of two and a half months. In my ITE, I had already had some exposure to using drama to teach language, but as I delved deeper into my learning journey, I discovered that although I had been equipped with tools, they were akin to a penknife in an operation theatre, where the scalpel was a better tool for the job. The study reported in Frame 1 offers a reflective analysis by a language practitioner mapping the development of his understanding on the types of drama techniques that could be used to teach ESL/EFL in a New Zealand ESOL context. Here, the study also contributes to the developing body of literature on the application of drama pedagogies in New Zealand ESOL.

The second project is divided into two sections, reported in two Frames. The first section reports the pilot study of applying drama pedagogies in ESL in the Malaysian context. The second section provides an account of the reflective analysis of the main teaching programme carried out in the same context, four months after the completion of the pilot. The value of this project is that it provides an example of how an ESL practitioner uses the learning from prior cycles of reflective enquiry to experiment and gain confidence in using drama pedagogies. This project is of particular relevance to using alternative teaching pedagogies, specifically drama pedagogies, in teaching ESL in the Malaysian context. It is also relevant to Malaysian language teaching in general, as it also proposes some views on the role of first language translation in CLT-dominated Malaysian classroom.

The third project is one where I had developed more confidence in applying drama pedagogies in ESL/EFL, and tracks the enrichment process of teaching methodologies crystallised from the previous two projects. The work is relevant as it presents a streamlined form of the methodologies that were applied in adult EFL education in the New Zealand context. Seen through second language acquisition (SLA) lens, the reflective analysis of the project proposes how drama forms contribute to students' understanding of language through the comprehensive input-output loop created in the *new space*.

As key components of my learning journey, through the lens of reflective practice, these three projects offer substantial insights into the development of my understanding in applying drama pedagogies in

ESL/EFL learning. Some of the findings arising from this research have also been reported in earlier publications, which are in Nawi (2013) and Nawi (2014).

## **Behind the art: insights from the Frames**

### **Favoured drama techniques**

As an ELT practitioner, I am primarily concerned with acquiring drama techniques that enhance my teaching. In the drama pedagogies that had been used and acquired throughout the study, the following are the techniques and their variations (though not limited to these) that were found most beneficial to my needs in the language classroom.

Initially the concept of process drama to teach English was one that I was unable to grasp at the beginning of my PhD candidature. In my ITE, I had been trained in the use of many drama techniques that were based on Maley and Duff (1983), which had many similarities with the work taught by Wessels (1987) and Di Pietro (1983). These were excellent drama tools in their own right and I had found that using them in my ESL classes greatly increased student motivation and supported language acquisition (Nawi, 2005). However, sustaining the use of role in the teacher and students throughout various connected activities had not occurred to me based on the training of my ITE alone. The works of Greenwood (2005), Heathcote (1995) and Miller and Saxton (2004) among others opened my mind to the possibilities of teaching in a more substantial drama environment where learning could occur in the context of the drama, as well as taking the drama techniques and injecting them in the language classroom that I had been previously exposed to. The teacher and students work in various roles, where they explore a situation or a problem, and through several dramatic activities work toward a resolution (O'Neill, 1995). However, using process drama specifically in an ESL context with specific language learning objectives is a field that saw a limited amount of documented research (with perhaps the exception of Kao, 1995, and Kao and O'Neill, 1998), until a resurgence after the new millennium (see Piazzoli, 2011; Stinson, 2009; Stinson & Freebody, 2006; Stinson & Winston, 2011) among others). Furthermore, prior to this research, only one single study has been done on the application of process drama, and drama pedagogies that carried similar principles of process drama in the Malaysian ESL context (see Samat, 2010). My research is the second that documents the use of process drama in Malaysian ESL, and the first to employ a reflective practice lens of analysis.

Within the frame of process drama was the central use of Teacher in Role (TiR) and Students in Role (SiR), which featured extensively in the accounts of Frames 2 and 3. The acquisition of this technique came mostly from critical reflection on the actions of the drama mentor in Frame 1, where it was observed to increase student engagement in the dramatic context. The application of TiR and SiR in Frame 2 yielded very interesting results in the Malaysian context that had to do with navigating cultural discourse, which will be discussed in more detail in a following section.

Hot-seating was also another favoured drama technique that was synonymous with many process dramas. This technique allowed for the use of TiR and SiR to be developed, as more context is collaboratively built through the process of asking and answering questions. In the language learning classroom, this particular drama technique was useful to teach and practice language pertaining to question forms. In Frame 2, the introduction and discussion of these language forms was taught collaboratively between the drama teacher and the ESL teacher.

Subsequently, three forms of collaborative acting that were controlled by time-manipulation, namely freeze frames, vignettes, and sketches, were also favoured as favoured methods; in particular the focus on creating freeze frames.

### **The artist and the teacher**

Another dimension that I had to consider in reference to teaching using the drama techniques mentioned above was that decisions constantly had to be made between teaching them as an *art form*, and teaching them as tools to develop language skills. The questions that were always present in the reflective cycles were: How much time and effort do I want to spend to make sure that the students mastered the art form? How accomplished do I want to be in the development of their artistry? An example I had given in Frame 1 was that of making freeze frames, where I accepted the students' offerings as long as I had considered them 'adequate' for the purposes of the lesson. However, if the emphasis of teaching the drama technique had been to make a good freeze frame, for example, being 'adequate' or doing 'just enough' would have been less acceptable. In this case, the students would have had to develop other abilities in creating artful freeze frames, for example facial expressions, point of impact, levels in the relationship between each piece, and so on. Figure 4 shows the dynamic slider between drama skills development and language skills development, where I found that a shift in balance would lead to better acquisition of one, but lesser development of the other. In reflection, I found that there were many times when I felt that I needed to prioritise the language learning objectives of the lesson over its drama objectives, and that this priority was brought about by my core business of being an ELT practitioner. However, this sometimes led to a sense of personal dissatisfaction with the offerings of my students, felt by the artist part of me. Nevertheless, this dissatisfaction came with the understanding that like all art forms, development of drama techniques takes time and patience, both of which have to be navigated through daily by the ELT practitioner.

Ideally, the ELT practitioner is both teacher and artist; even more so in the context of using drama pedagogies in teaching ESL/EFL. However, the average ELT 'lay-teacher' may not have been exposed to enough of the art involved to effectively teach a second or foreign language using drama pedagogies. In the course of this study, both of the teacher-collaborators had not used drama in their teaching, even though they had had prior experience to drama. With the New Zealand collaborating teacher, although he had not had prior training in using drama pedagogies in the language classroom, he had very little difficulty in connecting his theatrical background once he started working with me. However, the

Malaysian collaborating teacher had a more difficult time in seeing how she could use drama pedagogies in teaching her students, even though she had gone through a basic course in using drama in ESL in her ITE. Upon reflection, I found this to be, at least in part, due to the different cultural backgrounds they were from, and the different cultures in which they taught. The training that the New Zealand collaborating teacher had undergone had a bigger focus on being the artist, and this translated well into his teaching career, teaching adult learners English proficiency classes. However, the Malaysian collaborating teacher had trained primarily as a teacher, and had ‘dipped into’ the art through a series of once a week classes for a semester, before heading out to teach in an education system that was heavily biased on passing examinations. These conditions made her forego her training in drama in her teaching prior to her collaboration with me, and also slowed down her uptake and adoption of the drama techniques that I showed her. Nevertheless, in the follow-up telephone interviews, the teacher indicated that she was still using parts of the drama pedagogies that she had learnt, which showed me that the teacher can be taught to be an artist, but requires time and plenty of guidance, preferably using a mentor-mentee model.

### Staging the textbook

The drama pedagogies that had been acquired under the apprenticeship in Frame 1 culminated into a form that was relevant to teaching ESL in the Malaysian context. As reported in Frame 2.2, a central challenge that had to be contended with in the Malaysian context was that the teaching work had to cover the stipulated syllabus, where these items in the syllabus would be tested as part of the district-wide standardised tests the students had to face. Designing the *staging the textbook* methodology required several components. First, the textbook section to be used for the teaching programme needed to be distilled. The key focuses of the language and skills to be learnt were identified, along with the relevant vocabulary and themes that were to be covered. It was found beneficial to include the collaborating class teachers in the planning stages of the programme because they were usually in the best place to suggest the learning areas that were needed by the students, or ones that needed to be covered before an examination. When staging the textbook, I also found that it was easier to design the drama section of the programme if the textbook was sufficiently ‘dry’. This meant that the less rich the textbook in terms of story, context and characters, the easier it was for me to stage a layer of drama on top of it. The elements that I normally added on top of the textbook were usually to do with enriching the context in which the texts were situated. To this effect, when designing the drama I looked for context-setting opportunities, potential for a story, potential for tension or complication, and the target language elements that had to be incorporated in the drama. In setting the context, some of the questions that were asked were: Is there a story?; Is there a pivotal point where a story can be devised (e.g event, theme, topic etc); Are there any problems that can be created and solved?; Can the problems lead to discussion-based activities? (Nawi & Greenwood, 2012).

Next, another choice that had to be made was in the transmission of the target language and skills, from the text to the student. To this effect, a transmission model of teaching language through drama

pedagogies crystallised, initially comprising three approaches: i) the adjunct approach, where the main teaching methodology was as in a communicative ESL classroom taught by the ESL teacher, with the drama teacher adding on a drama adjunct to complement the lesson; ii) the integrated approach, which was closer to the process drama methodology, and language was taught by the TiR; and iii) the integrated adjunct approach, which bridged the other two approaches, where the teacher and students were allowed to slip out of character should the need to clarify or teach language arise. However, in further discussion in Frame 3, it became apparent that even in an integrated approach lesson, there were still moments where the teacher and students stepped out of role to discuss language, and that shifts in role should not be something to be scared of, as they happened naturally in the drama classroom. This led to the streamlining of the approaches under the transmission model, where the integrated adjunct approach and the integrated approach were combined under the latter label.

