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Approaches to educational drama in foreign language learning

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SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

"*All the world is a stage*

and all the men and women are merely players".

(Shakespeare: As You Like It, Act II, Scene VII)

Spoken by Jacques in Act II Scene VII, this phrase is the beginning of the monologue of As You Like It from William Shakespeare. Here, in one of his most frequently quoted passages, the poet compares the world to a stage and life to a play; in his view, the world in which we live is *our stage*. Every day we act as if we were presenting ourselves to someone; whenever we go to work in the morning or into a business meeting in the afternoon, we are on display, on stage. Every situation, from a face-to-face meeting to a remote phone call is a potential situation for someone to be watching what we do. In these situations, we communicate with each other and we share information; in theatre, communication is the most important feature, through gestures, voice, intonation, movements and it implies verbal and non-verbal communication. In normal life, communication is identical: we communicate with people through language, but also through non-verbal signs. Theatre is without doubt closely related to language. On the following pages, I have tried to analyse the connection between drama and theatre with communication in a foreign language, and the benefits it could have on foreign language learning.

The intention of this thesis is to analyse the relation between drama, theatre and foreign language learning and the alleged benefits to the latter. The first part of the thesis will be an explanation of the general topic, with particular attention to the similarities and differences between drama/theatre and traditional education and the various aspects of foreign language learning that could be affected by the use of alternative teaching methods in classrooms. In other words, this part of the thesis will focus on the theoretical basis of drama in education and then on the connection and benefits it has on foreign language learning. The reader will have a more practical analysis of the topic in the second part of the thesis, where three different workshops will be examined in detail. The workshops are carried out in three different universities: the University of Padova, Grenoble University and

Reutlingen University. Finally, I will comment on the survey conducted among students of the University of Padova; by means of questionnaires (see Appendix A), we will enter the world of drama in education for foreign languages and examine the responses of the students.

The first chapter is an overview of drama in education, with the explanation of some teaching and learning methods, which show the positive effects of a dynamic and task-based approach to foreign language learning. Several educational drama workshops are growing in the field of foreign languages and I participated myself in the English theatre workshop in Padova; in the second chapter, I will analyse the workshop, comparing it with two similar projects carried out in two other European universities (Grenoble and Reutlingen). After this broad analysis of various aspects involved in the workshops, such as aims, educational setting, actors and language setting, the thesis will move to the third chapter. Here, I will analyse the survey conducted among students involved in the English theatre workshop in Padova, in the 2014-2015 academic year. Through this research, I aim to sustain the theoretical topics handled in the first two chapters and deepen the issue about positive benefits and the problems of an educational drama workshop for foreign language learning. It is essential to remember that the data collected in the analysis comprise only a university level, that is to say that drama in schools will not be taken into consideration in this thesis. That is very important as in a tertiary level of education – e.g. university – the language level is generally higher, and that gives the possibility to have a larger number of language exercises, word experiments and text adaptations compared to a workshop for beginner students. Even if it is extremely difficult to give a concrete and measurable result in terms of how much these workshops affect foreign learning language, this thesis will try to give an exhaustive answer about the importance of theatre and drama education in this field.

CHAPTER ONE

A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF DRAMA IN EDUCATION

> Drama is communication between people
>
> (Via, 1987: 10)

Drama is a mirror of the life we live; we communicate with different people every day, in different situations and places, with different roles. Under the entry "communication" in the Longman Dictionary (2003) we find the following definition: "the process by which people exchange information or express their thoughts and feelings". Language is the natural instrument needed to carry out these tasks; if we read Via's definition and take it for granted, the importance of language in drama is central. Drama used for educational purposes has "proved successful in developing and reinforcing students' communication skills and in promoting student interaction" (Marini-Maio & Ryan-Scheutz, 2010: 2). In this first chapter, I will explore the use of drama in education, especially as regards second language learning and how it may help students to improve their competence. In the literature on this topic, I have found two similar – but not identical – terms that need to be explained before starting to explain how the chapter will be structured: drama in education and theatre in education. The distinction is perhaps not very clear and the two terms are often reported in articles or books without clarification. Educational drama and educational theatre do not have a fixed structure or a clear definition, but they are usually linked to another two terms, which I will investigate in the end part of this chapter: process and product. In an article in the online journal Scenario, devoted to performative teaching, learning and research, Schewe (2013: 4) makes a distinction between small-scale and full-scale forms of drama teaching, where process drama falls into the first category:

Process drama, for example, falls into the small-scale category. Students and teachers are involved in challenging performative activities during which both the teachers conducting the class and the students take on and impersonate various roles, i.e. that of actor/protagonist, director and dramatist, as well as spectator. Over the course of the classes or teaching units, there is a continuous output in the shape of tangible creations (e.g. pantomimes, freeze-frame depictions and acoustic collages).

On the other hand, in large-scale forms, "the framework of the everyday classroom activity is expanded" (Schewe, 2013: 5). Rather than process drama, product drama could be better identified within this form:

Thus, for example, the staging of a production in a foreign language is a large form in the sense of a product-oriented project which is very time consuming and often stretches out over several weeks or months (Schewe, 2013: 5)

Marini-Maio & Ryan-Scheutz (2010: 3) also make a distinction between the terms theatre and drama:

The study of theatre (meaning of literary texts and their sociocultural discourses) and the use of drama techniques (role-plays, improvisational interchanges with language and/or body, exercises with nonverbal language) uphold the primary principles of communicative language teaching. […] The study of language through theatre can, therefore, place equal emphasis on receptive and productive skills.

Furthermore, Schewe (2013: 6) associates the definition of Theatre in Education with "the staging of a play especially created by semi-professional teacher-actors."

In short, drama in education gives more emphasis to the process, while theatre in education is used to indicate the performance of a play as the main objective. The two notions can be combined, such as in the case of the drama/theatre workshops organized at the University of Padova, where various drama activities are followed by a final performance at the end of the workshop. However, as the final performance is only the consequence of the work conducted throughout the year (even if the final performance represents an important step in the workshop), I will use the term drama in education in this dissertation, referring to all the activities

carried out in theatrical workshops. In this chapter, I will first provide a brief historical outline to highlight the narrow border between drama and education. Then, I have found it necessary to introduce two sections: the first one is about communicative language teaching in general, while the second has foreign language learning as its main topic. The central sections analyse drama in education and make a distinction between the topic in general and specifically for foreign language learning. Furthermore, the reader will encounter a section about drama and cultural learning and then meet the differences - but also the similarities - between process-oriented drama activities and product-oriented drama activities and how both help students in foreign language learning. Finally, the first chapter will deal with two of the main activities carried out in educational drama workshops for foreign language learning, namely 'improvisation' and the 'work on the text'.

1.1 HISTORICAL OUTLINE

Some recent research into the origins of educational drama underline the formative value of theatre (for example studies in the field of cultural anthropology by Victor Turner, 1982). In this regard, Antonacci, Guerra & Mancino (2013: 18) state:

> Innanzitutto è possibile esplorare il teatro come una grande Via di formazione dell'uomo, per comprendere il ruolo di questo potentissimo mezzo espressivo nel percorso individuale di crescita – per l'attore e per il regista – ma anche nel percorso di crescita collettivo per una comunità che nel teatro vede la messa in scena di una partitura significativa per esprimere le energie, le voci e le esigenze della collettività, sia in senso conservatore che eversivo.

The development of performances over the centuries has led not only to artistic theatre and social rituals; following this evolution it is clear that theatre, because of its nature, is educational. The following outline provides information about the educational shape of theatre through the centuries.

Ancient performance, besides having a ritual-religious valence, conveyed beliefs, told stories and, especially in the case of initiations, gave essential elements for personal and social education:

> Classical Greek comedies and tragedies were performed in the open air for the entire free male population of a city-state on religious holidays. The religious context underlines the importance of such performances for the social community and reflects the cult-like and ritual origins of drama (Pfister, 1991: 19).

Drama in ancient Greece had an educational role especially in the political-social field, first with tragedies, and then with comedies. Hemingway (2004: 2) explains the educational role of tragedies and comedies:

> Often, the dialogue between the actor and chorus served a didactic function, linking it as a form of public discourse with debates in the assembly. To this day, drama in all its forms still functions as a powerful medium of communication of ideas.

However, Stewart (2013: 16) argues that the dialogues between actors and chorus are prearranged conversations, rather than real discussions:

> Needless to say, dialogue was also a key element in Greek drama of the time, although the role of the chorus and the meter rendered this an artificial form of discourse that no one would ever mistake for a real discussion.

Whether or not these dialogues were artificial, Greek drama represented an example of a show where important messages were given to the audience. The main purpose of Greek drama was not the education of the audience, but passages where there were attempts to teach something or inform the audience about politics were frequent.

In the Middle Ages theatre maintained its educational nature but with further developments, especially for Christian education. As Schechner (2013: 46) points out, "a charismatic Christian church service heals, entertains, maintains community solidarity, invokes both the sacred and the demonic, and, if the sermon is effective, teaches". Benedictine monks began to accompany their singing of sacred hymns with gestures and movements, the first steps towards the emergence of liturgical plays. From that time onwards forms of drama-based education became increasingly popular (Coggin, 1956 in Schewe, 2013: 1). The emphasis was on the vital importance of mystery and morality plays in educating people at a time when

access to books and learning was reserved for the privileged classes of medieval society (Coggin, 1956 in Schewe, 2013: 1). Universities – learning places par excellence – were active centres in theatrical production and they formed several actors, but we do not know their personal names but only their common names, such as *troubadours* or *minstrels.*

During the Renaissance, with the growth of various forms of study and education and the rediscovery of the classics, one can find evident marks of the boundary between theatre and education. According to Wiles & Dymkowski (2013: 58), the "characteristics of this Renaissance are humanist accounts of the world that prefer to avoid Christian and other supernatural explanations." As Kuritz (1988: 154) testifies, "humanists stimulated individuality of thought by emphasizing the study of ancient dramatic literatures in education, providing new models for theatre artists, and advocating new standards for dramatic criticism". Close to the moral education of the students, there was also the preparation of the latter in the oratory arts and the introduction of the national language to schools and to theatrical literature.

Moving forward in time, the roots of drama in education in Great Britain are to be found in the works of two pioneers of the 20th century: Harriett Finlay-Johnson with the book "*The Dramatic Method of Teaching*" (1911) and Henry Caldwell Cook (1917). The former used dramatic games in order to help students to learn basic subjects (i.e. reading, writing, counting) and to help the personal growth of the child inside the classroom (i.e. taking decisions, organizing games with other children). The latter introduced the active method for the study of dramatic literature: improvisation and acting in the classroom was not only thought to help children to remember works, but also to be beneficial to the social and emotional development of the child. Cook (1917: 11) argues that:

> […] the child should be allowed to express his imaginings in the manner that most appeal to him, the way that is most natural. This will be the Play Way, with the high thoughts and noble endeavour of that super-reality which is make-believe.

In the 1930s the great defender of theatrical art used for educational purposes was Peter Slade[1]; starting from a creative game, he left the initiative to the protagonist/child without the purpose of acting on the school's stage. His basic argument was that "drama processes begin with the spontaneous, egocentric, creations of the child in movement and develop into the spontaneous creation of play, produced and acted by children" (Slade 1954 in Somers, 1996: 125). Drama in education emerged from the new thinking and atmosphere of experiment that characterised the British theatre of the mid-1960s, and from the developments in educational drama in schools that were taking place at the same time (Jackson 2013).

Between the 1970s and 1980s, drama found its place in education and large professional theatre groups started collaborating with schools. Jackson (2013: 26) points out:

> TIE[2] companies now cowered the complete educational spectrum: from infant schools to further education colleges, from youth clubs to special schools […] Several companies also explored ways of using the same material both for their study programmes and for their adult shows – part of a widening out from TIE to educational theatre for the community at large.

The following decade saw a strengthening of the link between drama and education:

> In the 1980s and 1990s communicative concepts of foreign and second language teaching and learning were thriving in Europe and worldwide." Taking heed of this development, advocates of drama in education, practitioners and foreign language teaching specialists became increasingly committed to the building of bridges between their respective disciplines (Schewe, 2013, Vol.VII, Issue1).

In the last few years, the number of contributions within this field has risen; in 2007, the foundation of the English-German online specialist journal *Scenario*

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[1] Peter Slade, who died aged 91, pioneered dramatherapy and, from 1947 to 1977, was Birmingham education committee's first adviser on drama. He brought sessions on the subject into schools and established relevant courses in education colleges. With that work, and through his Rea Street Centre, he won international recognition (Dodds Harry, "The first British dramatherapist", *The Guardian,* 20-08-2004).

2 TIE (Theatre in Education) companies uses drama for educational purposes, as DIE companies (Drama in Education), but the former pay more attention at the final performance; the preparation and acting of a play is their first aim. Nevertheless, their methods are close to what is been used in lessons within drama in education.

was an important step towards this discipline, but specifically for languages. Schewe (2013: 4) explains the content of the journal:

> This journal is geared towards linguists, language teachers, drama and theatre teachers, professional theatre specialists as well as second and third level educationalists. With its emphasis on the role of drama and theatre in teaching and learning foreign and second languages, as well as their corresponding literature(s) and culture(s), it has opened up a platform for a systematic and continuous discourse and exchange about drama- and theatre pedagogy in the teaching and learning of foreign and second languages (as well as in the areas of Drama and Theatre Studies, Psychodrama, Drama Therapy, Playback, Theatre, and Film).

Such as in Europe, also in U.S. there is a constant rise of contribution in this field and several universities are beginning to use a dramatic approach for foreign language learning; one of the online specialist journal is the *Journal for Learning through the Arts: a Research Journal on Arts Integration in Schools and Communities.* Asia is no exception, as it can be seen from the various contribution of Asian teachers and professors in the literature; *Asia-Pacific Journal for Arts Education* is only one of the important journal with discussions about this topic. The old teaching methods need to be developed as the world and people are changing and new teaching methods seem to be more effective in this period of globalisation. Always more universities are introducing these methods in their courses and the contributions are constantly rising, but, in the years to follow, further analysis of the importance of performative experience in foreign language learning and teaching will be needed.

1.2 COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

In the last few decades, second language teaching and learning has been affected by a theory, which became popular in the beginning of the 1980s, thanks to the works of Dell Hathaway Hymes. This theory, named communicative language teaching or the communicative orientation of language teaching, had a huge impact within the field of second language teaching and learning. Spada & Frohlich (1995: 2) summarize the heart of the theory:

[…] knowing a language includes much more than a knowledge of the rules of grammar (linguistic competence). Hymes drew attention to the importance of knowledge of the rules of language use (communicative competence) and this view was enthusiastically adopted and led to several developments of both a theoretical and applied nature.

Hymes' famous pronouncement (1972: 278) became an example to follow: "there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless". In order to understand the main differences between the old and the new orientation, I will use Widdowson's words (1987: 117-118) to explain the problems of the old approach to second language learning:

> The principal aim is to promote a knowledge of the language system, to develop the learner's competence (to use Chomsky's terms) by means of controlled performance. The assumption behind this approach seems to be that learning a language is a matter of associating the formal elements of the language system with their physical realization, either as sounds in the air or as masks on paper. Essentially, what is taught by this approach is the ability to compose correct sentences.

However, giving that "one linguistic form can fulfil a variety of communicative functions, and one function can be fulfilled by a variety of linguistic forms" (Widdowson, 1987: 119), other considerations are to be searched for. Widdowson (1987: 119) tries to answer to his question: "I would propose that in the process of limitation, grading, and presentation, we should think not only in terms of linguistic structures and situational settings, but also in terms of communicative acts."

Another confirmation of the changing orientation to second language teaching appproach comes Prabhu (1987: 2).

> Both the development and the exercise of grammatical competence were viewed as internal self-regulating processes and, furthermore, effort to exercise competence in response to a need to arrive at or convey meaning was viewed as a favourable condition for its development. It was decided that teaching should consequently be concerned with creating conditions for coping with meaning in the classroom, to the exclusion of any deliberate regulation of the development of grammatical competence of a mere simulation of language behaviour.

The orientation of Prabhu aligns with other researchers, "which support an exclusively meaning-based instruction – even though the research actually provided evidence that a combination of form and meaning was beneficial" (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995: 3).

There is a clear shift from focus on form, with grammatical forms and structures, to a focus on meaning and communication. Stephen Krashen (1982: 83), one of the strongest advocates for a communicative approach, claims that "second language teaching should focus on encouraging acquisition, on providing input that stimulates the subconscious language acquisition potential all normal human beings have." Focus on form is synonym of conscious language, which was the basis of the previous theory on foreign language teaching. However, Krashen (1982: 83) does not exclude the importance of grammar, but claims that grammar is a consequence of the learning and should not have the most important feature in teaching: "this does not mean to say, however, that there is no room at all for conscious learning. Conscious learning does have a role, but it is no longer the lead actor in the play". So, second language learners should be "provided by opportunities to focus on meaning and messages, rather than grammatical forms and accuracy" (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995: 3). Nevertheless, a simple focus on meaning cannot be enough if the learner is not able to understand the message: without 'comprehensibility', learners cannot acquire any language. "Comprehensible" is the optimal input according to Krashen (1982, 63):

> This is clearly the most important input characteristic. It amounts to the claim that when the acquirer does not understand the message, there will be no acquisition. In other words, incomprehensible input, or "noise", will not help. […] It explains why it is practically impossible for someone to acquire a second or foreign language merely by listening to the radio, unless the acquirer speaks a very closely related language.

Krashen (1982: 6-7) uses the world 'language acquisition' and not 'language learning' in order to emphasize the idea that the learning of grammatical rules and structure is subsequent to the natural acquisition of language:

Language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules, and does not require tedious drill. It does not occur overnight, however. Real language acquisition develops slowly, and speaking skills emerge significantly later than listening skills, even when conditions are perfect. The best methods are therefore those that supply "comprehensible input" in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear. These methods do not force early production in the second language, but allow students to produce when they are "ready", recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input, and not from forcing and correcting production.

Moreover, Krashen supports the idea of creating a good environment similar with low anxiety situations, but this topic will be discussed in the following chapters. Successive orientations claim that focus on meaning is not always the right choice, but, in some cases, *focus on form* may be necessary:

Focus on form refers to how focal attentional resources are allocated…during an otherwise meaning-focussed classroom lesson, focus on form often consists of an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features – by the teacher and/or one or more students – triggered by perceived problems in communication (Long & Robinson, 1998: 23).

That differs from a *focus on forms*, that is to say "the content of a syllabus and of lessons based on it is the linguistic items themselves", with "learners developing proficiency one linguistic item at a time" (Long, 1991: 44). The focus on form proves to be necessary, but should not be too interfering, as Long (1991: 45) reassumes:

SLA research findings like those briefly described here would seem to support two conclusions. (1) Instruction built around a *focus on forms* is counterproductive. (2) Instruction which encourages a systematic, non-interfering *focus on form* produces a faster rate of learning and (probably) higher levels of ultimate SL attainment than instruction with no focus on form.

Before moving to the next section, some clarifications about the present situation are essential, in order to understand why educational drama could help to ease second language teaching. Which approach is nowadays used in second language teaching for what regards Europe? Does a homogenization of second

language teaching among the various European countries exist or can anyone choose their own teaching method? To answer these questions, it is necessary to explain what the CEFR are and what function it has in the present second language teaching scenario. The website of the Council of Europe contains a clear definition of the CEFR:

> The result of over twenty years of research, the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (CEFR) is exactly what its title says it is: a framework of reference. It was designed to provide a transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses and curriculum guidelines, the design of teaching and learning materials, and the assessment of foreign language proficiency. It is used in Europe but also in other continents and is now available in 39 languages.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages has a very broad aim, where communication and the communicative approach play a very important part, as is clear from the CEFR itself:

> […] a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. (Council of Europe, 2001: 1)

The communicative approach is one of the most important in second language teaching in recent years and nowadays its effect are still visible. The following section covers aspects of second language learning and some theories about this topic, which are essential to understand educational drama and its utility within second language teaching and learning.

1.3 SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Whether or not the communicative approach to language teaching is more effective than previous approaches, second language learning has different implications from first language learning. As Lightbown & Spada (1993: 19) state:

> Some theories give primary importance to the learners' innate characteristics; some emphasize the essential role of environment in shaping language learning; still others seek to integrate learner characteristics and environmental factors in their explanation for how second language acquisition takes place.

However, "it is clear, that a child or adult acquiring a second language is different from a child acquiring a first language in terms of both personal characteristics and conditions for learning" (Lightbown & Spada, 1993: 19).

To analyse the "conditions for learning", Krashen (1982) could be of great help, when referring to the well-know "affective filter hypothesis". According to Krashen (1982: 31), a great number of affective variables about the success in second language acquisition can be placed into three sections: motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Motivation means that "performers with high motivation generally do better in second language acquisition"; self-confidence means that "performers with self-confidence and a good self-image tend to do better in second language acquisition"; finally, "low anxiety appears to be conducive to second language acquisition, whether measured as personal or classroom anxiety". There are said to be two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (see for example Ushioda, 1999). Intrinsic motivation is the desire to do something as an end in itself (e.g. studying for personal satisfaction), whilst extrinsic motivation is doing something for a separable outcome (e.g. a qualification, a job). Intrinsic motivation is generally considered the "optimal form" where motivation comes "from within" (Deci & Flaste, 1996, quoted in Ushioda, 1999: 21). This form of motivation comes from positive attitudes and feelings (Ushioda 1999: 21), and can be related to a student's experience, and appreciation, of other cultures.

Several factors influence a student's motivation and Ushioda (2001: 102) has tried to make a list:

- Academic interest

- Language related enjoyment/liking

- Desired levels of target language competence

- Personal goals

- Positive learning history

- Personal satisfaction

- Feelings about the target speaking countries or people

- External pressures or incentives

As far as second language learning is concerned, I would argue that the most important features are personal satisfaction and language related enjoyment or liking. According to the communicative approach, second language learning requires more active involvement on the part of students: if learners are not satisfied or they do not like the lesson, it is difficult to believe that their motivation will be high. Students need to be emotionally engaged in the lesson and their own personal feelings and involvement are strictly related with their own satisfaction in what they are doing. As Cook (1917: 9) points out "interest must be the starting point in all we do, or we shall not do well". Without interest, students will not be emotionally engaged and will not follow the explanation of the teacher with attention.

The implications deriving from the affective filter hypothesis are well explained by Krashen (1982: 32): "the Affective Filter hypothesis implies that our pedagogical goals should not only include supplying comprehensible input, but also creating a situation that encourages a low filter." Moreover, "the effective language teacher is someone who can provide input and help make it comprehensible in a low anxiety situation" (Krashen, 1982: 32). This low anxiety situation, where students are highly motivated, can help their self-confidence: a good environment, where second language learning could be easily learned. Another important issue in second language learning is the difference between natural and instructional language

learning. "Natural acquisition contexts should be understood as those in which the learner is exposed to the language at work or in social interaction" (Lightbown & Spada, 1993: 70), while "the traditional instruction environment is one where the language is being taught to a group of second or foreign language learners. Communicative instruction environments differ from traditional instruction environment and the programs are designed to resemble as much as possible a natural acquisition context. Lightbown & Spada (1993:70) describe communicative instruction environments as follows:

> Communicative instruction environments place the emphasis on interaction, conversation, and language use, rather than on learning about the language […] in these classes, the focus may occasionally be on language itself, but the emphasis is on using the language rather on talking about it […] students' success in these courses is often measured in terms of their ability to 'get things done' in the second language, rather than on their accuracy in using certain grammatical features.

The words "using the language" and "get things done" assume the need for an active approach to language, different from a static learning of fixed structures and grammar. A very useful method in an active approach to language learning and teaching is that of "tasks". Prabhu (1987: 24) defines the word task as "an activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process". However, while success in completing tasks involves more than linguistic competence – such as processes of understanding, thinking and stating outcomes – on the other hand it involves also less, as language needs to be comprehended only for a certain purpose (Prahbu, 1987: 68-69). The general acceptance of task-based activity as an effective method in communicative learning is supported by Prahbu's definition (1987: 69):

> While learners are engaged in an effort to understand and express meaning, a process of internal system-development is hypothesized to go on at a subconscious level of their minds. This process of system-building is thought to be activated or furthered by immediate needs, achieving grammatical conformity in addition to communication.

In the next section, I will introduce an active approach to foreign language teaching and learning, namely drama in education. Moreover, I will emphasize the importance of the multiple activities within educational drama and how they can help foreign language learning.

1.4 DRAMA IN EDUCATION

The use of drama in education could be described as a dynamic teaching and learning process during which a large number of drama-based methods are used in order to achieve special aims relevant for a specific target group. This cannot be a linear process, as the methods used do not fit a static environment: "Cultures and languages are porous; they meet, interact, exchange and slowly transform as they mutually influence one another" (Winston, 2012: 3). In order to understand better the role of drama in education, the following definition seems to embrace all its central elements:

> Drama in Education is an enactive learning process which derives from our unique ability to imagine, emphasize and project. It is a collaborative medium, accessible to all, the purpose of which is to explore past, present and future experience, our own and others, in an attempt to make sense of the world in which we live. The distinctive features of this process are: 1. The creation of an 'as if' context and fiction. 2. The taking of roles. 3. The motive power of feeling engagement within the fiction or metaphor and 4. The primacy of experiencing the "here" and "now" of the drama." (Norman 1999: 9)

This definition contains much food for thought; the first word we need to take into consideration is *imagine*. Drama asks the student or actor to portray himself or another person in an imaginary situation; every time an actor is on the stage he/she puts on a "mask" and tries to communicate an image according to what he/she has in mind. The same situation, for example portraying a person running across hot sand on a beach[3], will be portrayed differently by a group of students. Some students might focus on the hotness of the sand, others touch their feet, and others run as fast

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[3] An improvisation exercise, which was used during the theatre course at the University of Padova.

as possible. The ability to imagine is also an essential part of our lives, not only on a stage: before an interview we use our imagination to form a fictional picture in our mind of the situation that is going to happen, all the possible questions the interviewer will ask us, the possible answers we could give and so on. *Emphasis* is also a crucial element, as actors should learn what to give more or less importance to, how to stress some information, gestures, situations or voices; this also happens in normal life, for example in front of our boss or strangers, at work or during a family dinner. *Projection*, the third key concept cited by Norman (1999: 9), is the ability to transform the imagination and the idea of emphasis into a scene, either in front of an audience or only in front of a few fellow students. Good projection allows the audience to comprehend the situation the actor is portraying, so that the audience may emphatically get closer to the actor's mind.

Drama in education is a central element also in the "Mantle of the Expert" theory of Heathcote (see Heathcote and Bolton, 1994), where the learner is at the center of the learning. Learning grows around the learner such as a mantle, and teachers should create this condition; starting from the needs and interests of the learner, new approaches to learning are to be found. Among them, drama in education is one of key elements of Heathcote's theory, where "Dramatic role-taking permits the exploration of multiple viewpoints by giving students the opportunity to "walk in the shoes" of people other than themselves" (Aitken, 2008: 50).

Another example that can help us in the explanation of drama in education comes from Maley & Duff (1978) with the definition of "dramatic activities": "activities which give the student an opportunity to use his own personality in creating the material on which *part* of the language class is to be based". This draws on "the natural ability of every person to imitate, mimic and express himself through gestures. They draw, too, on his imagination […]" (Maley & Duff, 1978). Every student brings to the class different experiences, a consequence of his/her past and present life, so the general background is never the same. Norman (1999: 9) lists the "creation of an 'as-if' context and fiction" as one of the central characteristics of educational drama: fictional settings usually encourage students to engage actively. Byram & Fleming (2002: 143) argue that "drama also invokes looking

beyond the surface to the values which underlie them, and as such it provides an ideal context for explorations of cultural values, both one's own and other people's". This context is an ideal environment, where students can connect with each other and let their creativity spread within the class.

As already explained in the previous section, motivation is a central variable, which affects foreign language learning (affective filter by Krashen). Drama in education provides strong motivation to students as people generally identify drama as a powerful vehicle to catch students' attention. Noè-Le Sassier & Boyd (2010: 226) support the idea of drama as a tool that provides positive reactions in all their participants, with teachers included: "[…] a theme-based approach motivates instructors, too." In a traditional classroom, it may be hard for the teacher to hold students' attention for a long time: that depends on the class, on the teacher and on the subject, but usually not everyone listens and looks at the teacher for the entire lesson. The communication is usually unidirectional (from teacher to students) so there is no mutual exchange of experiences and information. With drama, these experiences are shared all together: "In fact, the multifaceted grandeur of opera tends to keep teachers interested, as they make the journey of discovery along with the students. (Noè-Le Sassier, 2010: 226).

The fact that in the group multiple stories and ideas emerge arouses interest; the participants feel this link between each other and this creates a power that in other classes is not so evident (Norman's definition describes drama in education as a "collaborative medium"). In order to understand better the differences between standard classes and this different type of foreign language teaching and learning method used during drama activities, the following section will be very helpful.

1.5 DRAMA IN EDUCATION FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

In foreign language learning, as we have seen earlier in the chapter, the environment is extremely important. The difference between natural acquisition, the traditional instruction environment and a communicative instruction environment has already been explained; drama in education fits into the communicative instruction environment and this has important implications for language learning. One of the

main problems of a traditional class compared with learning a foreign language with the help of drama is that the latter replaces some characteristics of traditional instruction with those typical of natural acquisition contexts (Lightbown & Spada, 1993: 72). Students could feel great pressure in class or see its environment as something artificial, as Krashen (1982: 162) points out:

> What is perhaps a more fundamental problem is that the second language classroom is seen, by many students and teachers, as an artificial linguistic environment regardless of attempts to promote "real" communication. The fact that it is a classroom, and the fact that the class is called "Spanish" or "English", of itself may subvert any effort to meet requirement two and may prevent students from fully focusing on the meaning of what is said. In other words, the filter may always be "up", to some extent, and many students will never get so interested in what is being said that they forget it is in a second language (Krashen, 1982: 162).

On the other side, educational drama, with the variety of discourse introduced through stories or acted out during improvisations or role-plays could resemble more real-life situations. In the examples I will analyze in the next chapter of the dissertation, drama activities are carried out through weekly rehearsals, in a period that last from one semester to a whole year. That means different situations compared to traditional classes, with their physical setting of fixed structures and repetitive dialogues usually present in foreign language textbooks. Because such interactions presuppose unique conditions (e.g. events, places, and people outside the classroom), they can only be simulated in the classroom (Ronke, 2005: 60). In drama activities, although the *as if* situations are artificial, simulating certain aspects of real communication can function as a 'training field' for the students, and is considered to be highly effective (Ronke, 2005: 60). In order to make *as if* situations as real as possible the teacher has different methods:

> The teacher tries to make the artificial classroom situation resemble the real one as much as possible, e.g., using sound effects in the background, bringing tangible objects to class (clothing, money, etc.), or recreating the real situation by using props (simulating countertops or box offices with chairs and tables etc.), thus bringing 'drama' into the classroom (Ronnke, 2005: 60).

Moreover, Bancheri (2010: 99-100) also sees the potential of this ideal environment with unique conditions that emerge during rehearsals:

> […] rehearsal is a process of refinement that, in a relatively short time, will bring an actor from reading a part to living that part, from observing a character to becoming that character; it is a process that will convert a theater space into an eighteenth-century *salotto,* a modern kitchen, a piazza. In the language classroom, however, rehearsal is much more; it is a study of language, culture, movements, and interpretation, as well as the development of reading, listening, speaking and critical and literary skills.

Another positive contribution to the idea of a safe, ideal and warm environment comes from Ronke (2005):

> One of the main benefits/goals of drama exercises is that they create a class atmosphere with a low affective filter (see Krashen, 1982), a learning environment that is sensitive to the individual personality of the learners, that helps to reduce anxieties and inhibitions connected with the language learning process, and fosters nonthreatening interaction among the students. Such a learning environment creates joyful and motivated FL learners and helps to store the new learning material faster in the long-term memory.

Positive feelings such as estabilishing a creative and collaborative atmosphere are thought to prevail during drama activities, but sometimes we may see something different: students could also experience negative emotions, such as insecurity or stage fright. O'Neill & Lambert (1982: 18) describe the idea of "emotional freezing": "drama can provide a powerful motivation to speech, and this speech does not occur in isolation, but is embedded in context and situation where it has a crucial organizing function." Collaborative tasks and fictional contexts in the language classroom can help students to control their anxieties and to overcome this mental block while speaking and relating with the others. Moreover, Marini-Maio & Ryan-Scheutz (2010: 5) underline the multiple advantages of this good atmosphere: "these peer-to-peer relationships are extremely useful not only for establishing a positive effective climate in the group, but also for promoting language learning and helping students develop critical thinking skills"

Emotions are involved in drama activities on two different levels: on the one hand, feelings are directly involved by acting them out during activities or performances. On the other hand, learners will have an emotional attitude towards drama activities themselves, as we have seen before. To the question "why do drama in the language classroom?" DeCoursey (2012: 7) gives a clear answer: "In order to mark elements of language with emotion so that students will remember them." Although sometimes students can experience bad feelings (especially at the beginning) while speaking in front of the class or a wider audience, the learning of foreign language through drama can be more memorable due to emotional aspects, rather than traditional learning situations which occur in a neutral setting. Language is not a purely intellectual concept, but textbooks may lack emotional elements; adaptability to the situation or the person you are speaking to, speed of reaction, intonation and so on are not elements which are not always taught in the classroom (Duff & Maley, 1978). Drama embraces these emotional elements and gives students a chance to practice language in situational context, which seems real even if they are "fictional" (think of the difficulty for a class to use language in communication where emotional elements, such as mood and feeling, are acted out, such as in the "real" world). As Neelands (1984: 46) points out:

> The opportunity is there for the class and teacher to step into imagined contexts 'as if' they were actually (authentically) happening to them, i.e. to suspend the reality of the classroom context in order to pretend, as a group, that they are *other* people, in *another* place, in *another* time.

Often, emotional elements such as mood and feeling are transmitted to the others through unconsciously communication, as Boal (2002: 39) explains:

> Human beings are capable of 'emitting' many more messages than they are aware of sending. They are also capable of receiving many more messages than they think to receive. That is why communication between two human beings can take place at two levels – consciously and unconsciously, i.e. on the wave, as it were, or in the 'undercurrent', by which I mean all communication established without passing via the conscious mind.