With the application of staging the textbook in Frame 2.2, the reflections suggested that staging a layer of drama on top of the prescribed texts did not culminate in more time spent on teacher planning time than that of a normal well-planned CLT lesson. Additionally, Frame 2.2 suggested that the students had not sacrificed learning content from the syllabus, as the prescribed syllabus was covered in the course of drama teaching programme.

### **Translation and task completion**

The acceptance of using L1 in an L2 classroom has long been debated (Bruhlmann, 2012; Cook, 2013; Kaneko, 1992), with one end of the spectrum advocating full translation into L1, and the other a full aversion of L1 translation. In the Malaysian project, one of the most pertinent themes to emerge from the data was the need for L1 translation, both on the side of the teacher and the students. It was found that the students incessantly felt that they needed the teachers to translate the instructions and the texts in order for them to be able complete and understand the task. The interviewed teachers, on the other hand, felt that they needed L1 translation as a crutch to ensure that the students understood what they needed to do. Frames 2.1 and 2.2 suggest that the crutch of teacher translation can be significantly reduced if the students are supplied with enough context, clearly enunciated and clarified teacher talk, and coping drama strategies. However, reducing the need for teacher translation did not seem to correlate with reducing the need to revert back to L1 as the students were working on the collaborative learning activities that were given to them by the teacher. Critical reflection on the data in Frames 2.1 and 2.2 (in a Malaysian ESL classroom) where English is taught using drama pedagogies, strategic use of the students' L1 improves task completion.

In the discussion in the Frames, I used the analogy of three highly sensitive light bulbs that represent the three components of a drama in ESL lesson: drama, content, and language (refer to Figure 7). For the transmission of knowledge and skill to work, the electrical current needs to flow through these bulbs. As described in Frame 2.2, there is a balance between how much conductivity of the operational language should be permitted, as too much focus on the language would reduce the focus on task completion, and

*vice versa*. This insight suggests that there is merit in allowing L1 translation for the students, though not as a blanket rule. The Frames recommend that teachers should abstain from L1 translation and increase the development of context, enunciate clearly, and provide coping strategies (for example the use of a TiR translator). However, students should be permitted to discuss the texts and their tasks in their L1, though the use of English should be encouraged. This is because in a drama in ESL class, the students have to contend with both language uptake (leading to language acquisition), and dramatic uptake (leading to acquisition of drama technique), as described in Frame 1. As the students' language proficiency and proficiency in drama increase, they should be able to scaffold their own learning more, and decrease the resistance in the conductivity of their operational language. It is hoped that this should result in less dependence on L1 translation, even among themselves.

### **Role, protection and empowerment**

As stated previously, the use of role in drama in ESL classroom featured prominently in the teaching programmes described in all the Frames; the first Frame being the introduction to working with TiR and SiR under the mentorship of the Lead teacher, and the following Frames being the application of working with role in my own practice. Using role allowed the teacher and the students to work in an immersive environment, where their actions did not represent their own personal beliefs and personalities, but reflected those of the characters they inhabited. In Frame 1 the female students responded with great care and concern towards the TiR who played the role of an old lady who had gone through much trauma, which appeared to enable them to connect better with the role and the dramatic context that they were in. In Frame 2.2, the student participants reported that the use of teaching in role offered them protection from harsh criticism from the TiR over a job that they had not done well. In the Frame, I offer a critical reflection seen through a cultural lens, where the concept of *berkat* (blessing) plays a monumental role in how the students perceived their teachers. Using role in the classroom allowed a sense of double buffering, where both interacting parties were shielded from the other's true persona, enabling both parties to navigate through a potential cultural minefield to work towards a common goal. Another similar form of protection provided by working in role was the sharing of personal opinions without the fear of reprisal or admitting to one's own weaknesses. All the opinions were merely of characters, and not the students themselves. I propose that this form of protection is an important tool to utilise in hierarchical cultures where the preservation of personal dignity and that of cultural superiors is of utmost importance.

Nevertheless, an unseen complication was observed in the working with roles and social hierarchy. In Frame 1, the students were told to be kind and understanding to the TiR old lady in the Silence Seeker drama, which led to questions that were serious, but compassionate at the same time in the hot-seating activity. In Frame 2.2, the students were also advised to treat the TiR old man with deference and respect, which became almost counterproductive in the case of one of the participants of the focus group. The particular participant described his inability to ask questions to the old man on account of his *segan*



(reluctance to commit an act that is seen to be culturally inappropriate), which resulted from the social distance and inferiority felt towards an elder in a hierarchical society. A consideration that I propose when carrying out process drama work in the Malaysian (or similar hierarchical society) context would be to find roles that empower the student, instead of potentially incapacitate the student-participant's ability to function within the given dramatic framework. Interestingly, the very act of associating the power relationships in a process drama with one in real life suggests a deep level of engagement in the student, which affirms the effect of working in role in the language classroom.

### Language acquisition

With regard to language acquisition, a combination of various research instruments was employed to gauge whether or not students had acquired the target language and skills. In all the Frames, researcher observation and analysis of writing were used, though analysis of writing featured more prominently in Frames 1 and 3. In Frame 3, a modified Jacobs scale (Jacobs et al., 1981) was used as the basis of the research instrument, but was appended to include three criteria, aesthetics, creativity and relation to drama, to become what I labelled as a Modified Jacobs Scale for Dramatic Activity. However, the analysis of writing did not provide a complete picture on the students' language proficiency, which required the use of researcher observation obtained through first-hand classroom observation, interaction with the student participants, and through review of video data. These data were reviewed through a critical reflective lens of an ELT practitioner, cross referenced with the attainment of the drama and language objectives of the teaching units.

The data in the Frames suggest that most, if not all, of the students had acquired the target language through the drama in ESL programmes taught in the three projects, and that the language had been used in ways that were appropriate to the context the drama in which the drama was situated. This insight partially answers the first and second sub-questions of the research.

Towards the end of the third frame, a language acquisition model using drama crystallised (refer to Figures 10a & 10b), that utilised the SLA framework of Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985, 1988), Swain's (1985) Output Hypothesis, and Vygotsky's ZPD (1978, 2004). I propose that there is a loop between the process of collaboratively creating a drama form and understanding the language required to create the drama form, where the students negotiate meaning and intent in their communication until equilibrium of required language is achieved. The implication of this insight suggests that students are constantly engaging in scaffolding their language learning when carrying out a dramatic activity. However, for the cascade effect of scaffolding language, there are two considerations that have to be taken into account: i) at least one of the participants in the group needs to have achieved a certain level of understanding to achieve the task; and ii) the language transfer needs to be achieved within a set time for task completion to occur, and as discussed previously, the students should be permitted to use a reasonable amount of L1 in navigating their understanding.

## Engagement and motivation

The third research sub-question asks: what is the level of engagement in the students while undergoing a drama in ESL course? There is a progression in the discussion on student engagement as each Frame built upon the previous. In Frame 1, engagement was ascertained reflecting on the observations of the way the students carried out their tasks, as well as how they described how the drama classes were fun, and how they liked the combination of drama classes and ESOL classes in their learning.

In Frame 2, observations of the students' engagement in the drama lessons were taken from the research journals and lesson plan reflections of both the class teacher and myself. In our observations, we recorded phrases such as "most of the students seemed interested in their tasks"; "with the exception of the usual passengers in the groups, the students remained focused on completing their tasks in their discussions, even though the discussions were mostly carried out in Malay"; and "Students worked in groups and prepared their Freeze Frame. They asked questions to me as usual, like what to do, can I do this and that. This shows their engagement to this activity". Additionally, our journal entries and lesson plan reflections indicated that many of the students were interested in the stories of the fictional contexts of the dramas, which was corroborated with a focus group interview where the student participants expressed their curiosity towards the ending of a particular storyline in the drama unit.

Frame 3 provided the opportunity for further development of the process of researcher observation. In this Frame, I ventured to create a research instrument that was more transparent, having clearer criteria of engagement. In order to achieve this, the Jones' Student Engagement Walkthrough Checklist (Jones, 2009) was used as a guide in the observation process. In order to customise the checklist to suit a drama environment, another criterion called Contextual Engagement was added to observe how well the students connected to the context of the drama activity. The data obtained from this checklist was then used as a litmus test to gauge the effectiveness of my teaching on the students' engagement and motivation levels. It was observed that the students obtained high levels of engagement and interest throughout the whole project, with the exception of two lessons; the first being the maiden lesson with drama, and the second being a lesson where the students had not been properly warmed up.

In general for all the three Frames, student engagement and interest was observed to be high. This was verified in the interview sessions with the student participants from each project.

## Student responses to using drama pedagogies in ESL/EFL

The responses from the student participants in the case studies carried out in Frames 1-3 all indicate that there was a positive reception towards using drama in the ESL classroom.

In Frame 2, a major concern that I had related to the culture of the teaching context. The students came from a culture that shared many norms with other Asian cultures of the region, where learners are often "reluctant to participate in classroom discourse, unwilling to give response, do not ask questions, and

remain passive and over-dependent on the teacher” (To et al., 2011, p. 157). Their initial response substantiated this statement, as I had found their response to using drama to be one of discomfort and resistance in the first lesson. An additional cultural challenge that I had anticipated was for there to be a sense of awkwardness or embarrassment between the students of different sexes, as religious and traditional cultures of the students prohibited direct physical contact between them. However, all the students seemed to adapt quickly to working with drama, and showed positive signs of active classroom participation starting from the second lesson. Moreover, both boys and girls showed that they were able to work with each other in the drama activities, and found ways to interact without physical contact with each other. Although these two concerns with culture were relatively easy to overcome, the students’ over-dependence on their teacher took a while longer to resolve. Upon reflection, this over-dependence was mostly due to the students’ level of language proficiency, as well as their confidence in their own ability to understand and interact in English. This cultural barrier of over-dependence on the teacher was eventually overcome by introducing rich dramatic contexts and providing them with clearly enunciated and clarified teacher talk, which illustrated the positive responses of the students to using drama pedagogies in their language classroom.

Another major challenge in designing and implementing drama pedagogies in the ESL classroom in the Malaysian context was that the teaching programme had to encompass the syllabus that the students had to cover in preparation for their examinations. According to a followup telephone conversation with the Malaysian collaborating class teacher, the students had managed to fare well in their examinations, and had managed to achieve a standard bell-curve in their marks distribution across the class. This indicated that generally, it can be assumed that the students had not lost any acquisition of content and skills in comparison to the other classes that had not been taught using drama pedagogies. However, this assumption remains a supposition at best, as the limitations on the scope of the study did not permit an experimental design in an intervention research, and as such did not include cross-referencing marks with another class that had not been taught using the drama programme. Nevertheless, the teacher reported that one of the student participants who had previously failed his English examinations in previous years had managed to pass the district-wide standardised test, an achievement which she accredited in part to the drama programme. Another indicator of the positive reception that the students in the Malaysian context had come in a focus group interview, where all the participants indicated that they preferred to be taught using drama pedagogies even in the coming year where they were to face their SPM, the national-level school-exit standardised examinations. In a culture and environment where examinations were seen as the bridge to a successful life, the impact of this admission was a powerful one to me. I took it to mean that the students in the focus group had enough faith in the drama programme that they had undergone, where they felt they had learnt what they were supposed to learn, and that they thrived in the language-learning environment provided by drama; something that the teachers in Stinson’s (2009) Singaporean study had not allowed to happen in their classes when it came time to study for the examination. However, as a reflective practitioner, I also ask myself whether I would have done the same in a similar

situation, with the students' futures riding on whether or not they had managed to learn enough of the syllabus through the drama classes to be able to effectively answer examination questions that relied heavily on whether the students were able to regurgitate the facts that they had memorised. Is there room for drama in the Malaysian context when the students are faced with national-level examinations? Or is there room for drama in the years where the students did not have to take national-level examinations (at the time of writing this thesis three years with no national-level examinations, and two years with examinations)? Would the examination-driven culture have to go through changes for students to fully thrive in their language studies under drama? These questions were a mark of some of the changes that I had made in my own practice, and the considerations that I was still exploring in my constantly evolving understanding of using drama in ESL/EFL.

### **Positionality of the research**

The use of drama in teaching language has been practiced since the past four decades (for example Holden, 1981; Maley & Duff, 1983; Parry, 1972), and in more recent times there have been published accounts of applying drama pedagogies in second language learning (for example Greenwood, 2012; Ntelioglou, 2011; Piazzoli, 2011; Stinson, 2009; Stinson & Freebody, 2006; Stinson & Winston, 2011). However, the majority of the accounts of use of drama in second language learning work have mainly come from people who are predominantly drama practitioners. The positionality of the work in this thesis is that it comes from an ELT practitioner who is exploring drama in ESL, bounded in a rural Malaysian context. In my learning journey, the drama pedagogies that I had acquired was the product of two traceable phases of scholarship. In my ITE, I was trained in the use of drama techniques as those advocated by Maley and Duff (1983), Wessels (1987) and Di Pietro (1983), among others. The second phase was my exposure to mantle of the expert (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995), and process drama (for example Greenwood, 2005; Kao, 1995; Kao & O'Neill, 1998; Miller & Saxton, 2004), that I had learnt during my apprenticeship in my PhD journey. Identification of these influences provides suggestions for further development of ESL teacher training in Malaysia in terms of learning drama pedagogies.

While other people's journeys and discoveries might be different, there are things about the process that may resonate with others. In the case of my own journey, I went through the process of becoming an apprentice, subsequently a fully experimental practitioner, and finally, at this point in time, feeling like I was beginning to be an artist-teacher. This was only achieved through finding different models of teaching I could experiment with, finding what worked and did not work, and looking through these cycles of trial and error through critical lenses. Greenwood (2013a) states that in the continuous process of critical reflection, practitioners will usually utilise several reflective lenses, and gives practical outcomes, previous practice, other practitioners' responses, and theoretical framework as examples of critical lenses. Throughout the research process, I utilised several critical lenses with which to analyse my observations and reflections. My constant interaction with the literature of the field provided me with a consistent critical lens formed by theory. However, in the earlier stages of research, especially in my apprenticeship,

a major critical lens came from my senior supervisor-cum-lead teacher in Frame 1. Moreover, to contextualise my insights, I also utilised three Malaysian lenses, the first of which was my own practice in the Malaysian context; and the second was the observations and reflections of the collaborating class teacher. The third lens came from my alignment with curriculum goals, which was the embodiment on the Malaysian National Education Philosophy.

## **Implications of the research**

### **Reflective practice in teacher training**

This research was initially started as an introspective, reflective account of the learning experience of an English language teaching practitioner who was experimenting in using drama to teach ESL/ELT. However, the knowledge acquired throughout the process of completing this research is hoped to be relevant to other researchers or practitioners who are interested in using or developing the field of drama in education, specifically in language teaching. Thus, it can be postulated that the people who would benefit most from the findings in this research would be Malaysian ESL teachers, who want to engage in different teaching methodologies to increase the repertoire of teaching strategies, and teach in a way that is designed to be engaging and interesting to the learners.

The focus on Malaysian teacher development is natural because of the contexts in which this research occurred, where I am a language practitioner and a teacher trainer in Malaysia, teaching Malaysian students and Malaysian ESL teachers. However, the account of professional learning tracked in this thesis can also be beneficial to ESL/ELT teachers in other countries in which the teaching contexts may overlap. The New Zealand context, even though unique in its own right, has the potential to overlap with other English-speaking countries that have a growing immigrant population. The discussions presented in Frames 1 and 3 in this thesis deal with students of different age groups and cultures, but they take place in a context where there is an abundance of exposure to the target language, as opposed to that of the Malaysian rural school in Frame 2. ESOL teachers in English-speaking countries may gain some insight into where they can apply drama in their teaching, and how their students can potentially benefit from interest, engagement and language acquisition.

The other major focus of this thesis lies in its research design, which is that of reflective practice. In the Malaysian ITE, ESL trainee teachers are taught a slightly limited form of reflective practice, where they are required to record their reflections on in their ESL teaching methodology course. In their reflections they are required to think on how different teaching methodologies affect the teaching and learning process (Queensland University of Technology - IPG Kampus Ilmu Khas Link Bachelor of Education Studies (Primary TEFL) Degree program, 2012). Another subject where the trainee teachers are required to note down their reflections is during their practicums, where they are required to note down how the class progressed, if they achieved their objectives, and whether there were areas where the class could

have improved. Furthermore, in a pre-practicum workshop, they are also given a task to track their development of personal growth during their practicums (Department of English Studies, 2013), which they report in their weekly self-reflection. These existing forms of reflection on practice conform with Griffiths and Tann's (1992) cycles of action, observation, analysis, and planning.

However, trainees are not normally made conscious of the different areas of awareness in reflective practice other than the criteria mentioned above. For example, these trainees could be made aware of the personal influences that are infused in their teaching. These influences may include their 'personal subject construct' that encompass their philosophical and educational leanings towards the subject they teach (Green & McIntyre, 2011), or their influencing traditions such as the academic, social efficiency, developmentalist and social reconstructionist traditions (Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Boal (1985) understood the potency of the drama form in transmitting ideals to its participants, and used his *Theatre of the Oppressed* to evoke ideas of social change. Because of its potency, teachers who use drama in the classroom need to realise and acknowledge its potential in social movement, particularly in moulding young impressionable minds at school. That is why it is important for the Malaysian teacher, and in this context the Malaysian ESL teacher, to become the living embodiment of the National Education Philosophy. Teachers need to understand *why* they are teaching as much as *what* and *how* they are teaching. In Frame 1, being aware of these influences made me contemplate why the lead teacher framed certain activities the way that she did, and how my interpretations of certain actions were different to those that the Lead had intended. This realisation led me to question the differences in perception that the students may have in relation to the objectives that were intended by the teacher. In turn this epiphany made me more sensitive to what I was teaching the students, which prompted more introspective reflection, sensitising me more to the ideals of reflective practice.

Additionally, although the training the trainee teachers receive encourages some reflection in teaching, it is rarely retained throughout a teacher's career (Interview 11.6.14 – Pn Mahani). Reflection on teaching is still encouraged when the trainees have graduated as teachers, though not a requirement in Malaysian schools. This highlights areas of that can be further developed in teacher training – one for a more structured approach to reflective practice training in ITE, where trainee teachers are guided on what sort of questions to ask themselves and what sort of observations to be on the lookout for; and two, for the perpetuation of the reflective process in their teaching careers, hopefully leading to the perpetuation of lifelong learning, as advocated in Malaysian Ministry of Education policy. It is hoped that this thesis can provide a model on which teachers can apply reflectivity in their practice, and aim to become lifelong reflective practitioners.

### **More comprehensive drama pedagogy training**

The teacher training syllabus for ESL teachers is not standardised in Malaysia, and each Teacher Training Institute (*Institut Pendidikan Guru*, or IPG) and university that offers TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language), TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) or TEYL (Teaching English to Young

Learners) designs their own training programmes. However, according to a senior teacher trainer in a Malaysian IPG, the *Queensland University of Technology - IPG Kampus Ilmu Khas Link Bachelor of Education Studies (Primary TEFL) Degree program* is currently the benchmark of English language teacher education in many IPGs and universities in Malaysia. According to another senior IPG lecturer interviewed (Interview 6.6.14), generic drama in ESL topics are in these programmes, typically covering drama techniques, role-play, and simulations. However, to date, there has not been documented research that suggests the teaching of process drama in the teacher training syllabus, which is supported by Samat's (2010) claim that her research was the first and only documented research on the use of process drama in Malaysian ESL.

Therefore, with the data and reflections offered in this study, I suggest a review of the English language teacher training syllabus on using drama pedagogies, and suggest it should feature additional drama pedagogy techniques such as process drama (as defined by O'Neill, 1995, and Kao & O'Neill, 1998), and mantle of the expert (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995), to complement the existing syllabus. Implementation of the training of Malaysian teachers to use this more comprehensive drama training programme should be carried out in their ITE. Additionally, ESL teachers already practising can be upgraded through short courses and in-house training, carried out in stages, starting with select pilot schools, working their way up to district, state, and finally national levels.