This communication happens in real life such as in dramatic activities, and "it is important to understand that the actor's creation must also be, fundamentally, the creation of interrelations with the other actors" (Boal, 2002: 39). In fact, when we speak, our aim is "not to exhibit static emotions, but to create rivers in flux, to create a dynamic" (Boal, 2002: 39). Again, as "to act is to produce an action, and every action produces a reaction – conflict" (Boal, 2002: 39). Language and emotions are parallel systems, as emotions affect the performance of the language; both are important in the communicative process between people.

In addition to emotions and the idea of a good environment, drama activities imply differences as regards the language itself. Firstly, as meaning is emphasized over form, there is a limited amount of error correction (Lightbown & Spada, 1993: 72); in order to hold the attention and the rhythm, little mistakes can be corrected at the end of the activity. Usually, in a communicative approach such as those in drama activities, students should use the target language as much as possible; students should make efforts to use it in class or during rehearsals and try not to speak their native language. However, it is inevitable that students at a certain point will revert to their native language during drama activities in foreign language; when people are excited or angry it is totally normal to express themselves through the mother tongue. Even if the teacher insists on the use of the foreign tongue instead of the mother tongue, it could also be of great help not to stress always that and let the activity develop. Teachers should obviously encourage the use of the target language within these activities and help students who are not entirely self-confident with it: "In collaborative role-play activities, instructors are freed to coach individuals and pairs to take risks, to experiment as speakers of Italian." (Noè-Le Sassier & Boyd, 2010: 231). Every student has a different degree of language difficulties, but "most students need to be coaxed to use new vocabulary and express emotion in the target language" (Noè-Le Sassier & Boyd, 2010: 231). With time students will come to associate the activity with the target language and they will have less difficulty to accept it. However teachers will be of great help while "turning the classroom into a studio for improvisation", where they "can support the effective processes that aid language acquisition" (Noè-Le Sassier & Boyd, 2010: 231-232). Maley & Duff (1978: 4) also claim that, "Drama can help

considerably by ensuring that language is used in an appropriate context, no matter how 'fantastic' this context may seem."

Another advantage of drama in foreign language learning is the possibility to use and develop non-verbal communication along with oral communication; non-verbal communication helps the listener to understand the message, as Lightbown & Spada (1993: 72) claim:

> Input is simplified and made comprehensible by the use of contextual cues, props, and gestures, rather than through structural grading (the presentation of one grammatical item at a time, in a sequence of 'simple' to 'complex').

Palechorou & Winston (2012: 49) call it a pedagogical advantage:

> A key pedagogical advantage of drama for additional language learners lies in its multimodal character. Drama does not depend on language alone, but uses objects, gestures, sounds and images along with words in order to communicate meaning.

The importance of non-verbal communication is often underestimate; Fonio (2012: 7) highlights the importance of this communication vehicle:

> The acquisition of nonverbal competences is in fact closely connected to fluency in oral communication, because the mastering of paralinguistic traits helps students to emphasise their speech, but also to bridge linguistic gaps as regards words and expressions.

As already explained in the previous sections, school textbooks do not generally convey emotions; in addition, it should be said that non-verbal competences are rarely approached in textbooks, but they are features that can be learned with direct communication exercises. As Fonio (2012: 7) claims, "Proficiency in nonverbal traits of the foreign language distinguishes culturally aware learners from those who are merely exposed to bookish oriented teaching." Non-verbal traits are essential in communication, and drama can foster those competences; "gestures form a pattern which is parallel and complementary to the text, and which needs to be memorised with the same accuracy" (Fonio, 2012: 7).

1.6 DRAMA AND CULTURAL LEARNING

Culture is a reality that is social, political, and ideological and the difficulty of understanding cultural codes stems from the difficulty of viewing the world from another prospective, not of grasping another lexical or grammatical code (Kramsch, 1993: 188)

Drama can foster language and cultural learning, especially in a product-oriented approach to drama (see the next section), where literary texts are performed in front of an audience. Students may find it difficult to understand other cultures - especially if they have no possibility to have direct contact with the target culture - so active approaches to a foreign culture are essential. As Moody (2011: 176) points out "An active classroom, one in which students must, in a sense, enter into and engage with the new culture, affords a perfect opportunity for that type of learning. And a theatrical presentation provides the pathway." Language learning is strictly related to cultural learning: they are complementary, as without an understanding of the cultural context it is difficult to learn the various shapes and features of the language. Again, Murphy (2011: 180) helps us to understand the reasons for the powerful power of drama:

> Students are also required to learn about and appreciate unfamiliar cultural information in order to perform the play in a meaningful way. That is, they must have a clear cultural context on which to construct their performance. In this way, language become less a foreign entity and more a familiar means of communication, while the otherness of the culture diminishes and can more easily integrate with the students' understanding of the play.

Written drama can open students to a relationship with the past, while its performance can bring history into the present as a lived experience (Jones, 2011: 111). Putting on the performance means that students need to act as if they were people from the target country, and culture. In order to perform a play set in 1920 in Great Britain for example, students from another country need to have a clear context of that specific situation, and that is the reason why often in drama lessons directors show videos or pictures from the places, society or habits of the people the class is going to reproduce. According to Jones (2011: 112), it should be

effortless to convince educators that dramatic texts (literary texts written with a view to performance) offer an invaluable mechanism through which to introduce students of foreign language and literature to the cultures they study. Of course, performing a play in the target language does not mean that the play comes from the target country, as directors could choose to translate a play in the target language. However, I suggest that a foreign play, either with a different language, but also from a different cultural background, helps students to a enter and visit the society they are facing, allowing them to understand the reason of some linguistic choices that could seem absolutely strange and absurd to them. As Fonio and Genicot (2011: 83) affirm,

> […]staging a foreign language play that presents a certain degree of linguistic and cultural thickness offers the teacher a series of possibilities when working with students to adapt (part of) the text, to readjust its dialogues for a certain audience, or to study cultural materials from the same area or tradition which could enrich the staging or clarify difficult scenes […].

In a foreign language classroom two cultures are compared, the target culture and the home culture; in the performance, the native language and culture affects the way in which we perform and act out the target language (both verbal and non-verbal communication are affected by the native culture). An example can be found in Fonio (2012: 7): "In the Italian cultural tradition, touching is, in particular, one of the paralinguistic parameters which is more difficult for non-native speakers to understand and to incorporate into oral communication." In drama in education, practice can have the function to diminish these differences in order to perform the part in the best way, helping actors to resemble as possible as the target character. Kramsch (1993: 48) gives a perfect summary of the cultural exchange in a foreign language classroom:

> Participants in the foreign language classroom create their own cultural context by shaping the conditions of enunciation/communication and the conditions of reception/interpretation of classroom discourse. […] they enact the traditional culture of the instructional setting in which they were trained; they echo the native culture of the society in which they were socialized; they act out the behaviour of speakers from the target society, which they have studied; their

discourse and that of their students are full of invisible quotes, borrowed consciously or unconsciously from those who taught them - parents, teachers, mentors – and from those who have helped build the discourse of their discipline. In fact, language teachers are so much teachers of culture that culture has often become invisible to them. (Kramsch, 1993: 48)

Nowadays, the number of interconnections and exchanges between people and cultures is rising due to globalisation. Universities, as well as schools, the marketplace and society in general, present a multitude of people with different backgrounds and nationalities, as we have never seen before. A growing number of people from different areas and cultures has relevant effects on society, as new people mean new ideas, new lifestyles, which could enrich this already multicultural society. However, nowadays, we are witnessing exchanges and migrations that are the consequence of wars, bad governments and uncivil laws, bringing poor and often, desperate people, to flee from their lands find a safe refuge in new countries. The meeting between the locals and the migrants is becoming one of the most important, but also problematic issues. This is the reason because I suggest that people should always consider the whole process before judging, and school may be the place (as well as the home) where children, and then students (at university) can learn to think critically and accept and appreciate diversity between people and cultures. Drama also helps to overcome this diffidence and allows people to have close contact with otherness, as Fels & McGivern (2002: 21) testify:

Through dramatic exploration, participants were invited into creative spaces of intercultural dialogue, negotiation and interaction that inspired thinking beyond the walls of the classroom and which emerged into "space moments of learning".

The effects of drama in education on culture can be described as positive. A more active involvement in the learning of a new language – especially with performances – aids students in entering the whole context where the target language is spoken and in understanding the cultural aspects behind a language. While working on a specific dramatic text, students learn something about the author, the text, the context in which the latter is set and so on. Moreover, students bring different cultural backgrounds during rehearsals and the collaboration between them causes an exchange of cultural ideas that could be a very enriching

experience for the participants in the project. Drama helps students to overcome the initial fright of relating with people from other cultures or in a different cultural context, because of this particular dynamic atmosphere that we have already spoken about in the previous sections. Culture and language are close to each other, as without a clear cultural context the learning of a new language would be incomplete. Now we move to the last section of the first chapter, where two essential terms in drama in education will be discussed; the two terms represent the different types of approach to drama and both have their characteristics that allow for foreign language learning.

1.7 PROCESS VS PRODUCT

In the previous sections, *process* drama and *product* drama have been mentioned, without giving a detailed explanation of the two definitions. In this last section, I would like to clarify the two terms and show how both can affect language in different ways. As Moody (2002) explains, "process-oriented" and "product-oriented" approaches to drama differ from each other as regards their goals:

> On the one hand, a process-oriented approach tends to focus on the dramatic medium itself, in which the negotiation, rehearsal, and preparation for a more informal, or improvisational, in class-dramatic representation becomes the focus for language learning. On the other hand, a product-oriented approach emphasizes the final staging of the students' public performance, wherein the concluding dramatic realization in front of an audience is viewed as one of the primary goals of the learning experience (Moody, 2002: 135-136).

"Process Drama" is a term widely used in North America, while in Great Britain the term "drama in education" is easier to find, and it is concerned with the development of a "dramatic world created by both the teacher and the students working together" (Liu 2002: 5). In a process-oriented approach, the process of learning through informal rehearsals is the most important thing, where fictional settings usually encourage students to engage actively; the most important step is to create among the students a sense of community (Del Fattore-Olson, 2010). Here, drama activities are learner-focused, not dependent on a script and concerned with the construction of imagined experiences. Supporters of process drama claim that a

final performance could obscure the goal of learning because students concentrate on the final show. Process-oriented drama is argued to be more creative; as Bendazzoli (2009: 160) argues, creativity "is normally linked to artistic activities", but it "can also be intended as the ability to find effective solutions and apply strategies in order to solve problems in novel and unconventional ways". Process drama always starts with a pre-text (O'Neill, 1995), that gives the initial input, and after which the activity begins, as Piazzoli (2012: 2) explains:

> In process drama the pre-text also provides the initial input, but goes beyond that; it becomes an ongoing thread for the entire duration of the drama. It constitutes the platform on which to create the roles and situation of the dramatic world; it contains the implicit tension which will fuel the dramatic explorations; it evokes unanswered questions that can create a particular mood or dramatic focus.

The creation of this dramatic world is carried out by improvisation activities, the most important exercise in process drama, which will be analysed in the following sections. To conclude, in process-drama, fluency is more greatly valued than accuracy and there is less pressure compared with a student that needs to act in a final performance.

On the other hand, the main goal of a product-oriented approach is to stage sketches or full-scale plays with students, such as final performances, and the main difference is the presence of an audience (an external audience). Product-oriented forms put more emphasis on accuracy than fluency and they may be more motivating for learners who prefer working on a concrete end-product; in Ryan-Scheutz & Colangelo (2004; 374) we have a testimony of this: "[…] since students took great pride in the project and in its final, public goal, they were highly motivated to devote themselves to competent and accurate communication". Another positive idea of the product-oriented approach is that of seriousness: a product-oriented approach to educational drama adds the seriousness of creating life-like situations (Fonio & Genicot, 2011: 5). Staging drama in a foreign language – which means also performing and this represents a concrete objective for learners. Anticipating the final performance in front of an audience, learners rehearse with the seriousness of children at play (play is one of the best and spontaneous way to

learn). A product-oriented approach could have a powerful impact on the student's motivation and concentration; in addition to the final show, there are other correlated activities that need to be taken into consideration. The writing or adaptation of the play, setting, lightning design, props or costumes choice are activities strictly correlated with the staging of a play and are of great importance for language learning development. As Fonio (2012: 2) explains, these activities "correspond closely to the communicative and action-oriented approach of the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe 2001), upon which many foreign language syllabi are now based." Different groups of students can fulfil these tasks and that allows the teacher to divide the work and the students to practice with a concrete objective in mind. In order to have a better view of the two parts I have compiled a table that could help us to understand the differences between the two approaches.

PROCESS DRAMA	PRODUCT DRAMA
- Participants experience personal growth through an exploration of their understanding of various issues within dramatic experience. - The drama is not usually performed for an audience. - Improvisation is the heart of process-oriented approach. - Teachers and students share an equal place in the analysis, development and production of the drama.	- The student's personal growth is measured through the learning of skills. - The primary objective is a formal play production. - Students have a scripted play or something already fixed before the play performance. - The teacher gives feedback and an own interpretation of the drama.

It could also be argued that a final performance occurs both in a product-oriented approach to drama and in a process-oriented approach; in the first case in front of an audience, while in the second case in front of other students that form another type of audience.

Speaking about this argument Ronke (2005: 118) points out that:

> […] in a drama-oriented foreign language class, the motivation to practice those linguistic features also increases because the learning situation (e.g. role plays, improvisations, play or scenes of a play) are interactive and are acted out with or in front of class members or a wider audience. Both the 'actor' and the 'foreign language learner' need to watch how they say things so they can be understood. The audience can give immediate feedback, and there is the realization that one day the student may face an actual target language audience.

Hence, process and product can be connected in drama projects, e.g. as students' process-oriented explorations of a topic (e.g. improvisations) are turned into a scripted play which is rehearsed and eventually publicly performed. They have also similarities and sometimes the boundary between each other is very close; in fact, often, drama workshops are a mixed elements, with an initial part closer to process drama and a second part that can turn into a more product-oriented approach. Process drama and product drama are two different approaches to drama in education, they have their pros and cons, but both are effective methods for language learning. When combined, process drama forms a valuable tool to exercise and rehearse the scripted play that will be performed; Nunley (2001: 185) experiences the potential of the workshop in process drama (here atelier):

> As the play's debut approaches, the atelier offers invaluable time for rehearsal; at atelier stages in the semester, it provides a space for play-acting activities that allow students to build up a sense of comradeship with their classroom castmates and a greater degree of confidence in their own performance abilities that will both improve their stage presence and help them speak in French with greater assurance and energy.

However, as Dalziel (2013: 105) points out, the importance of the whole process is invaluable: "the final performance or product is but the tip of the iceberg, with the whole process lying beneath". The following chapters are going to analyse two

main activities within drama workshops in foreign language, where the combination of the two type of processes – process and product – is further explained.

1.8 IMPROVISATION

Improvisation activities are the core of process drama and a very useful tool to develop foreign language competences. The most important language feature developed in improvisation is, of course, oral expression; in improvisation exercises, students are "encouraged to express themselves imaginatively through their own words and gestures" (Nunley, 2011: 188). Through improvisation, fictional worlds are created, maintained, and participants explore deep personal connections to themes and issues. The improvisations provide the impetus of questions as participants take on fictional roles answering who, what, when, where and why that fictional character exists in the fictional world. Sometimes the improvisation activities are prepared by the students (usually they have only a couple of minutes) and that has consequences on the language outcome. This planning of a task (here improvisation) enhances language use, as the students have the possibility to think about the topic for a few minutes and create in his or her mind the scene; that helps to improve fluency and the complexity of the discourse. Here, creativity plays an essential role and the actor has to find a way to express himself and solve a problem: "improvisation goes far beyond stand-up comedy routine and takes us into the realm of humorous spontaneity and enlightening and liberating creativity" (Sukhina, 2011: 246). The sense of interdependence and interaction between students is another key concept that can be developed in this kind of activity:

> In the course of the improvisation, each participant's interactions build on words, actions, and emotions put into play by others, leading all participants to develop a sense of interdependence and an appreciation for the energy and initiative of their classmates. The resulting dynamic of collaboration and confidence is key to students' progress as performers and as speakers (Nunley, 2011: 188).

Improvisation inevitably brings forth mistakes and reveals weak points which would not be visible in a memorized and rehearsed kind of interaction (Sukhina, 2011: 265). In this scenario, "verbal expression is often made difficult by an awkward or otherwise unexpected situation" (Nunley, 2011: 188), so students are asked to use their imagination and not merely to repeat the written words of another author. This is linked with the drama in education advantage of encouraging 'risk-taking', as Dalziel (2012: 4) states: "rather than being afraid of making mistakes, learners will be encouraged to take those risks which are so beneficial to language learning." Risk-taking acceptance is not very common in institutionalized education, where "students come to fear mistakes, to avoid them, and become ashamed of making them" (MacDonald, 2011: 278). However, it is extremely important to be aware that risk-taking has positive effects, and improvisation exercises are an example:

> Improvisational play, however, is an exploration of failure, or risks taken, and wrong decisions chosen. But out of every mistake grows an opportunity, and as in foreign language teaching and learning, permission to fail, to be imperfect, is essential. Both teachers and students must accept that sometimes something goes wrong, but they must also see that out of that situation something else can arise (MacDonald, 2011: 278).