Further, the development of the staging the textbook methodology is one that should be given due consideration by teachers and teacher trainers. Although the methodology can still be considered in its infancy, it draws upon process drama, and many drama techniques that many teachers are familiar with from their ITE. The discussions in Frames 2 and 3 propose that this methodology is able to combine drama pedagogies with the language learning syllabus of the textbook units, resulting in engaging and interesting language classes for the students. Additionally, Frame 2.2 makes explicit reference to the attainment of syllabus objectives in the examination-oriented ESL classroom in the Malaysian context.

### **Developing community of practice**

Throughout the entire research process and writing up of this thesis, I had had the opportunity to apprentice under a drama educator, and was also fortunate enough to have had the support of the community of drama educators in New Zealand and Australia. This community of practice provided me with the support I needed, providing me with new ideas and innovations to teaching and carrying out drama-based research.

In Malaysia, there does exist a vibrant drama community, but it is mostly focussed on stage drama performed by drama companies. In schools, however, drama is only seen in two forms: one as a co-curricular activity in the form of school drama clubs; and the other in the form of a subsection in the literature component in the English language subject. Along with reference to the syllabus, I wanted to gain more insight into drama in Malaysian schools. This information was obtained via telephone interview

(carried out on 4.6.14) with Pn Hayati, an ESL teacher of 12 years and the advisor to the drama club in her school. Through the interview, it was confirmed that drama was not part of the teaching curriculum, and had to be done outside of normal school hours. Additionally, the drama subsection in the Literature component contained a text that was written in drama form (using dialogues), but was normally taught as the teachers that Pn Hayati had observed, broken down into plot, theme, and literary devices, normally with the aid of textbook aids. However, Pn Hayati had also indicated that because of her passion for drama, she teaches the texts in drama form, though according to her colleagues the process would take too long. This exchange provided me with several insights. First was that drama education in Malaysia is not part of the learning curriculum, but can be taught under the Malay and English language subjects. Next was that there were teachers who were involved in drama as an art form, and that this form of drama had to be sustained by the teacher's own interest and commitment outside of school hours. Subsequently, a very limited form of drama was included in the Literature component in the ESL syllabus, but was rarely taught in drama form. Furthermore, the most relevant information that I obtained from the interview was that Pn Hayati, and several teachers she knew through her drama club involvement, were interested when presented with the idea of creating a community of practice; a group of language teachers interested in drama who wanted to experiment and apply drama in their own ESL classrooms.

Noble and Henderson (2008) describe the use of the Learning Circle approach in fostering a community of learners. I propose that this approach is one that is needed in the Malaysian ESL teaching context, where the aforementioned ESL teachers and like-minded practitioners can “join together to enhance critically reflective skills, incorporate tacit knowledge and engage in dialogue to enhance their learning experiences” (Noble & Henderson, 2008, p. 2). Participation in this community of practice can provide Malaysia teachers with a support system to develop innovation in teaching, as much as the New Zealand community of practice had helped me with my own development.

## **Recommendations for future research**

The current study provided insights, through a reflective practice lens, into how using drama pedagogies affected language learning in three different contexts, namely the immigrant NZ intermediate school context, the Malaysian secondary ESL context (specifically the rural), and the NZ adult language learning context. This study combines the insights of all three Frames to gain a comprehensive understanding of teaching using drama pedagogies, with the three research contexts as examples. Future studies may consider a deeper focus on each research context, combining more research methodologies to gain a richer view of the available data. Further, to gain better understanding of the use of drama and its effectiveness in each context, a larger-scale longitudinal study should be carried out. This can be built upon the foundations of the teaching programmes of this research, such as *staging the textbook*, and expanding the research scope to observe and perhaps measure language acquisition and retention. A suggested research model can be through discourse analysis, carried out through meticulous voice and



video recording. Such research could provide another dimension to the field in terms of quantifiable data, that could complement the qualitative data of this study.

In the Malaysian context, to investigate the generalisability of applying drama pedagogies in ESL, the current research could also be widened to include urban schools, as well as school with a more representative mix of the different ethnic/cultural groups in Malaysia. There are three major racial groups in Malaysia: The ethnic Malays and other indigenous peoples who are considered to be *Bumiputra* (natives, literally ‘princes of the earth’ or its Maori equivalent the *Tangata whenua*), the ethnic Chinese, and the ethnic Indians. Some studies have shown that the different races in Malaysia do have similar cultural values (Asma, 1996; Lim & Asma, 2001), and are instilled the same national values such as those enshrined in the *Rukunegara*, or the National Principles (Jeong Chun Hai @ Ibrahim & Nor Fadzlina Nawi, 2012). However, these communities are distinct and would ideally require more representation for a more accurate study in the Malaysian context.

In the Research Methodology section, I described the use of Web 2.0 technologies such as social media as a means of both writing as a method of crystallising my thoughts, as well as a means of collecting other people’s thoughts as data, akin to data obtained from questionnaires and interviews. However, the data that I obtained were mostly from responses given my Facebook friends, and several regular readers of my research blog. Most of the responses were also given by PhD students at various stages of completion, informed outsiders from various disciplines, studying in various places around the world. This provided a rich body of knowledge from which I could draw. However, the use of social media was not extended to the student participants from the research. A future study could provide a more elaborate use of social media like Facebook to gain deeper insight into how the use of drama pedagogies was affecting the students’ learning processes and language acquisition. This could be done through the formation of private Facebook groups where only the student participants had access, and were invited to share their reflections on their lessons as the teaching programme progressed. Additionally, the versatility of using online resources allows for the teaching programme to be combined with surveys, activities and assessments, all of which could be accessed by the students from the convenience of their own homes. However, such a study would need constant supervision from the researcher to ensure the online interactions are on track, and that all the participants are in fact participating.

This study merely forms a further contribution to the foundations in the developing field of applied drama in English language learning.

## Concluding the journey

The learning journey that this thesis reports was one fraught with challenges right from the very beginning. It was a journey filled with earthquakes, cold nights without power or water, and the looming threat of devastating aftershocks. Nevertheless, it was also one of camaraderie and humanity, and one of learning and discovery.

Throughout this report of the journey, I map the insights I had learnt as an ELT practitioner who was studying the use and impact of with drama pedagogies on English language learning, through the reflections of three case studies, or Frames (the second Frame being divided into two chapters). Before concluding the journey, I reflect on the final sub-question of the research: What changes have I made, am making, and still have to make in my practice?

To answer this question, I need to reflect on where I was as a researcher and an ESL practitioner four years ago when I began this research. Along with the teaching techniques that I had acquired, and the insights that had crystallised from the application of these techniques, I realised that one of the biggest changes that I had undergone was in the perception of my identity. At the beginning phases of the research, while I was in my apprenticeship, I looked upon my role in the drama community as a 'tourist', who was beginning to understand what he was reading, and beginning to familiarise himself with the seminal works of this community. I was an informed outsider, but still felt that I was an outsider nonetheless. This feeling of self-imposed alienation was in no part due to the lack of a warm reception from the drama community; far from it, from the first conference I attended, they took me in as one of their own. It perhaps lay in the knowledge that my core business was teaching language, and training teachers how to teach language; and it was to this core business that I was to return upon the completion of my research. However, as my research progressed, I realised that I was not only filtering what I was learning through the eyes of a language teacher and linguist. I now realised that more and more, I was beginning to look at the world through the eyes of a drama practitioner, of a performer, and of an artist.

As a researcher, my awareness had also experienced a monumental shift. My previous research experience prior to my PhD candidacy had left me very much in favour of a quantitative paradigm to research where findings were obtained and measured for their significance. However, as the research progressed, I began to realise that there was a 'human' element that I was unable to rightly identify and report through numbers, and that each smile, each expression of happiness, of confusion, of triumph in the students did not convert well to quantifiable data. It was then that the shift in paradigm began to take place, where I began to look at myself as the most important research instrument, and that my observations and reflections of the student participants' responses to my teaching were the most important data that I had in tracking my understanding of my own practice. Subsequently, the analyses of my practice developed into insights that were then used to plan the next cycle of action. This was perhaps the most important outcome of this learning journey: becoming the reflective practitioner.

Through three Frames, this study sought to explore a language teacher's journey of reflection and discovery of applying drama in English language learning. It is a journey traversing new ground for the Malaysian ESL context, where there has been very little documented research on using process drama. It is a journey that attempts to map the process of perpetual reflective practice in Malaysian ESL teachers, and attempts to do so through the trial and error faced by a man with a burning question: What have I learned, as an ELT practitioner, about the use and impact of drama pedagogies? Marcel Proust once said:

“We don’t receive wisdom; we must discover it for ourselves after a journey that no one can take for us or spare us”. For me, this discovery came from being prepared to experiment with new ideas and methodologies in the confidence that I could evaluate and modify them through critical reflection on my own practice, rather than totally relying on the instruction of others. Though I had guides along the way, this journey was indeed one that no one else could have taken for me or spared me. And now at the end of it, perhaps finally, I can pick up and shoulder both the mantles of the drama practitioner and the ELT practitioner, on the stage of the language classroom.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: Modified Jacobs Scale for Dramatic Activity

<b>SCALE</b>	<b>CONTENT CRITERIA</b>
4	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: knowledgeable; substantive; thorough development of thesis; relevant to assigned topic
3	GOOD TO AVERAGE: some knowledge of the subject; adequate range; limited development of thesis; mostly relevant to topic, but lacks detail
2	FAIR TO POOR: limited knowledge of subject; little substance; inadequate development of topic
1	VERY POOR: does not show knowledge of subject; non-substantive; not pertinent; OR not enough to evaluate

<b>SCALE</b>	<b>ORGANISATION CRITERIA</b>
4	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: fluent expression; ideas clearly stated/supported; succinct; well-organised; logical sequencing; cohesive
3	GOOD TO AVERAGE: somewhat choppy; loosely organised but main ideas stand out; limited support; logical but incomplete sequencing
2	FAIR TO POOR: non-fluent; ideas confused or disconnected; lacks logical sequencing and development
1	VERY POOR: does not communicate; no organisation; OR not enough to evaluate