In this communicative atmosphere, MacDonald (2011: 270) argues for the need to be mentally present in the communication in order to avoid mistakes and be prepared for the interaction:

> Improvisation can be seen as training for the unknown and as a way to learn to observe communicative details, be they verbal, tonal, gestural, or spatial. Training in improvisation is training in being physically and mentally present and aware in situations in which one find oneself.

In addition to its importance as one of the most powerful tools of process drama, improvisation can be used "as an approach to performance in front of an audience as an embellishment to pre-scripted material" (MacDonald, 2011: 279). Again, according to MacDonald (2011: 280), "improvisation helped us explore options for how to play each scene", a synonym of what is known as "devised

theatre", which will be analysed in the next section (see for example Dalziel, 2012: 4).

1.9 WORKING ON THE TEXT

In a workshop with a final show on a stage, the text language is also very important and it has a direct influence on multiple language aspects. While improvisation is a key concept in process drama, the work on the text represents one of the central activities in product drama. Giardinazzo (2009: 141) gives us a testimony of his work with a script: "Lavorare sul testo teatrale è stata senz'altro un'esperienza di grande valore didattico e interpretativo"[4]. There are several methods to perform a play within a drama workshop; the group could translate an original text, adapt it to the situation, and leave it identical to the original and so on. For example, a company that plays Macbeth exactly like the original text, with the same dialogues, chooses a specific language. On the other hand, another company could re-interpret the original text in order to turn it into something more understandable for the audience, with new structures (see fo example Dalziel & Pennacchi, 2012). Marini/Maio & Ryan/Scheutz (2010: 353-354) suggest about this topic that "for text that use an antiquated Italian, you may have students use their creativity to script a modern-day version of the play." Re-interpreting can have multiple meanings: a company could modify the text deeply, or only some words (e.g. "you" instead "thou". It should be said that a performed play is never, exactly the perfect repetition of a text; as Giardinazzo (2009: 150) points out:

> Le prove avvengono per scene singole e grazie ad un montaggio progressivo della *fabula* che viene sottoposta di volta in volta a rifacimenti e riscritture. Allora accade una cosa curiosa: come il passaggio reale non è mai lo stesso di quello rappresentato, così il testo cartaceo non corrisponde mai, se non generalmente, con la sua rappresentazione. [Rehearsals take place in single scenes and through the *fabula's* progressive assembly, where it is continuously re-changed and re-written. Then, a curious thing happen: such as the real passage is never as it is represented, so the paper text never correspond, except generally, with his representation].

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[4] Working on a dramatic text was without any doubt an experience with a great didactic and interpretative value.

Hutcheon (2012: 111) claims adaptation to be "both an interpretive and a creative art; it is storytelling as both re-reading and re-relating", where repetition should not mean sameness. It is extremely important to select an appropriate text, and the instructor should consider several factors, which are again clearly enlisted in Marini/Maio & Ryan/Scheutz (2010: 354): "Is the language accessible for participants and audience members? Does it contain and colourful and up-to-date expressions and vocabulary words that participants will enjoy incorporating into their everyday speech?". The main issues are the length of the text, the audience, and the cast; the first two are linked with each other, as it is clear from Dalziel's example (2013: 98):

> For our workshop, performance length is clearly an issue: audience appreciation can be hindered by an overly long performance, especially in view of the fact that in this case non-native speakers of a language are acting in front of a predominantly non-native speaker audience.

Of course, as it is more difficult for a non-native audience to follow a play performed in a foreign language, people can get tired earlier. Moreover, another central issue is that of "knowing and unknowing audiences" handled by Hutcheon (2012), that is to say the text should be adapted also to the knowledge of the audience. To cite an example, in the show of 2015 at the University of Padova, the language of the text was adapted to match an audience of students (with good knowledge in English literature) with an audience of parents (with lower knowledge of English language and literature). Furthermore, the demands of the cast should also not be underestimated; there are students who are willing to do important parts and other wants smaller parts. However, as Dalziel (2013: 99) points out, "parts need to be as far as possible of equal length so as to give all a fair chance to improve their language and acting skills; if this is not possible then students may be assigned more than one smaller part." This brings forth other problems, namely the difficulty to explain the change of actors that play the same part to the audience, and the issue of the genre of the actors (usually more female participants). Both issues will be

explained in detail later, with the direct records of the workshop at the University of Padova.

If an instructor chooses to adjust and re-interpret an original text, it can have some consequences on students, because often they have to do this work themselves. Students can work alone or in small groups to adapt the text to the situation previously discussed in the class and that surely has a positive effect on language learning. As Dalziel (2013: 100) explains:

> If the students themselves are involved in the adaptation of the text, such innovative operations can represent a means for stimulating their creativity, contributing to the development of their critical skills and language abilities and boost to motivation.

Re-adjusting a script means learning new words, new structures and being able to insert them in the right place inside a sentence. Adaptation can prove to be an effective language exercise because of the amount of imagination and language skills that are required to achieve this aim. Either if the students themselves create the text or if the text is an original one, working on it is an essential language exercise:

> As the students work more and more closely with the play, questions will inevitably arise about language usage. The instructor can turn these inquiries into mini-language lessons that will further enhance the understanding of the play and brief exercises that will increase the students' interactions with the text. In the end, language skills will improve not only because lines have been memorized but also because grammar instruction was made relevant to the ultimate task of performance (Murphy, 2011: 166).

Often the work is divided between small groups of students, so that everyone can participate actively in the tasks. This leads to an important topic, namely "devised theatre", where the previous topic of improvisation is seen as a starting point to the creation of the play. As we have seen that adaptation never reproduces the text exactly as it is written, students often need to add something new, and create their own scenes. That is not an easy job, but improvisation can be of great help also in this product approach to drama, when students are asked to act out scenes based on

sections of the text that is going to be performed. A clarification of the term "devised theatre"[5] could be find in Dalziel (2013: 101):

> These activities not only enabled the students to become familiar with the themes of the play but also provided inspiration for the final performance, adding an element of what may be called "devised theatre".

Improvisation exercises are useful in order to give students ideas for making the play more enjoyable for the audience, as the simply adaptation of the text in the target language is not always the right decision. Due to the issues analysed in this section, changes are often needed, and improvisation could be a solution to find the perfect adaptation for the audience and the cast of the show. In the second part of the dissertation, this topic will be handled in detail, with examples and witnesses of participants in drama workshops for foreign language learning.

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[5] Devising is a process of making theatre that enables a group of performers to be physically and practically creative in the shaping of an original product that directly emanates from assembling, editing and re-shaping individuals' contradictory experiences of the world (Oddey, 1996 :1).

CHAPTER TWO

THREE DIFFERENT WORKSHOPS

Attraverso l'incontro, il dialogo e il confronto, l'arte antica del teatro crea uno *spazio* e un *tempo* privilegiati in cui riscoprire le radici dell'università (Garcia, Zucchiatti, Biscu, 2009: 7).

The previous chapter was an overview on drama in education, which was useful in order to have a solid ground that permits the reader to understand better the three workshops presented in this chapter. All of them have similar objectives and fall within the field of drama in higher education for foreign languages; they are from different European countries (Italy, France and Germany) and carried out by three different universities: the University of Padova, University of Grenoble and Reutlingen University. As I myself participated in the workshop at the University of Padova, most attention will be given to this one, but the examples of two other similar workshops will be of great value in order to understand the issue of drama in education for foreign language learning. I will analyse the different workshops, find similarities and differences, and explain the reasons for the attention universities have given to this particular topic. Moreover, the other two courses offer alternative insights for discussion on topics that could be secondary in the Padova workshop and that allow me to create a full picture of the benefits each part of the workshop has on the students' language learning. In order to do so, it is necessary to compare the educational settings, language settings, aims, actors and their goals and the other related activities of the three different workshops. Comparison helps in making decisions and statements; furthermore, it can also help one to understand the 'unfamiliar', by contrasting it with something you already know. Here, as I followed the English theatre workshop at university, the comparison with two other similar workshops at other universities, could help me

to develop a deeper analysis of the issue of drama/theatre in higher education for foreign languages.

The structure chosen to fulfil this aim is a point-by-point pattern, where you work back and forth between the sources you consider in your paper discussing one point of similarity or difference at a time (Jamieson, 1999). Each section will be presented as follows: one topic and its comparison in the three workshops (or within the workshops that involve the topic). The information about the workshops at Grenoble University and at Reutlingen University are taken from the articles in the online journal "Scenario": (Fonio & Geneieve, 2011: Vol.VI, Issue 2; Fonio, 2012: Vol.VII, Issue 2 and Giebert, 2011: Vol.V, Issue 1).

2.1 WORKSHOP SETTING

Department of Linguistic and Literary Studies (DiSLL)[6] proposes the "Theatre in English" workshop at the University of Padua for all university students as an extra-curricular activity. It is suitable for the acquisition of three CFU for four different courses of study: Lingue, Letterature e Culture Moderne, Mediazione Linguistica e Culturale, Lingue e Letterature Europee e Americane and Lingue Moderne per la comunicazione e cooperazione internazionale. There are other foreign-language theatre workshops offered to the students (Spanish, German, Romanian and L2 Italian), but we will concentrate on the English theatre workshop carried out in the academic year 2014-2015. The role of general co-ordinator and language instructor is played by the prof. Fiona Dalziel (coordinator of the workshop since 1997 and Assistant Professor English Language), while Pierantonio Rizzato[7] is responsible for the theatrical training of the play and was the director of the play. The workshop lasts for one academic year, from the end of October to

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[6] Department provides the funds for the workshop and collaborates with the Centro Linguistico di Ateneo (CLA), which offers the rooms for the rehearsals.

[7] He works for the TPR (Teatro Popolare di Ricerca) which, along with Teatro de l'Inutile, Carichi Sospesi, Teatrocontinuo and Amistad Teatro, belongs to the Cooperativa di Impresa Sociale TOP (Teatri Off Padova). In one year the five companies act around 150 shows, both for adults and children, and which attract thousands people as audiences and hundreds students as actors. Taken from: www.teatropopolare.org.

June, where it ends with two public performances. Rehearsals take place in the same classroom the whole year: clearly, a room full of chairs is not suited perfectly to theatrical purposes, but the participants manage to create an "empty space" where students are able to act freely. In previous years, the group rehearsed in the theatre of TPR (Teatro Popolare di Ricerca). Each year, the number of students involved in a single workshop vary from fifteen to twenty-five students, with the possibility to continue the workshop for the following years.

The second workshop I will analyse takes place at Grenoble University with the Italian professor Filippo Fonio as director. The Department of Applied Linguistics for Non-Specialist Students (LANSAD) at Grenoble University carries out a workshop for a class of Italian through drama practice. The workshop last for two-terms and consists in one two-hour meeting per week for 24 weeks. For both specialist and non-specialist students, drama language classes represent one of the many options in their choice of core elective courses that they have to integrate into their study program, selecting them from fields other than their main subject. Nevertheless, students attending these classes do not obtain language credits, but merely optional credits. For this reason, the drama class is not always guaranteed (it is necessary to have a minimum of 7 students attending the course, with at least 4 of them being non-specialist students) because of a possible lack of students interested in a class not offering language credits (Fonio, 2011).

The International Office of Reutlingen University organizes the third workshop. Since the workshop was purposely designed to include both German and international students, it was offered within the framework of the campus-wide integration project SWITCHRT, funded by the PROFIN programme (Programm zur Förderung der Integration ausländischer Studierender) of the German Academic Exchange Service. It was offered for the first time in 2009, and it is open to students from all departments; now it also involves students from Tübingen University in Tübingen, due to the scarce participations in the first years of the workshop. It usually sees the participation of fifteen students from different faculties every year, and it is mainly conceived for those who are studying business and law. In fact, the workshop attempts to teach business English, with the setting of an old text (often from Shakespeare), which is revisited and turned into business language, a branch

of ESP (English as Special Purpose). As Choudhary (2013: 138) specifies, ESP "is confined to the teaching of English to the learners who have specific goals and purposes: these goals might be professional, academic or scientific." Each course lasts for one semester, so the university is able to offer two theatre workshops every year, and the director is supported by a business English professor (English native speaker) and by the International Office.

The three workshops have the same organisational setup: the university or a single department provides funds and spaces for the course, which is an extra-curricular activity and where students can also obtain a small number of ECTS credits (as in Padova). The number of the students is restricted, with a maximum of twenty-five students: in order to stage a full-scale play the number should not be too high. Marini-Maio & Ryan-Scheutz (2010) also share problematic considerations about the number of students involved in a single course:

> Too few participants will usually not pose insurmountable difficulties, as students can always play multiple roles or take on both design and acting responsibilities. The opposite situation – having too many students for the available roles – often turns out to be more of a challenge for the director of a foreign language production. You may want to limit enrolment by instituting a "first come first served" policy or by using auditions to thin out the group.

All three workshops have a final performance, but the skills students acquire during the rehearsals are the real essence of the workshops, as we can understand by reading Dalziel's article (2012: 8):

> This article has attempted to show how even when the ultimate aim of a foreign language drama workshop is a product in the form of a full-scale performance, improvisation and storytelling can play an important role in making the process as, if not more, important.

Moreover, evident marks of the importance of the process can be found in Murphy (2011: 172-173):

As mentioned earlier, the central goal to this theatrical collaboration is for students to think about theatre beyond the written words on the page and to also have a stake and a true participatory role in their own learning process. […] Additionally, the practice of acting itself can be a very useful tool in the study of a second language.

In our case study, the workshop duration varies from one semester (Reutlingen University), to one year (Grenoble and Padova). This has relevant consequences on the workshop structure, because with only one semester, there will be less time for process drama activities (role-plays, improvisations, etc.), and most of the workshop will be devoted to the preparation and rehearsal of the play.

2.2 AIMS OF THE WORKSHOP

The development of foreign language skills is the first of the workshop of Padova, as noted by Dalziel (2013: 98):

In its early years, texts from contemporary theatre were chosen (playwrights such as Pinter, Stoppard and Wesker), as often happens in drama workshops whose main aim is the development of foreign language skills.

In order to reach this aim, the workshop is based on weekly rehearsals with "improvisation and storytelling activities proposed to the students which had the aim of fostering their language competence and creating strong group dynamics while familiarising them with the play" (Dalziel, 2012: 8). Role-plays, warm up activities and much more served as preparation for the final performance, where students are asked to act in English in front of an audience. The development of communicative competence, useful in social interaction, is a natural consequence of the workshop. This social interaction enhances the possibility of language learning by connection with fellow students:

The interactional group activities intrinsic to drama and theatre courses prove very conductive to learning. In the many stages that lead to the performance, students show a tendency to either offer to or seek in their fellow students some linguistic, social, and affective support in the understanding, pronunciation, and memorization of the play; in

organizational issues: and in all the aspects that the preparation of a public performance requires. (Marini-Maio & Ryan-Scheutz, 2010: 5).

The development of foreign language skills - especially oral competence – is the main aim of Padua's workshop, along with group works, culture development and other activities.

Grenoble University offers the staging of a full-scale play in Italian in their workshop. The aim is to stimulate students in foreign language learning (in this case the Italian language) and a product-oriented approach "may prove very beneficial in terms of students' commitment and of intercultural learning." (Fonio, 2012: 1). Fonio (2012: 5) also stresses the importance of the "comic" as a way to convey cultural meaning:

> Wordplay is obviously only one of the comic forms which it is possible (and probably easier) to exploit for a pedagogical aim. "Comedy of situations" and "comedy of characters" are both important when working on Italian comic theatre, as we have seen, and I am convinced that they are also amongst the most immediate ways to convey cultural contents.

The comic is also "especially valuable for introducing learners to the features of nonverbal communication" (Fonio, 2012: 7). In order to support the thesis of drama practice usage in language learning, Fonio and Genicot (2011) have tried to find a convergence between CEFR parameters with artistic practice in teaching foreign languages. Among others, the CEFR parameters ask "for explicit promotion of universal values such as democracy, interculturalism and the encounter with other people – which can easily be put into correspondence with the drama tradition of dialogue and debate" (Fonio and Genicot, 2011: 3). Furthermore, the CEFR approach stresses the fact that contents of learning should be connected to everyday situations and that foreign cultural contents, particularly regarding lifestyles and habits, should be placed at the centre of the learning process – authentic pedagogical supports being crucial in this respect (Fonio and Genicot, 2011). Drama practice matches these objectives with dramatic scenarios that resemble everyday life situations and with the analysis of the specific cultural context before putting on a final performance. Along with foreign language learning, the workshop at Grenoble

University stresses the need to foster other aspects, such as socio-political intents, pedagogical concepts and competences, a consequence of the guidelines of the CEFR parameters. According to the directors of this workshop, drama practice in second language learning can enhance the demand of a 'European uniformity' highlighted by the CEFR overall acceptance and help to strength these competences.

Reutlingen University offers students a foreign language workshop, in order to allow them to improve English for Special Purposes through drama practice. In this case, as the courses at the university are mostly for business students, the workshop aims at "improving students' oral competence by giving them the opportunity to use (business) English in fictional but meaningful situations and by using it as the working language throughout the whole workshop" (Giebert, 2011: 1). As proficiency in one foreign language is essential for business students, and due to limited time for classroom oral practice, Reutlingen University has proposed the workshop to overcome these issues and help students in foreign language discussion practice outside normal classrooms hours. Moreover, a practical direction of the workshop (business English), is seen as a motivation for students to participate in a drama workshop:

> We hoped, however, that students of business subjects (or engineering) might be more motivated to participate in a theatre workshop if they could perceive a practical, career-related benefit, such as improving their business English and their presentation skills. On the other hand, we assumed that being introduced to expressions and vocabulary from the world of business would be useful for the humanities students from Tübingen also (Giebert, 2011: 3).