<b>SCALE</b>	<b>VOCABULARY CRITERIA</b>
4	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: sophisticated range; effective word/idiom choice and usage; word form mastery; appropriate register
3	GOOD TO AVERAGE: adequate range; occasional errors or word/idiom form, choice, usage but meaning not obscured
2	FAIR TO POOR: limited range; frequent errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage; meaning confused or obscured
1	VERY POOR: essentially translation; little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form, OR not enough to evaluate

<b>SCALE</b>	<b>LANGUAGE USE CRITERIA</b>
4	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: effective complex constructions; few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, pronouns, prepositions
3	GOOD TO AVERAGE: effective but simple constructions; minor problems in complex constructions; several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, pronouns, prepositions but meaning seldom obscured
2	FAIR TO POOR: major problems in simple/complex constructions; frequent errors of negation, word order/function, pronouns, prepositions and/or run-ons, deletions; meaning

	confused or obscured
1	VERY POOR: virtually no mastery of sentence rules; dominated by errors; does not communicate; OR not enough to evaluate

<b>SCALE</b>	<b><i>MECHANICS CRITERIA</i></b>
4	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: demonstrates mastery of conventions; few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalisation, paragraphing
3	GOOD TO AVERAGE: occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalisation, paragraphing but meaning not obscured
2	FAIR TO POOR: frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalisation, paragraphing; poor handwriting; meaning confused or obscured
1	VERY POOR: no mastery of conventions; dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalisation, paragraphing; handwriting illegible; OR not enough to evaluate

<b>SCALE</b>	<b><i>AESTHETICS CRITERIA</i></b>
4	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: demonstrates awareness of aesthetics in form; able to create works that are pleasing to read or see; rouses the readers' interest throughout the work
3	GOOD TO AVERAGE: shows some awareness of awareness of aesthetics in form; able to create works that are have sections that are pleasing to read or see; arouses the readers' interest in some sections of the work
2	FAIR TO POOR: shows little awareness of aesthetics in form; creates work that is somewhat unappealing to read or see; poor engagement of the readers' interest
1	VERY POOR: no awareness of aesthetics in form, produces work that is unimpressive or ugly; work is boring; OR not enough to evaluate

<b>SCALE</b>	<b><i>CREATIVITY CRITERIA</i></b>
4	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: demonstrates originality of thought; able to apply divergent thinking and/or shows signs of experimenting
3	GOOD TO AVERAGE: shows some originality of thought, though prone to follow the norm in some sections of the work; demonstrates some evidence of divergent thinking, and shows some signs of experimenting
2	FAIR TO POOR: shows almost no originality, and may appear to be copying ideas from peers; shows almost no evidence of divergent thinking and/or almost no signs of experimenting
1	VERY POOR: Lacks originality; shows no evidence of divergent thinking and/or no signs of experimenting; copied from peers; OR not enough to evaluate

SCALE	<i>RELATION TO DRAMA CRITERIA</i>
4	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: produces work that is very relevant to the drama activity, story, game or technique; very able to use dramatic context and apply it to work produced; shows evidence of using vocabulary that is relevant to dramatic context and/or vocabulary that was learnt in dramatic context
3	GOOD TO AVERAGE: produces work that is somewhat relevant to the drama activity, story, game or technique; somewhat able to use dramatic context and apply it to work produced; shows some evidence of using vocabulary that is relevant to dramatic context and/or vocabulary that was learnt in dramatic context
2	FAIR TO POOR: produces work that is not very relevant to the drama activity, story, game or technique; not very able to use dramatic context and apply it to work produced; does not show much evidence of using vocabulary that is relevant to dramatic context and/or vocabulary that was learnt in dramatic context
1	VERY POOR: work is not relevant to the drama activity, story, game or technique; unable to use dramatic context and apply it to work produced; unable to display evidence of using vocabulary that is relevant to dramatic context and/or vocabulary that was learnt in dramatic context; OR not enough to evaluate

\*adapted and modified from (Jacobs et al., 1981)

## APPENDIX 2: Consent form for parents

Telephone: +64 22 6599682

Email: [abdullah.mohdnawi@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:abdullah.mohdnawi@canterbury.ac.nz)



5 August 2011

### Applied Drama in English Language Learning (ADELL)

#### Consent Form for Parents

[Malay translation is italicised below]

Instructions: Please tick (✓) in the boxes if you agree

**Arahan: Sila tandakan (✓) di dalam kotak jika anda bersetuju**

- I have read the information sheet and understand what will be required of my child if he/she participates in this project.  
*Saya telah membaca surat maklumat dan faham apa yang perlu anak saya lakukan jika dia mengambil bahagian dalam projek ini.*
- I understand that the some of the lessons will be video-taped, and I consent to my child being video-taped, and for the recording to be used in any research-related presentations and conferences.  
*Saya faham bahawa sebahagian dari kelas anak saya akan di rakam video, dan saya bersetuju untuk anak saya dirakam video, dan rakaman itu boleh digunakan untuk pembentangan dan konferens yang berkenaan dengan kajian ini.*
- I understand that my child will be audio-taped if he/she is selected to be interviewed.  
*Saya faham bahawa suara anak saya akan dirakam jika dia dipilih untuk ditemubual.*
- I have read the information letter and understand that all information collected will only be accessed by the researcher and that it will be kept confidential and secure.  
*Saya telah membaca surat maklumat dan faham bahawa semua maklumat yang dikumpul hanya akan diakses oleh penyelidik dan maklumat itu akan disimpan secara sulit dan selamat.*
- I understand that neither I, my child, or his/her school, will be willingly identified in any presentations or publications that draw on this research.  
*Saya faham bahawa diri saya, anak saya, ataupun sekolah saya saya, tidak akan dinamakan dengan sengaja di dalam mana-mana pembentangan atau penulisan hasil kajian ini.*
- I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and he/she may choose to withdraw at any time.  
*Saya faham bahawa penyertaan anak saya ialah secara sukarela, dan dia dapat menarik diri pada bila-bila masa.*

University of Canterbury Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand. [www.canterbury.ac.nz](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz)



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I understand that my child's participation or non-participation in the study will not have any negative impact on his/her course grades.  
*Saya faham bahawa sekiranya anak saya menyertai atau tidak menyertai kajian ini, ia tidak akan memberi apa-apa kesan negatif kepada markah penilaian dan peperiksaannya.*

I understand that I can receive a report on the findings of the study. I have written my email address below for the report to be sent to.  
*Saya faham bahawa saya boleh menerima laporan kajian ini, dan telah memberikan alamat emel saya di bawah untuk diberikan laporan tersebut.*

I understand that I can get more information about this project from the researcher, and that I can contact the University of Canterbury Ethics Committee if I have any complaints about the research.  
*Saya faham bahawa saya boleh mendapatkan maklumat lanjut tentang kajian ini dari penyelidik, dan bahawa saya dapat menghubungi University of Canterbury Ethics Committee jika saya mempunyai apa-apa aduan tentang kajian ini.*

By signing below, I agree to allow my child to participate in this research.  
*Dengan menurunkan tandatangan di bawah, saya bersetuju untuk membenarkan anak saya menyertai kajian ini.*

Name / Nama : \_\_\_\_\_

Date / Tarikh : \_\_\_\_\_

Signature / Tandatangan : \_\_\_\_\_

Email address / Alamat Emel : \_\_\_\_\_

Please give this consent form to your child to return to his/her English teacher.  
*Sila berikan borang persetujuan ini kepada anak anda untuk dipulangkan kepada guru BI.*

## APPENDIX 3: Consent form for Principal

Telephone: +64 22 6599682

Email: [abdullah.mohdnawi@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:abdullah.mohdnawi@canterbury.ac.nz)



5 August 2011

### Applied Drama in English Language Learning (ADELL)

#### Consent Form for the Principal

I have been given a full explanation of this project and have been given an opportunity to ask questions.

I understand what will be required of the teacher and the students if I agree to allow them to take part in this project.

I understand that the participation of the teacher and the students is voluntary and that they may withdraw at any stage without penalty.

I understand that any information or opinions I, the teacher or the students provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and that any published or reported results will not identify me, the teacher, or the students.

I understand that all data collected for this study will be kept in locked and secure facilities and will be destroyed after five years.

I understand that I will receive a report on the findings of this study. I have provided my email details below for this.

I understand that if I require further information I can contact the researcher, Mr Abdullah Mohd Nawi. If I have any complaints, I can contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

By signing below, I agree to allow my staff (the teacher) and the students of my school to participate in this research project.

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Signature : \_\_\_\_\_

Email address : \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 4: Consent form for students

Telephone: +64 22 6599682

Email: [abdullah.mohdnawi@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:abdullah.mohdnawi@canterbury.ac.nz)



5 August 2011

### Applied Drama in English Language Learning (ADELL)

#### Consent Form for Students

[Malay translation is italicised below]

Instructions: Please tick (✓) in the boxes if you agree

*Arahan: Sila tandakan (✓) di dalam kotak jika anda bersetuju*

- I have read the information sheet and understand what will be required of me if I participate in this project.  
*Saya telah membaca surat maklumat dan faham apa yang perlu saya lakukan jika saya mengambil bahagian dalam projek ini.*
- I understand that some of the lessons will be video-taped, and I consent to being video-taped, and for the recording to be used in any research-related presentations and conferences.  
*Saya faham bahawa sebahagian dari kelas saya akan di rakam video, dan saya bersetuju untuk dirakam video, dan rakaman itu boleh digunakan untuk pembentangan dan konferens yang berkenaan dengan kajian ini.*
- I understand that I will be audio-taped if I am selected to be interviewed.  
*Saya faham bahawa suara saya akan dirakam jika saya dipilih untuk ditemubual.*
- I have read the information letter and understand that all information collected will only be accessed by the researcher and that it will be kept confidential and secure.  
*Saya telah membaca surat maklumat dan faham bahawa semua maklumat yang dikumpul hanya akan diakses oleh penyelidik dan maklumat itu akan disimpan secara sulit dan selamat.*
- I understand that neither I, nor my school, will be willingly identified in any presentations or publications that draw on this research.  
*Saya faham bahawa diri saya, ataupun sekolah saya, tidak akan dinamakan dengan sengaja di dalam mana-mana pembentangan atau penulisan hasil kajian ini.*
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and I may choose to withdraw at any time.  
*Saya faham bahawa penyertaan saya ialah secara sukarela, dan saya dapat menarik diri pada bila-bila masa.*

I understand that my participation or non-participation in the study will not have any negative impact on my course grades.  
*Saya faham bahawa sekiranya saya menyertai atau tidak menyertai kajian ini, ia tidak akan memberi apa-apa kesan negatif kepada markah penilaian dan peperiksaan saya.*

I understand that I can receive a report on the findings of the study. I have written my email address below for the report to be sent to.  
*Saya faham bahawa saya boleh menerima laporan kajian ini, dan telah memberikan alamat emel saya di bawah untuk diberikan laporan tersebut.*

I understand that I can get more information about this project from the researcher, and that I can contact the University of Canterbury Ethics Committee if I have any complaints about the research.  
*Saya faham bahawa saya boleh mendapatkan maklumat lanjut tentang kajian ini dari penyelidik, dan bahawa saya dapat menghubungi University of Canterbury Ethics Committee jika saya mempunyai apa-apa aduan tentang kajian ini.*

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research.  
*Dengan menurunkan tandatangan di bawah, saya bersetuju untuk menyertai kajian ini.*

Name / Nama : \_\_\_\_\_

Date / Tarikh : \_\_\_\_\_

Signature / Tandatangan : \_\_\_\_\_

Email address / Alamat Emel : \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this consent form to your English teacher.  
*Sila pulangkan borang persetujuan ini kepada guru BI anda.*

## APPENDIX 5: Consent form for collaborating class teacher

Telephone: +64 22 6599682

Email: [abdullah.mohdnawi@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:abdullah.mohdnawi@canterbury.ac.nz)



5 August 2011

### Applied Drama in English Language Learning (ADELL)

#### Consent Form for the Native Teacher-Collaborator

I have been given a full explanation of this project and have been given an opportunity to ask questions.

I understand what will be required of me if I agree to take part in this project.

I understand that some of the lessons will be video-taped, and that I will be audio-taped when I am interviewed.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any stage without penalty.

I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and that any published or reported results will not identify me.

I understand that all data collected for this study will be kept in locked and secure facilities at the University of Canterbury and will be destroyed after five years.

I understand that I will receive a report on the findings of this study. I have provided my email details below for this.

I understand that if I require further information I can contact the researcher, Mr Abdullah Mohd Nawi. If I have any complaints, I can contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Signature : \_\_\_\_\_

Email address : \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 6: Information for parents

Telephone: +64 22 6599682

Email: [abdullah.mohdnawi@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:abdullah.mohdnawi@canterbury.ac.nz)



5 August 2011

### Applied Drama in English Language Learning (ADELL)

#### Information for Parents

*[The translated Malay version follow in italics]*

My name is Mr Abdullah Mohd Nawi, a lecturer at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, and a PhD candidate in the College of Education, University of Canterbury, New Zealand. I will be working with your child's teacher to help him/her learn English in an exciting way, using applied drama in English Language learning (ADELL).

For 5 weeks, I will be working closely with your child's English teacher, where we assist him/her to learn English in ways that are more motivating and engaging, especially with using ADELL in class. During the classes, I will take video recordings of the classes in order to see how your child reacts to the teaching techniques used. The recordings will be used only for this research, in conferences and presentations. However, if you are not comfortable to your child being video-taped, please let me know on the consent form that I have provided with this letter. This means that I will edit any parts of the video that have your child's face in them, and will only use the edited video recordings for any conferences or presentations.

Also, I may also choose your child and some other students to interview later, just to see if they are enjoying the classes, and if the classes are helping him/her learn English. If your child is chosen, he/she will be interviewed 3 times – once at the beginning of the project, once in the middle of the project, and once at the end. These interviews will normally last between 15 to 30 minutes. These interviews will be carried out in any place your child feels comfortable. This can be in a classroom, a science lab, an empty room, or even the cafeteria. Your child will have the option to tell me if he/she does not feel comfortable in a selected place, and we will look for another place that is suitable to him/her.

Your child may also chat with me at any time if he/she have any ideas he/she would like to share. From time to time, I may also give your child simple questionnaires to fill, also for him/her to share his/her opinions with me. With your permission, I will use the information your child gives to me to give presentations and reports later. Your child will be given a code-name to protect his/her identity in any presentations and publications I make later on.

If your child wishes to drop out of the project at any time, he/she is welcome to do so. If your child does not want me to share what he/she has told me, that's all right as well. Your child does not have to be afraid, because I will understand. He/she only needs to tell either myself or his/her English teacher, and we will talk about it. Your child's participation or non-participation will not impact on his/her course grades in any way. You or your child can also contact the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch ([human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)), if you have any complaints regarding the project.

After 5 years, when no one needs the information your child has given me, I will delete or destroy the documents.

If you agree to allow your child to take part in the project, please sign the consent form that I have provided with this letter, and give it to your child to return it to his/her English teacher by 18 August 2011.

Thank you for considering your child's participation in the project.

Abdullah Mohd Nawi  
PhD Candidate  
College of Education  
University of Canterbury

University of Canterbury Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand. [www.canterbury.ac.nz](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz)

## **Aplikasi Drama dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris (ADELL)**

### **Maklumat untuk Ibubapa**

*Nama saya En. Abdullah Mohd Naw, seorang pensyarah Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, dan calon PhD di College of Education, University of Canterbury, New Zealand. Saya akan bekerjasama dengan guru bahasa Inggeris (BI) anak anda untuk membantunya belajar bahasa Inggeris dengan cara yang menyeronokkan dan memberikan motivasi, dengan menggunakan aplikasi drama dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggeris (applied drama in English language learning [ADELL]).*

*Selama 5 minggu, saya akan berganding bahu dengan guru BI anak anda, di mana mana kami akan membantunya belajar BI dengan cara yang memberikan motivasi, terutamanya dengan menggunakan ADELL. Dalam kelas, saya akan mengambil rakaman video untuk melihat bagaimana reaksi anak anda kepada teknik-teknik yang digunakan. Rakaman ini hanya akan digunakan untuk pembentangan dan konferens. Bagaimanapun, jika anda tidak selesa anak anda dirakam video, anda boleh memberitahu saya di dalam borang persetujuan yang disertakan, ini bermakna saya akan menyunting rakaman tersebut supaya anak anda tidak kelihatan, dan hanya akan menggunakan rakaman yang telah disunting untuk apa-apa pembentangan.*

*Semasa dalam kajian, mungkin saya akan menjemput anak anda dan beberapa rakannya untuk ditemubual, sekadar melihat jika dia suka teknik-teknik yang kami jalankan, dan jika teknik-teknik itu membantunya belajar BI. Jika dipilih, anak anda akan ditemubual tiga kali, pada permulaan, pertengahan dan di akhir projek. Setiap temubual biasanya akan berlangsung selama 15-30 minit, di mana-mana tempat yang anak anda rasa selesa. Dia juga dijemput untuk berbual dengan saya pada bila-bila masa jika dia mempunyai sebarang idea yang ingin dikongsi bersama saya. Dari masa ke semasa, anak anda juga akan diberi soal-selidik (questionnaire) yang ringkas, supaya dia dapat memberikan pendapatnya. Soal selidik ini biasanya akan mengambil 15 minit untuk diisi. Dengan izin anda, saya akan menggunakan maklumat yang diberikan dalam pembentangan dan laporan di masa akan datang. Bagaimanapun, anda tidak perlu risau kerana anak anda akan diberi nama samaran, dan nama sebenarnya tidak akan digunakan.*

*Jika anak anda ingin menarik diri dari projek ini, atau tidak mahu saya menggunakan maklumat yang dia berikan, dia mempunyai hak untuk berbuat demikian. Dia tidak perlu takut, dan saya akan memahami. Untuk berbuat demikian, anak anda hanya perlu bercakap kepada saya atau guru BInya. Sekiranya anak anda memilih untuk menyertai atau tidak menyertai kajian ini, ia tidak akan memberikan apa-apa kesan yang negatif kepada markah penilalain atau peperiksaannya. Anda atau anak anda juga boleh menghubungi the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch ([human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)), jika anda mempunyai aduan tentang kajian ini.*

*Selepas 5 tahun, segala maklumat yang anak anda berikan akan dimusnahkan.*

*Jika anda bersetuju untuk membenarkan anak anda mengambil bahagian dalam projek ini, sila tandatangan borang persetujuan yang telah saya sertakan bersama surat ini, dan memulangkannya kepada guru BI anak anda sebelum 18 Ogos 2011.*

*Terima kasih kerana menimbang penyertaan anak anda dalam kajian ini.*

Abdullah Mohd Naw  
PhD Candidate  
College of Education  
University of Canterbury

## APPENDIX 7: Information for Principal

Telephone: +64 22 6599682

Email: [abdullah.mohdnawi@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:abdullah.mohdnawi@canterbury.ac.nz)



5 August 2011

### **Applied Drama in English Language Learning (ADELL) Information for the Principal, [REDACTED]**

This information letter follows our earlier communication, and I thank you for your verbal consent. My name is Abdullah Mohd Nawi, a PhD candidate in the College of Education, University of Canterbury and I am working under the supervision of Professor Janinka Greenwood. I am researching a language teaching and learning project that looks at the way applied drama in English language learning (ADELL) affects the way ESL/EFL learners learn English and communicate in the language.

Throughout the 5-week period of my data collection at your school, I will be working closely with the English teacher of the target class (4 Baiduri), where I will integrate ADELL into the required English language syllabus. We will work together and distribute the teaching load according to our niche areas. With your permission, during the classes, I will take video recordings of the classes in order to obtain data on how the students react to the teaching techniques used. The recordings will be used solely for the purpose of this research, and will only be shown in conferences and presentations pertaining to the research.