The workshop also gives the possibility for weaker students to have practice in foreign languages; they have the chance to develop language skills that they can use in normal classrooms, where they have much more difficulties than other students. Doing an extra activity enhances the skills of weaker students who are willing to learn, and gives them the possibility to reach other students' language level.

> Moreover, classes are often rather heterogeneous: students in one class might show proficiency levels in English ranging from A2 to C1 or above. This poses the problem that

the weaker students might experience problems keeping up, if progression is too fast, or the stronger students might start to feel bored, if progression is too slow. Offering a workshop in which the participants can improve their English with the help of theatre activities shows an innovative approach to tackle some of these issues (Giebert, 2011: 2).

The three workshops have the learning of a foreign language as their main aim; however, the three seem to have slight differences in how to reach this aim. In the Padova workshop, the main focus is on the whole process, where all the activities are centred on the development of communicative competences: oral skills, pronunciation and the movement of the body are essential features that need to be studied. The final performance is but a consequence of the work done through the year, as Maini-Maio & Ryan-Scheutz (2010: 6) claim: "no matter what the shape of the theatrical task, the final performance is a tangible product encompassing several processes that often overlap". The workshop at Grenoble University pays particular attention on the importance of culture: intercultural connections are at the centre of the workshop and the activities are prepared in order to give students (often multicultural students) the chance to share and exchange knowledge. As Byram and Fleming (1998: 2) argue, learning a language as it is spoken by a particular group is learning the shared meanings, values and practices of that group as they are embodied in the language". Moreover, the use of a literary text allows students to become familiar with the target culture: "In our specific case in Grenoble, we also allow students to work with contemporary Italian playwrights, which only enriches the cultural exchange" (Fonio & Genicot, 2011: 77). According to Schewe (1998: 220), the use of drama and dramatic text in teaching culture is immediate:

> But – in the context of teaching culture through literature through drama – I would even go a step further. We must not stop at 'nner activities' in our classrooms. The films in our head need to be made and shown. And this is obviously where drama can play an important part. Which medium would be better or more immediate 'showing medium' than drama?

Furthermore, Sobral (2011: 86-87) analyse the duality of language and culture:

Foreign language instructors teach both language and culture (and one cannot be divested from the other), and therefore the language is simultaneously the goal and the barrier. The language is the messenger and the message, but students have to learn how to form all structures and sound patterns in order to gain insight into the cultural messages embedded in the language, within the language. Students will learn to decipher these cultural messages as they acquire more language, and are thus more able to express themselves in the target language.

This is enhanced when the teacher has a different background, such as in the case of Padova and Grenoble, with both teachers who are native-speakers. In this case, Jin & Cortazzi (1998: 98) claim that, "in such cases, teacher and students bring different cultural experiences and expectations with them, not only as content, but also as medium since there are cultural ways of learning all subjects, including foreign languages."

The workshops help to develop foreign language skills, which are a vehicle for intercultural exchanges. Without the ability to communicate, the comprehension of another culture is complicated.

The workshop at Reutlingen University focuses more on English for Special Purposes rather than the foreign language as a vehicle for cultural exchange. It is structured so as to expand students' knowledge of business English, and to enrich their linguistic heritage, which could be useful on entering the job market. The choice of business English also derives from the willingness to attract business students, who are usually reluctant to participate in drama workshops: "The theatre groups at these universities attract students from almost all departments. Business students, however, rarely, if ever, seem to find their way into a theatre group" (Giebert, 2011: 4).

The three workshops focus on the learning of a foreign language, with some differences. The Padova workshop is mainly focused on the acquisition of oral competence, and the group is mainly composed of students of Literature and Language courses. The University of Grenoble tends towards the developing of foreign language skills along with cultural knowledge of the target language, using the comic and focusing on the importance of non-verbal communication to transmit cultural context. Finally, Reutlingen University focuses on the learning of a special language, which could be useful for the students' future careers.

2.3 LANGUAGE SETTING

The students involved in the Padova workshop come from different courses, but the majority from Literature and Language studies: the foreign language level varies from B1 to C1 level, according to CEFR parameters. The activities are often carried out in English, but sometimes students turn to their mother tongue while speaking with each other or with the Italian director of the play. The workshop offers a collaboration between two co-ordinators, Fiona Dalziel (English native speaker) and Pierantonio Rizzato (Italian native speaker). Because of that, students tend to use the English language with the former and their mother tongue with the latter. The mediation of Fiona Dalziel, with the help of another English native speaker tutor, Ralph Church, is essential to develop foreign language skills. While one group rehearses a scene, another group has the possibility to read the scene and practice pronunciation with the above-mentioned professors, the same combination as described in Del Fattore-Olsen (2010: 280):

> In order to perfect the pragmatic aspects of students' language skills, focusing on pronunciation and intonation, the approach should be based upon a combination of theatrical and pedagogical means: basic theatrical exercises are intermingled with the practice of pronunciation and intonation in order to bring students to a deeper understanding of phonetic rules and a more harmonic rhythm in speaking.

The reading of the script that will be acted out in the final performance is a good language exercise, where students start to get in touch with the characters they will perform. According to Del Fattore-Olson (2010: 276):

> In order to avoid an impersonal or, even worse, tedious reading of a play and to create a frame of mind linked to a play, it is useful to ask students to sit in a circle on the stage and read the lines of the characters before they know which character they will perform.

It should be said that, in the workshop in Padua, students already know the parts they are going to perform while reading the script; however, it is still a good exercise, as the teacher listens and corrects everyone's pronunciation and

intonation. It is necessary that students fully understand their own parts, in order to act out their character in the final performance. In fact, Del Fattore-Olsen (2010: 276) points out that, "to offer a convincing reading, students must understand the lines each character is saying as well as grammatical structures and lexicon". Students are required to reach a good level of pronunciation before acting in the final performance, so this activity is carried out several times in the workshop.

Improvisation exercises cover a substantial part of the first part of the workshop, due to their language learning benefits to students. According to Noè-Le Sassier & Boyd (2010: 231):

> Improvisation is fundamental to acting and, in some sense, to language learning itself: it is analogous to strategic competence. Improvisation requires awareness of the five physical senses and of the communication act, as well as an attitude of engagement and play.

Sukhina (2010: 264-265) makes a list of four advantages that improvisational drama and games can bring; first of all "it is an off-book activity", that is to say the acting could be more natural for students than acting with a script in mind. Secondly, "improvisational acting enables students to employ a bigger scope of linguistic and cultural knowledge that they could otherwise use": due to their autonomy, students can use more cultural references or they simply feel free to imitate the speaking behaviour of the persons they are representing. Thirdly, "when allowed this freedom, students normally come up with something they can really relate to, thus making their language use more personal and their knowledge more internal and profound": as with the second advantage, here students draw on their own beliefs and ideas to refer to the culture they are imitating for the audience, and let their imagination take flight. The last advantage cited by Sukhina (2010: 264-265) is that "improvisation inevitably brings forth mistakes and reveals weak points which would not be visible in a memorized and rehearsed kind of interaction": in spontaneous acting, forms coming from their mother tongue come up and that allows teachers to analyse students' mistakes and to correct it after the activity. To sum up, Dalziel (2012: 5) contextualises improvisational activities:

Improvisational activities such as these saw students actively engaged in their theatrical and language learning, creating characters and expressing emotion with their whole bodies. In other words, they could be said to have been researching their own experience or, in a social constructivist perspective, making sense of previous knowledge by means of social interaction.

Role-play activities are another important touchstone of drama in education. Ryan-Scheutz (2010: 292) claims that "the role-playing mode often (quite magically) helps lower effective boundaries that stifle students' ability to flourish in oral production". These activities need no script, but are merely improvised or only roughly prepared: "practices are never merely monotonous and boring repetition of lines but constitute real learning and communication where language and cultural interactions occur" (Bancheri, 2010: 101).

The University of Grenoble focuses more on the phonetical side of language, as Fonio and Genicot (2011: 9) clarify:

With reference to linguistic features, phonetic learning is a fundamental part of foreign language courses through drama. One of the main tasks of the teacher in general is to transmit to students a correct, or normative, pronunciation. It is sometimes useful to repeat the same words and sentences over and over during the class, and especially during rehearsals. By doing so, the student's phonetic (and musical) awareness and self-confidence are developed further. Moreover, pronunciation practice can contribute to a long-lasting form of knowledge, rooted in an active body in a concrete, even if pretend, situation.

In Italian, phonetic and phonological variation have sociolinguistic implications, with the large variety of dialects present also in our country. In fact, another topic of conversation in Grenoble is the exposure to these linguistic differences:

An important part of the process of phonetics learning often consists in exposing students to varieties of pronunciation, phonetic inabilities, regional phonetics, conversational habits or verbal tics (Fonio & Genicot, 2011: 9).

Of course, it is a challenging activity, because only advanced level students can recognise the phonetic and phonological differences; however, with practice, every

student is able to notice these little linguistic features, which proves essential in the Italian language:

> In order to familiarise students with these phonetic elements, we started by playing a series of videos and audio recordings that featured lisping characters or Southern Italian speakers, followed by selfrecorded versions of the same dialogues with no lisping or in standard Italian pronunciation. In the case of the play by Giovanni Allotta this proved to be particularly important, because many of the play's jokes and puns are based on linguistic misunderstandings due to ambiguous word pronunciation (Fonio & Genicot, 2011: 9-10).

The positive effects of pronunciation in educational drama has been shown to be effective also by Dodson (2002:165):

> Over the course of the term, we used tongue twisters, poems and short speeches from plays that we were reading […] we also worked on breathing, speaking from the diaphragm, and projecting without shouting, which are all traditional drama techniques to speak more clearly. Overall, the students seemed less anxious about speaking English aloud after these exercises.

Furthermore, the University of Grenoble focuses on the intercultural connection that happens through the language, where the latter becomes a vehicle for cultural exchanges. That can be seen in Fels & McGivern (2002: 22): "each one of us is an embodied text, and as we engage in conversation and interaction, intercultural texts are written or spoken or played into shared memory and presence". Inside the multicultural group, there is a constant exchange of ideas and opinions, which is one of the aspects of the CEFR that should be developed in a foreign language class, according to the guidelines from the Council of Europe:

> An important aspect of CEFR that should encourage foreign language teachers to promote drama practice in the classroom is its socio-political intent, namely the explicit promotion of universal values such as democracy, interculturalism and the encounter with other people – which can easily be put into correspondence with the drama tradition of dialogue and debate (Fonio & Genicot, 2011: 2).

As already mentioned, the language setting at Reutlingen University's workshop is quite different from the other two workshops. The language of the course is a special language, which implies that the language used will be more restricted than in a normal foreign language workshop. The focus on a more restricted field of words gives the possibility to widen language knowledge within the field (business English), more than in a normal drama workshop. Speaking and reading skills, other than business English are the advantages students take from this workshop:

> Students who participate in the project are given ample opportunity to improve their spoken English: first, by practising the lines of their assigned roles and, second, by using English as the working language throughout the whole project. Apart from speaking, students can practise their reading skills, enlarge their (business) vocabulary and practise basic (work-related) writing skills since part of the scheduling is done via e-mail as students are required to inform the director when they cannot come to a rehearsal (Giebert, 2011: 7).

Oral skills can also been developed by means of short coaching sessions with a native speaker, where intonation and pronunciation can be more deeply examined than in a traditional classroom:

> Moreover, in order to perfect their parts, they are offered one-on-one pronunciation coaching sessions with a native speaker, who teaches business English at Reutlingen University (Giebert, 2011: 7).

As in the other two workshops, self-confidence is one of the natural and positive consequences of an educational drama course for foreign language learning:

> Students who participate in the project can improve their presentation skills by putting their newfound knowledge about body language, voice projection, articulation etc. into practice and by having to live through at least one performance, they will gain confidence for standing in front of an audience, speaking a foreign language (Giebert, 2011: 7).

Language can be divided into three sections: transactional language, discussion language and performance language (Duff & Maley, 1978). As the name itself suggests, transactional language is used when shifting from one situation to

another and there is an action needed (e.g. "it's my turn", "let's repeat again", etc.). Discussional language involves all the language used in the rehearsals, so as to comment or to discuss the activity, to agree or disagree with a decision (e.g. "I don't like it", "He could do another character", etc.). Finally, performance language embodies almost every language function that can come into play while doing the performance, as it depends on the nature of the play. The first and the second should be made part of the language learning activities from a very early stage, as it may prove very difficult or not possible to operate without them. Both are used in all three workshop, as the language of discussion was similar, with exception of some use of the mother tongue instead of the target language (like the example mentioned above for the University of Padova).

Language, as already mentioned in the previous chapters and sections, is also composed of non-verbal language, essential for complete communication between two or more persons. All the three workshops pay attention to this topic, with different activities or exercises, and directly or indirectly, all of them help to develop non-verbal skills. In Padova, mute improvisations are an important activity as well as spoken improvisations; Culham (2002: 96) speaks about 'dialogues' when referring to silent interactions: "I have become intrigued by the sorts of "dialogues" that take place in the silent interactions". Non-verbal language allows the student/actor to think about the character, his or her characteristics and behaviour, in order to ease the process of reproduction. The student needs to create a mirror of the personage and help the audience to enter the character's mind, and, through non-verbal language, has the possibility to think about the same situation in a context with oral interaction, but representing it in a different way. As Culham (2002: 105) explains, there is a need to talk about what is happening or what has happened to let the other understand what is going on:

> Powerful emotional experiences often release a competency in English of which neither the teacher nor the student has been previously aware. It is the need to talk about what has happened that gives students the capacity to find the words.

During imagination exercises, students often stop and are not able to continue their activity: "many students block their imaginations because they're afraid of being

unoriginal" (Johnstone, 2007: 87). I also encountered this problem during the improvisation exercises in the Padova workshop, especially the first times we were acting in this type of activity. Some students were afraid – I cannot use the word reluctant because everyone was willing to act – to perform an improvisation, while they were more confident with a written text. According to Johnstone (2007: 87-88), we have a wrong concept of originality:

> The improviser has to realise that the more obvious he is, the more original he appears. I constantly point out how much the audience like someone who is direct, and how they always laugh with pleasure at a really 'obvious' idea. Ordinary people asked to improvise will search for some original idea because they want to be *thought* clever. They'll say and do all sorts of inappropriate things. If someone says 'What's for supper?' a bad improviser will desperately try to think up something original. Whatever he says he'll be too slow.

Students try to act originally, and in their view, they try to do things others do not expect. However, they usually do not act out their first thoughts, because they are told not to do so:

> I learned never to act on impulse, and that whatever came into my mind should be rejected in favour of better ideas. I learned that my imagination wasn't 'good' enough. I learned that the first idea was unsatisfactory because it was (1) psychotic; (2) obscene; (3) unoriginal (Johnstone, 2007: 82).

When they try to think up something original, the rhythm of the improvisation slows down and the activity loses its primary goal: to improvise. In our case, after a few weeks of improvisation exercises, all the students started to feel involved in the activity, and the exercises run quickly and more fluently.

2.4 THE ACTORS AND THEIR GOALS

There were 22 student-actors enrolled in the workshop at the University of Padova (2014-2015) and the number of female students was higher than the number of male students. The majority of them came from Modern Languages and Literature courses and only few of them, from other courses of (undergraduate or

postgraduate) study or were already graduated. All of them had previously had experience of this type of workshop and everyone had already followed one workshop at the University of Padova. While the first year they could be attracted by the possibility to earn CFU credits in an alternative way from exams, the fact that they re-enrolled in the same workshop the following year/years highlights the positive environment and effects of the workshop. That is not always obvious, because as Spolin (1999: 7) claims, sometimes we see something different:

> Our simplest move out into the environment is interrupted by our need for favourable comment or interpretation by established authority. We either fear that we will not get approval, or we accept outside comment and interpretation unquestionably.

In our culture, approval and disapproval are felt as something necessary to the development of positions, but if the student/actor personality should emerge as a working unit, "all words which shut doors, have emotional or implication, attack the student-actor's personality, or keep a student slavishly dependent on a teacher's judgement are to be avoided" (Spolin, 1999: 8). Moreover, "the expectancy of judgement prevents free relationships within the acting workshops" (Spolin, 1999: 8). In the workshop at Padova, almost everyone followed the course more than once, and as they were not obliged, I assume they enjoyed the atmosphere of the workshop (the assumption is true, as we will see from the questionnaires of the participants in chapter 3). That means they built up strong group dynamics, and even if not everyone got along with the whole group, nobody was excluded from it. As Spolin (1999: 10) argues:

> A healthy group relationship demands a number of individuals working interdependently to complete a given project with full individual participation and personal contribution. If one person dominates, the other members have little growth or pleasure in the activity; a true group relationship does not exist.

In fact, a group should be a source of possibilities, not of exclusion:

> When working with a group, however, playing and experiencing things together, the student-actors integrate and find themselves within the whole activity. The differences as

well as the similarities within the group are accepted. A group should never be used to induce conformity but, as in a game, should be a spur to action (Spolin, 1999: 10).

This was the case of Padova, where the same group followed the drama workshop for three years; the environment allowed the single actors to participate actively in the workshop and everyone was able to bring his or her own experience.

The number of students involved in a single workshop is another important issue; while exercising in a process-oriented approach to drama in education (the first and biggest part of the workshop), the number of actors is not so relevant compared to a product-oriented situation (the second part of the workshop). In product drama with a final performance, the actors' number is a delicate issue, because a final performance with a high number – or low – of actors would be difficult to put on. From my experience in the workshop of Padova, I think that the ideal number goes from ten to twenty students; however, while a low number of actors could be handled, an elevate number can create a lot of problems. There are several techniques that help to overcome such an issue; in Padova we used the double casting in the workshop of 2012-2013, with the Shakespearean play "Midsummer Night's Dream". "Kiss me Kate" (a musical, based on "The Taming of the Shrew") was performed in 2013-2014, and due to the low number of actors in the original play, the director chose to add some characters.

At the University of Grenoble, students enrolled in the workshop usually vary in number from ten to fifteen students, "whose proficiency in the target language ranges from intermediate to advanced level" (Fonio, 2012: 2). Moreover, some features of the script and of the characters are designed and prepared considering the actors' characteristics, and the comic aim of the performances directed by Filippo Fonio. The use of the comic is useful to maintain a high level of seriousness:

> Almost every teacher practising the staging of comic plays or sketches with students would agree with the paradox that the strong desire, and sometimes the anxiousness that students feel in their yearning to make the future audience laugh, introduces a high degree of seriousness in classroom activities from the beginning of the staging project (Fonio, 2012: 3).

Although this characteristic of the comic is very important, it also has consequences on the actors themselves:

> This is particularly evident while performing for the first time in front of a large audience, because seeing and/or hearing the audience laugh when one is telling a joke or making funny movements on stage – not forgetting that being in disguise always enhances the comic effect – gives the performers immediate proof of efficacy. My students have always reacted in a very positive way to "hot" audiences and to the strong emotions they feel every time the show becomes somehow interactive. They even experienced situations where they had to stop acting until the audience stopped laughing (Fonio, 2012: 3).

The comic eases students' approach to foreign language drama, especially for novice actors; in the workshop at Grenoble, they have found a positive method to let students with little experience in the field act in a more relaxed environment, which also proves to be very effective and appreciated by the audience. Students involved in the workshop usually have strong motivation. As with the participation in the course students do not obtain language credits; students choose the workshop out of personal interest and not because they are forced to choose it. A summary of this can be found in Fonio (2012: 2):

> For both specialist and non-specialist students, drama language classes represent one of the many options in their choice of core elective courses that they have to integrate into their study program, selecting them from fields other than their main subject. Nevertheless, students attending these classes do not obtain language credits (which every student has to get in order to complete his or her academic year) but merely optional credits. For this reason, group opening in the drama class is not always guaranteed (LANSAD groups open with a minimum of 7 students attending the course, at least 4 of them being non-specialist students) because of a possible lack of students interested in a class not offering language credits. At the same time, students applying to the class generally show strong motivation and/or drama interests.

Reulingen University instead has two workshops a year, and 15 students are usually involved in any single workshop:

> Each semester, the project group consisted of about 15 students (from Reutlingen University and Tübingen University) with very different language competence levels,

different national origins, different majors and different motivations to join the project. Language competence ranged from (estimated) A2 to native speaker competence. The students were majoring in business and management (17), languages (10), sciences (chemistry 4, biology 1), law (1), engineering (3) and (2) social sciences (Giebert, 2011: 4).

As in Padova, this workshop has to face challenge regarding the actors' gender: for the first production, they had to find a solution to turn male characters to female ones:

> Since 14 of 15 actors in this production were female, modifications had to be made to include them all. Some characters, such as Banquo and the princes, were simply turned female. Moreover, a number of well-known female characters from other Shakespeare plays made an appearance as employees of Scotland Inc. Thirdly, the roles of the three witches were considerably enlarged with them becoming a team of unscrupulous human resources consultants, giving dubious career advice to Macbeth (Giebert, 2011: 5).

Given the international orientation of the University and the various English courses offered, the presence of foreign students is high; the drama workshop is indeed full of international students, which gives the course a very interesting intercultural shape:

> Of a total of 37 participants, the different nationalities were represented as follows: German (16), Chinese (7), American (3), French (3), Turkish (2), Italian (1), Indian (1), South Korean (1), Kenyan (1), Peruvian (1), Russian (1) (Giebert, 2011: 4).

Group cohesion is made difficult by the time constraints, as the workshop only has one semester to rehearse, and that differs from the other two workshops analysed in this dissertation. In a single semester students have time to know each other, but not very deeply, as Giebert (2011: 9) points out:

> For stronger group cohesion and a longer time period for inter-university contact, it would be desirable for the groups from Reutlingen and Tübingen to meet earlier during a production or even to form mixed rehearsal groups. However, it seems unlikely that participants will agree because the students have limited time and adding travelling time to and from rehearsal in another city would probably lead to a loss of participants. Also, the

high turnover rate of participants at the end of each production leaves little room for continuity and long-term skill building – whereas in more traditional student theatre groups, participants mostly stay two to three semesters at least[7]. Often students need a longer period of time in order to 'open up' and develop their acting skills

Having analysed the differences between the actors and their aims in the three workshops, now the dissertation will move further, with two sections where the activities will be analysed in detail. First, there will be a discussion on process and product and the different weight each workshop gives to both of them, and finally I will present a detailed overview of the educational setting of the workshops.

2.5 PROCESS AND PRODUCT

In the previous chapter I explained the difference between process and product in educational drama for foreign language learning and also the fact that sometimes the two could overlap and come together in a single workshop. Now I will analyse in detail the structure of the three workshops, especially that of the University of Padova. It has already been said that the latter embodies a mixture of both process and product, but how exactly do they work together? The workshop last one year, from October until June, when it ends with a final performance. The first part has more characteristics of the process approach, while in the second part (from March) the focus is on the product. A similar approach can be found in Moody (2002: 136) with his notion of "essential play"; in his view "At the heart of this notion is the belief that foreign-language learning can be enhanced through creative group activities that utilize drama through both the process and the production of dramatic activities". Moody (2002: 136) clarifies the term 'essential play" with this definition: "I believe that in many cases both approaches overlap in their actual implementation in the classroom and require elements of 'play' that I consider essential". I partially agree with him, as the approaches often overlap and the product is very important, especially in encouraging students to participate in such a workshop; however, I would argue that the 'essential' in this sort of approach is the process and not the play. Throughout the whole process, the actors are prepared to be ready to act out in front of an audience, they develop foreign language skills

(as in a product approach), but here they have the possibility to understand their mistakes and they have time to change their approach to the 'other', both the audience and the fellow students. It should be said that a final performance stimulates students' motivation, because of its concrete shape and the reward they can receive from the audience or from the teacher.

> A process-approach, which involves the evolution of students' ideas into some forms of dramatic realization, will not inspire that group of students adequately unless learning goals are made visible and tangible through small-scale *products*, which show participants that an actual audience other than the teacher will ultimately value their efforts (Moody, 2002: 136).

Although the final performance is seen as something more special for students, the potentiality of the whole process before the final performance is essential to the building of the play; it has also proved very helpful by Moody himself (2002: 136):

> Finally, one of the most significant conditions that is integral to essential play is that student motivation is greatly enhanced through exercises and projects that allow the students to benefit from their freedom to concrete in enjoyable ways – that is, to play. Doing a play, or improvising a dramatic situation, should also meaning fun.

The workshop at the University of Grenoble pays more attention to the final performance, and all the activities involved during the rehearsals of the play. The workshop is almost completely turned into a product-driven approach to educational drama for foreign language learning. In an article, Filippo Fonio (2012: 2) emphasizes the importance of full-scale theatre in order to motivate students: "my experience so far has persuaded me that public performances are, on the contrary, a powerful stimulus for students to maintain their attention and concentration".

Reutlingen University divides the workshop into five different stages, which I will add below and which are taken from Giebert (2011: 4). The first one is the preparation (four to six weeks): the director chooses a literary pre-text or overall theme for a series of short plays and creates original scripts or adapts existing texts for the project. Then, the recruiting and introductory phase begins (three to four

weeks): the project is advertised to students, introductory meetings are held. The group plays improvisation games, group members get to know each other, they are introduced to the current semester's topic and read the script, group members can express preferences for roles, the script is discussed and, if necessary, changes are made and specific vocabulary is introduced. Thirdly, a rehearsal phase (eight to ten weeks): roles are assigned, smaller 'scene teams' (if short plays are being done) emerge. Character work follows and accompanies rehearsals, ideas for costuming and use of props emerge during the rehearsal process. Students are strongly encouraged to take part in the pronunciation coaching and additional character work offered as small group or one-on-one sessions conducted by a native speaker. The next phase is the performance phase: technical and dress rehearsals take place in the actual performance space. The group meets as a whole and then students perform one or two shows on campus. Finally, after the performance, students are involved in the last part of the workshop, namely a recapitulation phase: the group meets to watch the video of the show, an informal evaluation of the project is carried out through talking about what students liked about the project or what they would change.

The three workshop have different approaches and are structured differently; in the workshop at Padova the time spent on process drama activities appears to be higher than in the other two workshop, where the main focus is on the final performance and the rehearsals of the play. Reutlingen University only has one semester of time to put on the play, so it is obvious that due to time constraints, the activities of process drama need to reduced. In the following section, I will analyse some specific activities, both in process and product drama, and explain the reasons for their use and the positive effects they have on foreign language learning.

2.6 EDUCATIONAL SETTING

In this section, I will go through some single activities carried out in the workshops, in order to show what happened in practice during the meetings. Beginning with the University of Padova, we will then have a short presentation of the University of Grenoble and end with the explanation of the different phases and the different activities carried out in the workshop at Reutlingen University.

As concerns the process, the variety of activities carried out in the workshop of Padova was high, and each one was proposed to students following a dynamic and task-based learning method, which has already been explained previously in this dissertation.

> Tasks can be labelled according to the kind of activity they require of the learner, for example, role-plays tasks and decision-making tasks, or according to the language skill they focus on, for example, listening tasks or writing tasks […] tasks can also have their own individual names, for example, 'spot-the difference' […] (Ellis, 2003: 210-211).

Task-based learning helps the development of all the language skills, as Ellis (2003: 10) points out:

> A task can involve any of the four language skills. The workplan may require learners to: (1) listen to or read a text and display their understanding, (2) produce an oral or written text, or (3) employ a combination of receptive and productive skills. A task may require dialogic or monologic language usage.

At the beginning of the course, students usually do not know each other, so the course starts with warm-up activities where students are asked to interact with each other, in order to create as soon as possible a relaxed and collaborative atmosphere. The majority of students are graduating in Modern Languages; in the workshop in the academic year 2014/2015, as students already knew each other, there was no need to do initial exercises for socialization, so the group could concentrate more on other activities, such as improvisation. However, warm-up activities are the heart of group dynamics and have the function of getting ready for more difficult tasks, thus in the first weeks the rehearsals started with this type of activities. Boal (2002: 264) claims:

> In reality the function of these exercises is not only warming up but forging a 'group' out of a bunch of people, a sort of 'communion' – if we do something together we become a real group, rather than a mere a juxtaposition of individuals.

Below, I would like to show and explain some activities the group carried out during the English theatre workshop. It is impossible to list all the activities and here is also not the right place, but a deeper analysis of some activities could be helpful to understand the wide variety of positive effects these have on the students' language and on the students' behaviour in general.

2.6.1 PROCESS-DRIVEN ACTIVITIES

- Presentation exercise

Exercise

Members of the group walk around the class (or the stage, or the place used for the activity) and every time they come face to face with another person, they give a very short presentation of themselves. The name, age, hobbies and short sentences are enough, as the group is composed of at least of fifteen persons; each student should speak with almost everyone and the activity should be very dynamic and with no pauses. At the end of the conversations, namely when everyone has finished the dialogues, the group gather in a circle. The tutor chooses a different person every time, and the other students should remember their conversations and give as much information as possible about the person chosen by the tutor.

Remarks

This is one of the first exercises to be presented in every sort of group, from theatre groups to normal classrooms. Presentation is the first thing to do when people from different places and situations gather, in order to create a relaxed atmosphere and help people to get to know each other. This activity is slightly different from normal presentations, such as in classrooms: here students are asked to walk around and change their partners, speaking directly in a one-to-one conversation, while often a presentation entails a unidirectional line, from one student to the entire class. The student needs to pay attention to what the partner says and at the same time to present herself or himself in a positive but brief way. The language of the conversation is not very difficult for the students' level, but the exercise could be

helpful to improve the speed of reaction to possible questions from the partner and to practice intonation and pronunciation. The more information the students are able to give, the better the outcome of the activity.

- The plain mirror

Exercise

One person looks directly into the eyes of the person facing him or her, and one person is the 'subject' and the other resembles the 'image', as also explained by Boal (2002: 130). The subject undertakes some movements with his or her body, while the image should try to copy, like a mirror. As Boal (2002: 130) suggests, the subject should not be the enemy of his/her image – the exercise is not a competition, nor is the idea to make sharp movements, which are impossible to follow; on the contrary, the idea is to seek a perfect synchronisation of movement, so that the image may reproduce the subject's gestures as closely exactly as possible. After a while, the couple changes, so that participants can work with more than one single partner.

Remarks

This activity belongs to the series of exercises suited for helping actors see what they are looking at; as Boal (2002: 129) argues, "the exercise develop the capacity for observation by means of 'visual dialogues' between participants; obviously the simultaneous use of spoken language is excluded." The exercise could be seen as a very simple one, but silence requires much concentration. Moreover, the connection between participants could be developed through this activity, as it contains an exchange, which is very powerful due to the absence of verbal communication.

2.6.2 PRODUCT-DRIVEN ACTIVITIES

- READING THE SCRIPT

Exercise

All the students are sitting in a circle with copies of the text, and each student reads his or her lines in a loud and clear voice. This exercise can be conducted in smaller

groups, where students do the same work; doing so - reading the lines of single scenes – the activity could be less boring for students who are not involved in a particular scene and who should only listen. The teacher will need to give feedback on students' pronunciation and intonation, so that each one will be prepared for the final performance. During the reading, which can be done in normal classrooms or even outside, students are not required to wear any costumes indicating the role they will play.

Remarks

This important activity is also analysed by Lys, Meuser, Paluch & Zeller (2002: 215), who claim that reading provides "an effective bridge between literature and theatre, between reading the play and acting in it, and between theory and practice." The student becomes familiar with the script and he or she is able to understand the text, the character's characteristics and has the possibility to ask questions about the play. The activity must be completed with concentration, but it often proves not very difficult, because it involves no full memorization as students read from the text. The text could be read several times, but the first reading, according to Lys, Meuser, Paluch & Zeller (2002: 215), "helped develop an understanding of the content and action in each scene and also created a unique sense of community". Finally, it has a positive effect on intonation and pronunciation, as the help of a tutor allows students focus on comprehensibility.

- WRITING AND ADAPTING THE SCRIPT

Exercise

A product-oriented approach to educational drama for foreign language learning requires a large amount of work, namely the advertising of the play, costumes, props, searching for an available theatre or space to perform the play, tasks which are divided between the teacher and the students. The writing and adapting of the script may be assigned to a small group of willing students who start cutting out parts, adding parts, adjusting the language to make it more comprehensible for the audience. The teacher can always revise the work, before giving the whole script to all the actors.

Remarks

As mentioned above, writing and adapting a text is a challenging activity, with many issues to handle. First, there is the discrepancy between the number – and gender – of students and characters in the play. As Dodson (2002: 172-173) explains, there are several techniques to avoid overcome this problem:

> Turning one character into two and dividing his lines; having one or more students take on backstage roles (lights, set, costumes, publicity), become the stage manager, or work as the assistant director; writing in extra characters to accommodate the number of actors; or eliminating characters or doubling up on roles when there are too few actors

2.7 TEXT ADAPTATION

In the year 2014-2015, the final performance of the workshop was more complex, and included five small plays based on works by Cornell Woolrich[8]. Four plays were based on four short stories and one of them was based on a short novel ("The Bride Wore Black"); students had to write short dialogues suited for theatre, starting from a short story which was not primary intended for this purpose. This is not very easy, especially for students who have never done this work before; however, they have shown great originality and creativity. Now, I will add the initial part of the original story "Dead on Her Feet", followed by the initial scene of the same story students have written for the final performance.

The original text of "Dead on Her Feet"

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[8] Cornell George Hopley-Woolrich (1903-1968) was an American novelist and short story writer. Among the twenty-two novels and more than 200 short stories published under his own name or under the pen-names "William Irish" or "George Hopley", Woolrich's masterpieces include "Three O'Clock" (1938); "The Bride Wore Black" (1940); "The Black Curtain" (1941), "Rear Window" (1942), "Rendezvous in Black" (1948). At the height of his career, during the 1940s, while French readers were snapping up copies of Woolrich's "black series" in translation, his motifs and moods began to dominate those black-and-white American thrillers, that we now call *film noir* (Bassett, 2011: viii).