Apart from video recordings, the class English teacher and certain students will be identified and asked to become interview respondents. They will be interviewed at certain points in the research for their views on the ADELL techniques and their progress in learning the English language. However, at this point in time, I am unsure which students will be identified, or how they will be identified. Questionnaires will also be given to all the students at various intervals, also to obtain similar data. I will use this information when I give presentations and when I write my reports. You, the teacher and the students will be given a code name in order to ensure anonymity in any presentations and publications.

Also with your permission, I would like to use the students' English course grades to determine the level of English proficiency. For this purpose, I will make sure that their names remain confidential and not be used in any presentations or reports. I would also like to request that the class English teacher be allowed to continue to use ADELL techniques that she finds useful after I have left the school, and that she be allowed to share her findings with me as part of my ongoing research.

If you agree for the students in your school to take part in the research, please sign the consent form attached, and fax (+64 3 3458416; c/o Prof Janinka Greenwood) or scan and email it to me (at the email stated above) by 20 August 2011.

As part of the University of Canterbury requirements, I will securely store the data of this project and destroy it after five years.



If the teacher, or any of the students in the project should change their minds about sharing ideas with me, or if they wish to drop out of the project at any time, they are entitled to do so without fear of facing any consequences.

This project has received ethical approval from the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee. If you have any questions regarding this project, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Prof Janinka Greenwood (+64 3 3458292). If you have any complaints you may also contact the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch ([human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)).

I am looking forward to working with you, and thank you in advance for your contributions.

Abdullah Mohd Nawi  
PhD Candidate  
College of Education  
University of Canterbury

## APPENDIX 8: Information for students

Telephone: +64 22 6599682

Email: [abdullah.mohdnawi@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:abdullah.mohdnawi@canterbury.ac.nz)



5 August 2011

### **Applied Drama in English Language Learning (ADELL)**

#### **Information for Student-participants**

*[The translated Malay version follows in italics]*

This letter follows the conversation we had when I visited your school in April 2011. My name is Mr Abdullah Mohd Nawi, a PhD candidate in the College of Education, University of Canterbury, New Zealand. I will be working with your teacher to help you learn English in an exciting way, using applied drama in English Language learning (ADELL).

For 5 weeks, I will be working closely with your English teacher, where we assist you to learn English in ways that are more motivating and engaging, especially with using ADELL in class. During the classes, I will take video recordings of the classes in order to see how you react to the teaching techniques used. The recordings will be used only for this research, in conferences and presentations. However, if you are not comfortable to being video-taped, please let me know on the consent form that I have provided with this letter. This means that I will edit any parts of the video that have your face in them, and will only use the edited video recordings for any conferences or presentations.

Also, I may also choose you and some other students to interview later, just to see if you are enjoying the classes, and if they are helping you learn English. If you are chosen, you will be interviewed 3 times – once at the beginning of the project, once in the middle of the project, and once at the end. These interviews will normally last between 15 to 30 minutes. These interviews will be carried out in any place you feel comfortable. This can be in a classroom, a science lab, an empty room, or even the cafeteria. You will have the option to tell me if you do not feel comfortable in a selected place, and we will look for another place that is suitable to you.

You may also chat with me at any time if you have any ideas you would like to share. From time to time, I may also give you simple questionnaires to fill, also for you to share your opinions with me. With your permission, I will use the information you give to me to give presentations and reports later. You will be given a code-name to protect your identity in any presentations and publications I make later on.

If you wish to drop out of the project at any time, you are welcome to do so. If you do not want me to share what you have told me, that's all right as well. You do not have to be afraid, because I will understand. You only need to tell either myself or your English teacher, and we will talk about it. Your participation or non-participation will not impact on your course grades in any way. You can also contact the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch ([human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)), if you have any complaints regarding the project.

After 5 years, when no one needs the information you have given me, I will delete or destroy the documents.

If you agree to take part in the project, please sign the consent form that I have provided with this letter, and return it to your English teacher by 18 August 2011.

Thank you for becoming part of the project, and I know we are going to have a good time!

Abdullah Mohd Nawi  
PhD Candidate  
College of Education  
University of Canterbury

University of Canterbury Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand. [www.canterbury.ac.nz](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz)

## **Aplikasi Drama dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris (ADELL)**

### **Maklumat untuk Pelajar**

Surat ini mengikuti sesi kita semasa saya menziarahi sekolah anda pada April 2011. Nama saya En. Abdullah Mohd Nawi, seorang calon PhD di College of Education, University of Canterbury, New Zealand. Saya akan bekerjasama dengan guru bahasa Inggeris (BI) anda untuk membantu anda belajar bahasa Inggeris dengan cara yang menyeronokkan dan memberikan motivasi, dengan menggunakan aplikasi drama dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggeris (*applied drama in English language learning [ADELL]*).

Selama 5 minggu, saya akan berganding bahu dengan guru BI anda, di mana mana kami akan membantu anda belajar BI dengan cara yang menyeronokkan dan mengasyikkan, terutamanya dengan menggunakan ADELL. Dalam kelas, saya akan mengambil rakaman video untuk melihat bagaimana reaksi anda kepada teknik-teknik yang digunakan. Rakaman ini hanya akan digunakan untuk pembentangan dan konferens. Bagaimanapun, jika anda tidak selesa untuk dirakam video, and boleh memberitahu saya di dalam borang persetujuan yang disertakan, Ini bermakna saya akan menyunting rakaman tersebut supaya anda tidak kelihatan, dan hanya akan menggunakan rakaman yang telah disunting untuk apa-apa pembentangan.

Semasa dalam kajian, mungkin saya akan menjemput anda dan beberapa rakan anda untuk ditemubual, sekadar melihat jika anda suka teknik-teknik yang kami jalankan, dan jika teknik-teknik itu membantu anda belajar BI. Jika dipilih, anda akan ditemubual tiga kali, pada permulaan, pertengahan dan di akhir projek. Setiap temubual biasanya akan berlangsung selama 15-30 minit, di mana-mana tempat yang anda rasa selesa. Anda juga dijemput untuk berbual dengan saya pada bila-bila masa jika anda mempunyai sebarang idea yang ingin dikongsi bersama saya. Dari masa ke semasa, anda juga akan diberi soal-selidik (*questionnaire*) yang ringkas, supaya anda dapat memberikan pendapat anda. Soal selidik ini biasanya akan mengambil 15 minit untuk diisi. Dengan izin anda, saya akan menggunakan maklumat yang diberikan dalam pembentangan dan laporan di masa akan datang. Bagaimanapun, anda tidak perlu risau kerana anda akan diberi nama samaran, dan nama sebenar anda tidak akan digunakan.

Jika anda ingin menarik diri dari projek ini, atau tidak mahu saya menggunakan maklumat yang anda berikan, anda mempunyai hak untuk berbuat demikian. Anda tidak perlu takut, dan saya akan memahami. Untuk berbuat demikian, anda hanya perlu bercakap kepada saya atau guru BI anda. Sekiranya anda memilih untuk menyertai atau tidak menyertai kajian ini, ia tidak akan memberikan apa-apa kesan yang negatif kepada markah penilalain atau peperiksaan anda. Anda juga boleh menghubungi the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch ([human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)), jika anda mempunyai aduan tentang kajian ini.

Selepas 5 tahun, segala maklumat yang anda berikan akan dimusnahkan.

Jika anda bersetuju untuk mengambil bahagian dalam projek ini, sila tandatangan borang persetujuan yang telah saya sertakan bersama surat ini, dan memulangkannya kepada guru BI anda sebelum 18 Ogos 2011.

Terima kasih kerana mengambil bahagian, dan saya yakin kita akan seronok belajar bersama-sama!

Abdullah Mohd Nawi  
PhD Candidate  
College of Education  
University of Canterbury

## APPENDIX 9: Information for collaborating class teacher

Telephone: +64 22 6599682

Email: [abdullah.mohdnawi@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:abdullah.mohdnawi@canterbury.ac.nz)



5 August 2011

### **Applied Drama in English Language Learning (ADELL)**

#### **Information for the Native Teacher-Collaborator**

This information letter follows our earlier communication, and I thank you for your verbal consent. My name is Abdullah Mohd Nawj, a PhD candidate in the College of Education, University of Canterbury and I am working under the supervision of Professor Janinka Greenwood. I am researching a language teaching and learning project that looks at the way applied drama in English language learning (ADELL) affects the way ESL/EFL learners learn English and communicate in the language.

I have approached the principal of the school and have been given permission to carry out the project in your school. Throughout the 5-week period of my data collection at your school, I will be working closely with you, the English teacher of the target class (4 Baiduri), where I will integrate ADELL into the required English language syllabus. We will work together and distribute the teaching load according to our niche areas. With your help, during the classes, I will take video recordings of the classes in order to obtain data on how the students react to the teaching techniques used. The recordings will be used solely for the purpose of this research, and will only be shown in conferences and presentations pertaining to the research.

Apart from video recordings, you and certain students who will be identified later will be asked to become interview respondents. You and the students will be interviewed at certain points in the research for your views on the ADELL techniques and the students' progress in learning the English language. There will be three interviews, one at the beginning of the study, one in the middle, and one at the end of the study. Generally the interviews will last between 15 to 30 minutes. These interviews will be carried out at any place that is comfortable to you. Questionnaires will also be given to all the students at three intervals (beginning, middle and end of study) also to obtain similar data. The expected time taken to finish the questionnaires is 15 minutes. I will use this information when I give presentations and when I write my reports. You and every one of your students will be given a code name in order to ensure anonymity in any presentations and publications.

I would also like to request you continue to use ADELL techniques that you find useful after I have left the school, and share your findings with me as part of my ongoing research.

If you agree to take part in the research, please sign the consent form attached, and fax (to +64 3 3458416; c/o Prof Janinka Greenwood) or scan and email it to me (at the email stated above) by 20 August 2011.

As part of the University of Canterbury requirements, I will securely store the data of this project and destroy it after five years. If you should change their minds about sharing ideas with me, or if you wish to drop out of the project at any time, you are entitled to do so without fear of facing any consequences.

This project has received ethical approval from the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee. If you have any questions regarding this project, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Prof Janinka Greenwood. If you have any complaints you may also contact the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch ([human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)).

I am looking forward to working with you, and thank you in advance for your contributions.

Abdullah Mohd Nawi  
PhD Candidate  
College of Education  
University of Canterbury

APPENDIX 10: Teaching calendar for Frame 3

# APRIL 2013

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	9	10	11	12	13	14
	Maori Incantation. Gestures & exaggeration. Worksheet – "Who am I?" – Focus on Gerunds. Module 2 – Life's ups and downs.		Maori Incantation. Gestures and exaggeration. Forum Theatre – Unlucky Sam Module 2 – Life's ups and downs. Language focus – Real life – responding sympathetically.			
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	Hot-seating Drama – Sydney at the zoo. TIR: Master Mazeratti T&L – Jigsaw & information gap. Level 2 ADELL. Module 3 – Adventures and Mishaps. Language focus - Narratives		Planned: Freeze frames. Exaggerated expressions. Language: Expressions of annoyance acceptance & regret. Result – Ss more interested in the pronunciation and usage. Became more of language lesson. Kungfu chop – emphasis. Ended with scenario.			
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	TBD (Vignettes?)	Mensa Mixer. Level 2 ADELL. Ss decide their roles. Come up with interesting fact. Rehearse fact. Use as conversation starter. Language -				

# MAY 2013

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		<p><u>1</u></p> <p>Topic – Mind</p> <p>Difference between men and women.</p> <p>Freeze Frames</p>	<p>2</p>	<p><u>3</u></p> <p>Mensa mixer speech giving. Visualisation &amp; contextualization exercises. Contextualised speech. Thought tracking. Module 5 – Unusual achievements. Language focus – phrases, vocab.</p>	<p>4</p>	<p><u>5</u></p> <p>FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW</p>
<p>6</p>	<p><u>7</u></p> <p>Warmer: mirroring Drama – love problems. Situation – STB Drama activity: Hand expert Language objectives – From STB</p>	<p>8</p>	<p><u>9</u></p> <p>The Nincompoop's Guide to Surviving a Breakup. Drama technique: Freeze frame. Output – written homework (as it is, no one has returned the work yet).</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p>
<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16</p>	<p><u>17</u></p> <p>Full Process drama: Kiwi Wings. Resource – brochure. Book – pg 68 &amp; 70</p> <p>*MARK For CCEL in-house training.</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p>
<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>	<p><u>22</u></p> <p>Big events. Ss perform 3 freeze frames to describe what is going on.</p> <p>Reporters do real-time report based on what is happening. 1 group – at the football stadium. 1 group at rugby stadium.</p>	<p>T</p> <p>23</p>	<p><u>24</u></p> <p>Day of the dead. Book pg 76. Tombstone. Menu.</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>

		Book – pg 74-75				
27	<a href="#">28</a> Process drama - Food Festivals. 2 groups competing to host food festivals. Drama technique – Make statues (what was the term I used that wasn't freeze frames?)  Homework – Magazine article on festival	29	30	31 Food festival  2 Reporters – reporting on food festival.  Ss make vignettes of activities as found in their magazine articles.		

## EVENTS

**Lessons**  
ADELL lessons

**Focus Group Interviews**  
Done at the Fox and Ferret,  
[Riccarton](#), Christchurch.



## APPENDIX 11: Sample lesson plan



### Drama Workshop: [REDACTED]

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#### LESSON PLAN

**Class** : Intermediate form 4 students  
**Time** : 1 hour 20 mins  
**Unit** : Bullying, consequences of violence  
**Drama objectives** : By the end of the lesson, students should be able to

- Breathe deeply
- Familiarise themselves with working with imaginative frame
- Familiarise themselves with working with role

**ELL objectives** : By the end of the lesson, students should be able to

- Use at least 2 character adjectives to describe fictional character

**Resources** : A3 paper, markers

#### Notes

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Activity	Time	Method	Rationale
Deep Breathing	2m	Ss are taught to diaphragmatic breathing. Ss practice.	To get Ss focused on lesson.
Circle , name and gesture	3m	Ss , Tr and Native Teacher-Collaborator (NTC) stand in a circle. Tr demonstrates. Ss enunciate their name clearly while making their own unique gesture.	confidence building, enunciation, ice-breaking, physical warm-up
1,2,3	10m	Ss are paired. Ss alternate saying 1,2,3,1,2,3... Second round - numbers are substituted with words and gestures introduced by Tr.	Practice enunciating elementary numbers and words. Build concentration.
Introduction to working in role	3m	Tr introduces 2 characters that will be used throughout the week – 1) Mr Mark, the troubled school counselor, and 2) Mr Boutros – the gourmand translator. Ss are introduced to the concept of working in role.	Building drama repertoire – Working in role
Introduction of fictional character	10m	Ss are divided into 6 groups. Tr as Mr Mark. Context – Mark has misplaced the names and profiles of 6 ‘troublesome’ students. Step 1: Ss have to use this context to make their own characters. Ss are instructed to make up characters that have nothing to do with themselves, as the context is about other people. Step 2: Character adjectives are elicited and revised. NTC assists in the revision of adjectives. Step 3: Ss list adjectives for their characters. Ss present characters and their attributes.  Language objectives: adjectives, language for discussion Drama adjectives: Teamwork, using imaginative frame	Language objectives: adjectives, language for discussion Drama adjectives: Teamwork, using imaginative frame

## APPENDIX 12: Questionnaire for Frame 2.1



This questionnaire is part of an ongoing PhD research in applied drama in English language teaching (ELT). Your responses to this questionnaire are CONFIDENTIAL, and will in no way have any implications to your studies in the school. Please ask your teacher if you do not understand any of the items.

INSTRUCTIONS: Please fill in the boxes by rating the following statements according to the scale below

1 - Strongly agree    2 - Agree    3 - Disagree    4 - Strongly disagree

- a) The class was interesting
- b) The class was too playful
- c) I managed to learn something
- d) I managed to practice what I learnt
- e) I think I can learn better when I learn  
English this way
- f) The class was fun
- g) I felt I made a fool of myself
- h) I have never done anything like this before in an ESL secondary  
school class
- i) I would like to do activities like these again
- j) I prefer doing these activities over what we  
normally do in the class
- k) I felt the teacher's characters made the lesson more interesting
- l) I want to do more work using the character I developed in the drama
- m) I prefer lessons where I am sitting at my desk and the teacher is  
standing in front, like normal classes.
- n) I understood the instructions in English most of the time
- o) I have to ask my friends for clarification of instructions
- p) I speak Malay all the time in the discussion

q) What did you like best about the drama? (Please rank 1 – Like best; to 5 – Like least)

- Learning Freeze Frames
- Using freeze frames
- Discussing what to do with my friends
- Different from normal lessons
- The teacher's characters in the drama : Mr Abdullah, Mr Mark & Mr Boutros Boutros

Suggestions/Comments

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Thank you! ©

## APPENDIX 13: List of interviews

\*Note: numbers on the left are dates. E.g. 22.4.11 is 22 April 2011

**22.4.11** – Interview with class teacher. Post first lesson. Teacher talks about her first exposure to some drama processes. Recorded on Apple iPod Touch using native voice recorder application.

**7.7.11** – Focus group interview with participants in intermediate school in Christchurch, carried out with Janinka Greenwood. Recorded on Apple iPod Touch using native voice recorder application.

**14.9.11** – Post-lesson interview with class teacher. Class teacher gives feedback on lesson, and shares general challenges in teaching English as a new teacher. Recorded on Apple iPod Touch using native voice recorder application.

**15.9.11** – Post-lesson interview with collaborating class teacher. Recorded on Apple iPod Touch using native voice recorder application.

**19.9.11** – Informal conversation with Pn Zaiton. Not recorded. Notes were written during reflection after school.

**19.9.11** – Informal conversation with Pn Rashidah. Not recorded. Notes were written during reflection after school.

**27.9.11** – Interview with Pn Kamariah about general challenges in teaching English, leading towards examination results. Not recorded. I took written notes.

**2.10.11** – Focus group interview with participants of Malaysian study. First focus group interview to investigate how they found the drama programme, and also to find out what they would like to see added into the programme. Recorded on Apple iPod Touch using native voice recorder application.

**10.10.11** – Post-lesson interview with class teacher. She talks about achieving set objectives and her views on future use of drama pedagogy. Recorded on Apple iPod Touch using native voice recorder application.

**12.10.11** – Final focus group interview with Malaysian participants. The students were asked about how they found working with drama as a whole, and also discussed the possibility of working with drama for their examination year. Discussion included the collaborating class teacher. Recorded on Apple iPod Touch using native voice recorder application.

**3.11.11** – Telephone interview with Muhammad carried out via VoIP call from New Zealand to Malaysia. Call was put on speakerphone and recorded on Apple iPod Touch using native voice recorder application.

**15.11.14** – Telephone interview with collaborating class teacher carried out via VoIP call from New

Zealand to Malaysia to discuss how she was faring with regard to her teaching, and also to find out if she was still using the drama pedagogy she had learnt. Teacher also reveals that Muhammad has passed his English examination for the first time in secondary school. Call was not recorded. Written notes were taken both during and after the call.

**5.5.13** – Focus group interview with adult learners, carried out at the Fox and Ferret, a pub in Christchurch. Interview was not recorded due to the ambient noise, but written notes were taken both during and after the interview.

**6.6.13** – Final group interview with adult learners, also carried out at the Fox and Ferret.

**23.8.13** – Interview with Janinka Greenwood discussing research findings. Recorded on Apple iPhone 5 using the Highlight by Cohdoo (the developer) application. Particular points of interest were highlighted *in situ* using the application, and reviewed post interview.

**4.6.14** – Telephone interview with Pn Hayati on [stage] drama in schools. Written notes were taken both during and after the interview.

**6.6.14** – Telephone interview with senior IPG lecturer who did not want to be identified. Interview was on reflective practice in Malaysian ITE. She provided me with documents via email. Written notes were taken both during and after the interview.

**11.6.13** – Telephone interview with Pn Mahani on teacher training in IPG. Written notes were taken both during and after the interview.