"And another thing I've got against these nonstop shindigs," orated the chief to his slightly bored listeners, "is they let minors get in 'em and dance for days until they wind up in a hospital with the D.T.'s, when the whole thing's been fixed ahead of time and they haven't got a chance of copping the prize anyway. Here's a Missus Mollie McGuire been calling up every hour on the half hour all day long, and bawling the eardrums off me because her daughter Toadies ain't been home in over a week and she wants this guy Pasternack ar-rested. So you go over there and tell Joe Pasternack I'll give him until tomorrow morning to fold up his contest and send his entries home. And tell him for me he can shove all his big and little silver loving-cups —" For the first time his audience looked interested, even expectant, as they waited to hear what it was Mr R. could do with his loving-cups, hoping for the best. "— back in their packing-cases," concluded the chief chastely, if somewhat disappointingly. "He ain't going to need 'em anymore. He has promoted his last marathon in this neck of the woods." There was a pause while nobody stirred." You all standing there looking at me for" demanded the chief testily. "You, Donnelly, you're nearest the door. Get going." Donnelly gave him an injured look. "Me, Chief? Why, I've got a red-hot lead on that payroll thing you were so hipped about. If I don't keep after it it'll cool off on me? All right, then you. Stevens!" "Why, I'm due in Yonkers right now," protested Stevens virtuously. "Machine-gun Rosie has been seen around again and I want to have a little talk with her—" "That leaves you. Doyle," snapped the merciless chief. "Gee, Chief: whined Doyle plaintively, "gimme a break, can't you? My wife is expecting —" Very much under his breath he added: "—me home early tonight?" "Congratulations: scowled the chief, who had missed hearing the last part of it. He glowered at them." get it!' he roared. "It's below your dignity, ain't it! It's too petty-larceny for you! Anything less than the St. Valentine's Day massacre ain't worth going out after, is that it? You figure its a detail for a bluecoat, don't you?"

A piece of the first two scenes of "Dead on Her Feet" performed in Padova:

Scene 1
[Everybody is getting ready on the dance floor for the marathon]

PASTERNACK: Good evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome to NAME marathon dance contest, around and around and around we go, where we stop nobody knows; and we are only beginning folks, only beginning. And when will it stop? When will it end? When? Only when just two of these wonderful kids are left, only when the last two dancers stagger and sway, stumble and swoon, across the sea of defeat and despair to victory. One couple and only one will walk out of here over broken bodies and broken dreams carrying the grand prize of one thousand dollars. The clock is ticking ladies and gentlemen. I said the prize because only one couple will dance on to fame and fortune. Those who give up, those who give out, those who give in, OUT. Tough rules, but these are tough times. Come on folks; let's hear it, LET'S HEAR IT. *[Everybody claps and the contest begins]*

Scene 2

[at the police station. Chief, Donnelly, Stevens, Doyle]

CHIEF: These nonstop shindigs have to stop. They let minors get in and dance for days until they wind up in a hospital. We can't accept that anymore. Mollie McGuire has been calling up every hour all day long because her daughter ain't been home in over a week and she wants this guy Pasternack arrested. One of you will go over there and tell Joe Pasternack I'll give him until tomorrow to fold up or...or.....is that clear? *[breaths heavily]* What are you all standing there looking at me for? You, Donnelly, get going.

DONNELLY: I can't Chief! I have a red-hot lead on another case you put me on if I...

CHIEF *[interrupting]*: All right, then you Stevens!

STEVENS: But Chief, I have to go and have a little talk with Machine-gun Rosie and I can't...

CHIEF: That leaves you, Doyle.

DOYLE: But chief, my wife is expecting me, can't you gimme a break?

CHIEF *[getting angry]*: Oh, I get it! It's below you dignity, ain't it? I'll put you all back where you started!! I'll...I'll..

[after a moment of silence]

DONNELLY: By the way Chief, I heard that Smith has been swiping bananas from Tony on the corner again, and...and getting the squad a bad name after you told him to pay for them.

First, there is a substantial difference in the structure: on one side there is a short story and on the other side there is a theatre script. How have students shortened the story? They have cut the most important information in their view and finally they have transformed it in a dialogue. In Padova, students involved in the adaptation and writing of the play in the workshop of academic year 2014-2015 used the cutting strategy (cutting lines or dividing lines in order to create more characters) or doubling roles as there was a higher number of students than roles. Furthermore, with the help of the director, chose to introduce a character with the function of explaining to the audience the hardest passages. It is similar to the situation explained in Dodson (2002: 173): "we created a narrator who would introduce each scene and remain on stage in character throughout the whole play, reacting nonverbally to the dialogue around her". In fact, they have added the first scene, where one of characters (Pasternack), makes a monologue: this scene is needed to help the audience understand the situation. "Dead on Her Feet" is the third story of the whole final performance, and as it is performed immediately after the first two, the audience could be confused without this "introduction" (Pasternack's monologue). If we focus on the first sentence, the adaptation and simplification is evident:

> ORIGINAL: "And another thing I've got against these nonstop shindigs," orated the chief to his slightly bored listeners, "is they let minors get in 'em and dance for days until they wind up in a hospital with the D.T.'s, when the whole thing's been fixed ahead of time and they haven't got a chance of copping the prize anyway.

> ADAPTED VERSION: "These nonstop shindigs have to stop. They let minors get in and dance for days until they wind up in a hospital. We can't accept that anymore".

The work was challenging; it should be said that the five stories were also mixed in the script in order to have a constant variation of the plot, and keep the audience attention at a high level. The play fragmentation also had consequences on the rehearsals throughout the year: in each scene, there were only a few students involved, so it was possible to rehearse more than one scene at the same moment. Moreover, as Colangelo & Ryan-Scheutz (2010: 152) points out, "though time constraints may prevent you from producing the entire play, putting on individual scenes in class is an excellent way to create a mini language-through-theater experience". Due to the plot fragmentation and this large amount of small scenes, the actors were required to memorize short dialogues and not long monologues and that has multiple consequences. On the one hand, it is obviously easier to memorize the lines, but on the other hand, the structure of dialogues is much more complicated than monologues. Due to the continued exchange between actors, they must concentrate and know precisely when they have to speak and interact; in order to do so, they should also know the others' lines, and then they will be able to commit no mistake and allow the dialogue to develop fluently. As Boal (2002: 38) argues, "Theatre is a conflict between or among characters confronting one another, always in the here and now". Moreover, "it is important to understand that the actor's creation must also be, fundamentally, the creation of interrelations with the other actors […] to act is to produce an action, and every action produces a reaction – conflict" (Boal, 2002: 39). Below, I will add the initial scenes (in the same order as they were performed) taken from the play performed in Padova after the workshop 2014-2015; this will make it possible to understand the huge number of interconnections between actors and the variety of small scenes.

IT HAD TO BE MURDER Scene 1 – Suspicion growing

[Betty enters the room, Jeff is a looking outside the window, a bit uneasy]

BETTY: I bought everything on the list. Anything else I can do for you sir?
JEFF: What? [distracted]
BETTY: I said, is there anything else, sir?
JEFF: No, no. Everything's fine.
BETTY: Hmm, that's never a good sign.

JEFF: What, exactly?

BETTY: Why the cricket, of course. Can't you hear it?

JEFF: Yeah, so?

BETTY: Whenever you hear one, well...it's a bad omen. It spells death for someone close by.

JEFF: Well, I can assure you it's not gonna be in here.

BETTY: Maybe, but somewhere close by...[pauses] Well, have a pleasant evening...[exits]

JEFF: Hmm...you may be onto something though...

THREE O'CLOCK Scene 1 – at home. In the kitchen

FRAN: Paul? Paul, is that you?

PAUL [From the basement]: Yeah, it's me. I am down here.

[He shows up]

FRAN: You are on time for the roast? [she kisses him] It will be ready in five minutes. D'you want a beer?

PAUL: Sure.

FRAN: did you have a good day?

PAUL: aha. Alright [staring at the fridge]. What's the hamburger for? Not for me. And you don't like it.

FRAN [hesitating]:Well… yes. I discovered I do like it.

PAUL [thinking]: "Mmm, sure. And you drank two beers today. Or somebody did."

FRAN: Take a sit. It will be ready in five minutes.

[He goes to the sofa, where he finds an ashtray full of ashes]

PAUL [thinking]:"Ash? Who smoked here today? A man, for sure… her lover. Damn."

[Fran comes to the living room].

PAUL [coldly]: Did you have a good time this afternoon?

FRAN: What do you mean with "good afternoon"?

PAUL: Well, did you enjoy yourself?

FRAN: Oh… I suppose so. [she comes back to the kitchen, confused].What's the matter?

PAUL: Nothing. Why? [thinking] "How can she be so calm?"

FRAN: Come to dinner now.

PAUL: Yeah, I am coming. [thinking]:"Well. Tomorrow is tomorrow. I will take my revenge, you bet it"

IT HAD TO BE MURDER Scene 2 – Information

[Betty entering the room]

BETTY: Why sir, you haven't eaten a single thing!

JEFF: Come again?

BETTY: Are you even listening to what I'm saying? And just look at yourself! You're as pale as a ghost! Have you had any sleep?

JEFF: Oh, never mind that. Think you can tell me the exact address of that building?

[Betty reaches outside the window]

JEFF: Don't stick your head out the window, damn it! Listen I want you to go around the corner and get me the exact number.

BETTY: May I at least know why?

JEFF: None of your business. And while you're there, check the mailboxes and tell me who lives on the fourth floor, the window in the back.

BETTY: One can ask the strangest things when one gets bored sitting around all day.

JEFF: Oh, and Betty, try and be discreet.

[Betty exits]

In the workshop at the University of Grenoble, the product-oriented approach embodies several activities, mainly directed at the realization of the final performance. The activities performed in the workshop have a clear function, as explained by Fonio (2012: 2):

> Activities related to the various practical aspects of the staging process – from the playwriting or play adaptation to costumes and props, set and lightning design – correspond closely to the communicative and action-oriented approach of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), upon which many foreign language syllabi are now based.

Furthermore, other practical activities need to be performed in the target language, and due to the international view of the workshop, they have to practice the target language in national or foreign festivals, with the possibility to practice the language.

> In fact, the action-oriented approach of the CEFR cries out for strongly task-oriented language teaching and learning activities, and the different steps of the staging process offer the teacher the opportunity to propose to students' simple task-divisions. In addition to the tasks related to the staging process, which are intended to be accomplished in a participative way by pairs or small groups of students, the production of a staged play at the end of each

academic year allows my students to perform in Italian and French festivals. On these occasions, students are actively involved in practical matters related to travel and accommodation and to the pre- and post-event communication plans. Most of these tasks must be performed in Italian, which is both a challenging and an enriching experience for the students (Fonio, 2012: 2).

A task-based approach is a common feature of all the three workshops analysed in the dissertation, and the workshop in Grenoble is structured through dynamic activities: "the activities are mostly based on spoken conventions and conversation, with a strong interest in sociolinguistic features in contemporary language." (Fonio & Genevieve, 2012: 2). Some activities are divided among single students or small groups of students: "the staging process may be conceived as a collective macro-task that includes many individual or small-group micro-tasks" (Fonio, 2012: 2). Doing so, they have the possibility to work better, with more decisional power and the teacher could easily help the group in the activity. Small group work is an important tool to facilitate foreign language learning and is often used by teacher in language workshops; according to Ellis (2003: 252-253):

It is probably easier to achieve when students are interacting among themselves, without the teacher being present, as the greater symmetry of social roles this affords leads naturally to the kinds of risk-taking behaviour required of a task-bases pedagogy. This is one reason why pair and group work are seen as central to task-based teaching.

A very interesting activity involves characterization, which the teacher, together with the students, does in order to pursue a specific pedagogical aim; the use of the exaggeration of the grotesque was motivated by a clear objective:

During the writing/adapting and the staging process, we worked on developing and pushing to the extreme the characterisation of the grotesque. This exaggeration was pursued with a precise pedagogical aim, i.e. to prevent excesses in the identification process with the grotesque or stereotyped characters through a series of improvisations and other activities based on the authentic materials (videos, newspapers articles, pictures, extracts from literature) collected by the students during their research (Fonio, 2012: 3).

The adaptation of the text and the characters of the play is done according to the students' requests or – even better – characteristics. In fact, as Fonio (2012: 3) explains:

> These excesses are particularly dangerous for shy students and for those who are taking part in their first theatrical experience and who are already rather clumsy on stage. A complete identification process would in fact result in a less credible performance both for the actors and for the audience.

In Reutlingen University, the creation of a public performance and all the correlated activities makes up the biggest part of the workshop. The first step is the choosing of the play: the play must consider several factors, such as the audience:

> We chose to start off with a Shakespeare adaptation since we hoped that the most famous English dramatist would attract an audience even on a campus with a traditionally relatively low cultural activity level, an expectation which was mostly fulfilled. Moreover, Macbeth is a play frequently taught at German high schools (Gymnasien), so we hoped that at least some of our actors would be familiar with it (Giebert, 2011: 5).

The choosing and the adaptation of the play is seen as a problematic issue also by Lys, Meuser, Paluch & Zeller, 2002: 210), who are directing a German drama workshop with a final performance directed to a non-German speaking audience:

> One of the main difficulties involved in such a project is the selection of an appropriate play. Not only were we limited by the time frame given to us for the staging, we also had to take the skill levels of our students into consideration and the makeup of our audience […] In order to entice them to attend a German production, we had to carefully consider the content of the play: a subject the audience would be familiar with and a playright they could identify.

The adaptation of texts is an essential passage at Reutlingen University, because the aim is to develop business English. In fact, modification should be made and correlations between the economy of the past and the modern business market may be found:

> The first production was an adaptation of Shakespeare's Macbeth, called Macbiz, which set the medieval tragedy in a modern corporate environment, turning the protagonist into an overly ambitious manager who goes to great lengths to eliminate the present CEO […] Since the play's central conflict revolves around power and the ways to achieve it, it was relatively easy to transfer its basic outline to a modern business context – 'kingdom' is translated into 'company' (called Scotland Inc.), the king becomes the CEO (Giebert, 2011: 5).

Text adaptation is one of the most challenging and interesting activities in such a workshop; the last section of the second chapter is a summary of two interviews made with the director of the workshop in Padova and with Filippo Fonio, the director the workshop in Grenoble.

2.8 INTERVIEWS WITH THE DIRECTORS

I will first report here the most important topics discussed during the interview with Pierantonio Rizzato (director of Padova workshop), in order to transmit another point of view about the workshop. The interview has several questions and I will only write the most important topics (and not the entire discussion).

1) When did you start this collaboration with the University?

The first collaboration with the English theatre group from University of Padova started in 1998, but our association has an experience in didactic activities with the University of Padova that goes back to the 1970s. However, the structure of the workshop as described in this thesis started in 1998.

2) How do you judge the work done in the first part of the workshop?

Thanks to the first part, students have the possibility to exercise and develop the English language more than in the rest of the workshop. This part is also essential as concerns the theatrical activities and in the last years we are trying to maximize the time and have a closer cooperation with the language tutor in order to give students the chance to practice both their acting and their linguistic skills.

3) Is the second part of the workshop more challenging than the first part?

Of course, because it is the time for students to become more serious and carry on the tasks needed to reach the aim, which is set at the beginning of the workshop. The linguistic aspect should also not be forgotten and I am trying to work at the

same time with the language tutor in order to give a precise direction to students. Often, students are at their first acting experience so we have to lead them to the following steps and we have to help them to do it. The problems that could be encountered during this part are acting and linguistic inexperience and that usually students start to memorize their part too late, without having the chance to fully understand and practise the text.

4) *Which is the most challenging activity?*

Again, I think the final performance needs a larger amount of attention and concentration, while the first part of the workshop is more similar to a game and students are free to use their imagination.

5) *Which are the benefits of the workshop?*

As concerns my point of view, at the end of the workshop they are more open, they have a different approach in relationships between them and they can interact with others without fear and inhibition. This difference varies depending on students: while with some of them the difference is evident, other students have changed their behaviour without showing it. Their language skills develop as well, and some of them speak with a very good diction at the end of the workshop.

6) *What could be improved in the workshop?*

Everything can be improved and so can this workshop. An improvement could be to perfect the collaboration between the acting and the linguistic part, as well as the collaboration with students, who should be better prepared for the second part of the workshop.

7) *Do you think a real stage would help students' performances during the workshop?*

Yes, absolutely. I saw a difference between students who prepared the show on a real stage and students who practise in normal classrooms. There is a huge difference; with a real stage students are more concentrated and more precise. They understand what it means to move during a performance; moreover, you have no time constraints and you can use the space whenever you want. You can also rehearse with lights and props from the very beginning, and that helps students to get used to it.

The second interview was a list of questions the director of the workshop in Grenoble (Filippo Fonio) kindly answers and which I will now report below.

- *When did you start this educational drama workshop for foreign language learning? Why?*

I started in 2009 and carried it through until 2013; then I changed the structure a bit and I did smaller performances with partially different aims. The main reason was that I am quite aware of the usefulness of theatre and drama activities when learning FL, of their efficacy and quickness, importance for motivation of the learner and especially because they bring to teaching and learning something which is rather absent elsewhere: the body, the voice, the group, the make-believe and creativity.

- *How is the workshop structured? Does it adopt a process-oriented approach, a product-oriented approach or a combination of the two approaches? If the workshop is a combination of the two approaches, which is more important? Why?*

The « normal format » workshop is 24 hours per semester (2 hours per week, normally late in the afternoon, 12 weeks per semester), and normally working in pairs of teachers, but actually from the beginning of the creative process to the staging of the play let's count more or less 200 hours both for us and for students. Formats have slightly changed since then, now I am working of radio plays instead, which is much lighter for everybody; it lasts for 1 semester more or less (20 hours of work) until the radio play is finished and broadcasted. I always put a bit of a « product » in it, because I personally believe it is also important to create « art » in a way, it is not always good to only stay close to the idea of « learning FL », let's forget about that and let's work in a creative way, the learning will follow. However, I always work a bit on the process, especially in the early stages of the projects: I am not particularly fond of the « parrot-like drama classroom » where lines are learnt and we rehearse and that's all. By the way, how can you work on a product - which is to me strictly connected to a creative product - without a processing of the product you are building? Finally, both are important in different ways; let us say that I cannot work properly without the one or without the other.

- *As concerns foreign language learning, what is in your opinion, the most useful activity in an educational drama workshop?*

Everything that has to do with creativity and the staging of something. The acting of a FL is essential because otherwise you cannot feel your performing of the FL; moreover, we should not forget that any kind of FL classroom is a form of staging something.

- *Which are the hardest challenges your workshop students found?*

All that is good is also hard! Being someone else in a context such as that of the FL classroom is not easy, because if you're not that much « into » the theatrical mood you'd feel weird about it. Then pronunciation of course, but when staging a play one of the toughest things is also being in a space - often small - with others, doing things, precisely and emotionally and convincingly and forgetting about anything which is bad in your life.

- *In your opinion, which linguistic features have students developed the most?*

All competencies at the same time, I'd say, but much depends on the kind of didactical project you propose. I normally try, if that is the aim, to propose a full-scale drama production with everything in it, from the brainstorming on the subject, all through improvising, writing drafts and make then into a play, stage-lightings and music, rehearse, organize a small tour, find money, advertise, perform, get back critically on the former performances.

After this overview of various aspects of the three workshops, I will start the third chapter with the analysis of the questionnaire, which was given to the students who followed the English drama workshop at the University of Padova, in the 2014-2015 academic year.

CHAPTER THREE

THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

In the first two chapters, the issue of educational drama for foreign language learners has been presented and analysed, with the description of three workshops from different universities. According to the various literature cited in the chapters and the direct evidence of the three workshop coordinators, the positive effects of educational drama for foreign language learning have been highlighted. However, the students themselves have not been greatly involved in this research so far; as they represent the subject of the project, it is important to give them the possibility to testify and comment on the workshop they have followed. In order to sustain the thesis proposed in the first two chapters, I have submitted a questionnaire to the students of the University of Padova, who followed the workshop of 2014-2015. It is extremely important to look at the same issue from two different perspectives and, after the teachers' one, this chapters will give voice to students. For a complete understanding of the reasons, the subjects and the content of the questionnaire, I will now answer a few questions. Then, I will start to analyse the content of the questionnaires, question by question, from the first section to the third one. Finally, I will make a summary and comment on the overall results of the study.

3.1 PARTICIPANTS

The respondents of the questionnaires are the students, to be precise those who followed the workshop in educational drama for foreign language learning at the University of Padova in the year 2014-2015. Because of the variety of educational drama workshop offered, it must be specified that the students involved, are only those of the workshop in the English language. All the students answering the questionnaire followed the workshop for an entire year and ended the course with two final performances of "The Black Curtain", an adaptation of multiple short stories written by Cornell Woolrich (see Chapter 2). Before moving on to the next

section, it must be said that 21 questionnaires were administered to students, but not all were completed. From twenty-one questionnaires, I received sixteen responses, so the analysis is carried out on a smaller group of students, which I think to be a sufficient and interesting number.

3.2 CHOICE OF RESEARCH TOOL

As Bell (2005: 203) claims, "we are constantly looking for similarities and differences, for groupings, patterns of items of particular significance". This dissertation is a study of all these features, which will enable me to represent the issue in detail and discuss the thesis of the positive effects of educational drama for foreign language learning. In fact, I agree with the description made by Bell (2005: 120): "your aim is to obtain as representative a range of responses as possible to enable you to fulfil the objectives of your study and to provide answers to key questions". The questionnaire helped me to understand and to see the issue also from a different side; teachers and coordinators of such workshops have already explained their opinions in articles or books, but what do the students think about it? With this questionnaire, it will be possible to see if the responses of both teachers and students match or if they differ from each other. The structure of a questionnaire has been chosen for its simplicity and its clarity; students involved in a survey often show little enthusiasm to answer questions and also have little time to meet the interviewer. The questionnaire could be submitted in ten minutes and via mail, for the students were not able to meet in person; moreover, this saved time both for the interviewer and the interviewed. It could be argued that a questionnaire gives students limited space for answers, less than interviews for example. However, the questionnaire submitted to the students from the University of Padova appears adequate to reach the objectives, which were previously fixed, and with a mixed structure, the students had the possibility to express their opinions in a more detailed manner than a strict multiple-choice structure.

3.3 QUESTIONNAIRE STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION

The questionnaire is completely anonymous and has three main sections. The first one is a general background of the students, such as age and course of study; the second part asks for the language background and the competence in the English language. The student needs to self-evaluate his or her competence, referring to the CEFR parameters, already explained in the previous chapters; moreover, questions about the use of the English language during foreign experiences are included. The third part of the questionnaire deals with the workshop and the activities carried out during the year, where students' opinions are required. The questionnaire has different types of questions: verbal or open, list and ranking, three of the seven types of questions listed by Youngman (1982). List or multiple-choice is "a list of items is offered, any of which may be selected" (Bell, 2005: 138); in our case the questionnaire also has list questions where students must choose only one answer among the multiple choices given. Then, in verbal or open questions, students are asked to respond with a word, a sentence or an extended comment. As Bell (2005: 137) points out, "you may feel it necessary to give respondents the opportunity to give their own views on the topic being researched – or to raise a grievance." Due to the need to give voice to students, half of the questionnaire is made up of verbal or open questions. Finally, there is only one question with the ranking structure, where students have to choose and evaluate their English competences and rank reading/writing/listening/speaking skills from A1 to C2 of the CEFR parameters. The questionnaires were submitted between December 2015 and January 2016. The response was almost immediate so that at the end of January 2016 the questionnaires were completed. However, it should be said that the questionnaires were completed six months after the end of the workshop, so after a rather long period of time. While that could have no consequence in the analysis of the activities - which were well impressed in the students' mind – it could be a problem when referring to the self-evaluation of their English competences. After a period of a few months, the English level of University students could vary due to foreign experiences (such as the Erasmus program) or language courses at the University.

Considering these problems, the self-evaluation cannot be considered very precise, but could slightly shift and differ from the language level in the period of the workshop. However, the difference should be not very significant, so I will analyse this data as with the other information retrieved from the survey.

3.4 ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST SECTION

The first section asks students to complete the form with some general information about their personal background; it is composed of five questions, the verbal type of questions to be precise. As the questionnaire is anonymous, the first question is not the name of the interviewee, but their gender; the results show a prevalence of female students (12) over male students (4). That could be linked with the discussion made in the previous chapters, namely the difficulties to adapt male roles with female one and vice versa. Choosing a play should also involve these considerations and it not an easy work, as Bancheri (2010: 94) points out:

> I do not like having female student-actors play the part of males. So when I read a play, I keep a watchful eye on its flexibility to transform male roles into female roles. At times, this can be easily done; at other times, more complex work is required. In all cases, however, I make sure that these changes do not undermine the quality of the play.

After a first glance at the students' gender, it seems that this workshop is suited more for female students. However, this is linked with the fact that the majority of students come from a degree in Language and Literature where the percentage of female students is much higher than that of male students. I suggest that the large discrepancy between male and female characters is nothing but a normal consequence of the difference that exists in the language courses at University and has nothing to do with an educational drama workshop for foreign language learning.

The second question is the students' age; almost everyone follows a course at university so the age varies between twenty-one to thirty years old, with an average age of twenty-three and a half years old. Age is not an essential element for my research; however, I thought it useful to know one of the principal

characteristics of the workshop participants. Furthermore, this underlines again that this dissertation deals with students in higher education and not with pupils or high school learners, who have other implications and are different as regards foreign language learning.

The country of origin is the third question, and that shows how the group was homogenous, with fourteen Italian students and two born outside Italy (both in Romania). The fact that the university offers other similar courses (Spanish, German) and one in the Italian language for Erasmus students, is the cause for the low number of foreign students involved in this workshop. I think that is a negative point, because of the huge possibilities and cultural exchanges possible within a multicultural group, as can be understood also in Giebert (2011: 8):

> The project also promotes intercultural awareness since, throughout the three semesters of its existence, the group has always had a multicultural set-up. Intercultural questions are not explicitly addressed by the director, but by working on a common goal in a mixed group, they arise naturally. In an atmosphere characterised by mutual respect and the pursuit of a common goal, intercultural topics are usually addressed in a friendly and often humorous way (for example questions of punctuality).

Nevertheless, there are strong group dynamics as the students come from different parts of Italy and have different backgrounds, and the presence of even a small number of students with a foreign provenience added with the two English tutors (one from the UK and one from the USA), causes an interesting and pleasant cultural exchange. Italian is the native language of every student, with two of them that are bilingual (Italian, Romanian). The data shows how the entire group has the same difficulties learning English and the whole group starts from the same cultural background.

The last question of the general background enables us to understand the students' course and year of study: twelve of them are following a Language course, one has already graduated (in a language course) and only three of them are from different field of study, Psychology, Forest and Environmental Sciences and a P.H.D. in History. Among the twelve students enrolled in Languages courses, four are following the Master and eight a Bachelor degree. The two bachelor courses are

Mediazione Linguistica e Culturale and *Lettere e Culture Moderne*. The master degree is called *Lingue Moderne per la Cooperazione e Comunicazione Internazionale*. That highlights the orientation of the course, which is mainly directed – even if it is open to every student enrolled at the University – to the students of Languages courses, as an extra-curricular exercise. In fact, students from these courses can obtain three ECTS credits with participation in the workshop. The credits represent a clear incentive for participation and the main publicity for the workshop is conducted within language courses.

3.5 ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND SECTION

The second section of the questionnaire includes questions about students' language background and competences. It is necessary to understand their language level and see the improvements they have made during the workshop; for this reason, the section requires students to write down their foreign experiences and the use of English language inside and outside University. The first question is a table with the six CEFR parameters for the four language skills, namely reading, writing, listening and speaking; each student should self-evaluate his or her own level, and that could help to understand the general level inside the workshop. This table is strictly related to the last question of the previous section; in fact, as the majority of students have followed or are following language courses, the language level is around B2 and C2. Even if they are following no English courses at University, the academic environment requires them to use English often, for example to relate with foreign people, to follow academic conferences or simply to read books from the library. It should be said that the self-evaluation regards the language level at the moment of the writing of the questionnaire, in other words five or six months after the end of the workshop. To facilitate the analysis of the table results I will add the table.

Present English Language Competence	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
READING				3	10	3
WRITING				6	10	
LISTENING				5	7	4
SPEAKING				4	12	

Table 1. Present English Language Competence

The results match the expectations, with the self-evaluation concentrated around the level C1. Reading and listening skills are slightly higher than writing and speaking, but that is totally normal, as the latter requires a more active involvement. Indeed, the scope of the educational drama workshop is to develop oral and writing skills, the latter with the writing and adaptation of the text. Usually, in language courses, the time spent on speaking activities may be restricted due to time constraints and the less communicative language teaching approach of many classrooms, already explained in the first chapter. Marini-Maio (2010: 240) agrees with the differentiation between educational drama classroom and the traditional classroom:

> When applied to L2 instruction, the process of theatre performance, namely, reading, adaptation, rehearsal, and mise-en-scène of a play, corresponds to the gradual metamorphosis from the "bare" class – if a class may be defined as "bare" – into the vibrant dynamics of a play production team.

As Ryan-Scheutz (2010: 308) argues, speaking and listening skills are often practised together during different workshop stages:

> The skills of speaking and listening were often practised simultaneously in two different communicative formats: (1) informal interactive exchanges during daily warm-up phases, rehearsing the play, discussing the contents and meaning of the text, or understanding the many additional tasks and responsibilities crucial to the success of the workshop, such as scheduling, measuring for costumes, purchasing props, or preparing the performance program […]

Despite the small differences in the self-evaluation, the language competences within the group appear homogeneous and that has multiple positive consequences: the group can work together and rather fast, differences between students are not so evident so there is not much status discrepancy for the benefit of the group environment.

Not everyone follows English at the University, despite the humanistic course orientation, and so I found it necessary to ask students to specify how long they had studied English, if they were studying it at university and for how many years. After the previous answers, these questions are partially obvious and could be seen as "Double questions"; but as Bell (2005: 141) reminds us, "It may seen obvious to remind you that double questions should never be asked". Almost every Italian student started learning English around the third year of primary school; having the age of the participants and their course of study it might be seem necessary to ask how long they had studied English. However, as I knew that some had followed their basic education outside Italy, I deemed it necessary to ask the duration of their language studies. After this consideration, I will analyse the results of the three questions. First, as some of the foreign students did not take part in the questionnaires and as the two Romanian students of the group did part of their basic education in Italy, students had studied English for an average of fourteen years. Among them only two students have not studied English at University, so a very small number; the majority studied English for two years at least, due to the fact the entire group have already followed the second year of Bachelor degree.

The second part of the second section covers the topic of foreign experience and, consequently, foreign language experiences. I believe that foreign experiences can positively influence the learning of a foreign language as well as the attitude towards this kind of workshop. Fonio & Genicot (2011: 7) state: "The promotion of plurilingualism by the European Union aims, in the last instance, at the development of pluriculturalism". Spending time abroad enhances the possibilities to know other cultures, people and languages and the understanding of the cultural dimension facilitates the improvement of sociolinguistic skills, as explained in Fonio & Genicot (2011:7)

> Learning foreign languages by the means of drama practice offers students a chance to develop these plurilingual and pluricultural skills. In order to stage a foreign language play, students have to decode its cultural component first, thus passing through a dramaturgic analysis process. The learner's acquisition of this cultural dimension can lead to the improvement of sociolinguistic skills in a foreign language.

To facilitate "real-life" communication inside the group, foreign experiences are useful for language practice and to get used to use it in every situation: "of course, it helps that learners are keen to use the target language for their own academic and personal goals, and that the target language is the lingua franca of the classroom" (Carson, 2008: 6).

Six students spent five to six months abroad: five of them with the Erasmus program and one of them with a job experience. Although only one of them stayed in an English speaking country (UK), everyone used their English skills. They were forced to use English because of the international shape of the foreign universities and the huge amount of people from different countries. Another six students followed an English course abroad, with a duration of between three to four weeks; that can be considered a good language experience because often there are only a few people for each classroom and the students are asked to participate actively in the activities. According to Schewe (2013: 10), such "camps" could be seen also as large-scale forms of educational drama:

> Language camps are a further example of the large-scale form, where, over the course of a two week holiday, language learning activities, theatre-based performative activities and hobby related activities mingle, and where the multilingualism of the children is explicitly taken into consideration.

Another two students followed similar language courses with a low duration (one or two weeks) and the last two travelled for a couple of weeks and used their English skills only occasionally, when relating with local people. Finally, only one single interviewee spent time abroad working, while the rest of the group studied or travelled for tourism. Students who have visited foreign countries or have the possibility to use their language skills with foreign people, may get used to relating with the "other" and becoming more "elastic". I believe this characteristic to be

essential in second language learning, because as Lightbown & Spada (1993: 113) claim, "One thing which is very clear is that second language learning is not simply a process of putting second language words into first language sentences."

3.6 ANALYSIS OF SECTION THREE

The third section of the questionnaire is the most interesting and the place where students can express their opinions, as well as making suggestions about the educational drama workshop. The section takes up the largest part of the questionnaire and includes multiple choice questions and open questions. The questions require students to give general and detailed information about the workshop and the activities that allow one to understand the extent of the positive effects they have on foreign language learning. Students can comment on the activities and specify which are best suited to their skills development. Moreover, students have to relate their past theatre experiences and the reasons that have led them to start – and maybe continue – this workshop. Now I will analyse each question and try to find a link between the results and the theory presented in the previous chapters.

The first question asks students how many years they took part in the English theatre workshop, a first figure that allows one to understand the participants' satisfaction. In fact, everyone followed the course for at least two years, with one student attending her fourth year in the English theatre workshop. This question is linked to the fourth one, where I asked why students had decided to continue the workshop the following years. Here, I found several interesting answers, starting from two students who like and appreciate the idea of theatre in a foreign language; without interest, it is hardly possible to have acquisition, as explained by Krashen (1982: 66): "optimal input focusses the acquirer on the message and not on form. To go a step further, the best input is so interesting and relevant that the acquirer may even "forget" that the message is encoded in a foreign language." Then, six students state that they carried on with the workshop because of the pleasant atmosphere of the group and because they have found new friends and wanted to meet new people. The potentialities of a good environment are already been explained: "the balance of rehearsal and performance seems to create

a space within which learners can be more fully themselves both as individuals and corporately" (Carson, 2006: 46). Even Belliveau & Kim (2013: 8) highlight the potentiality of drama in a foreign language environment:

> Another important benefit from using drama in L2 classrooms would be that drama can create an environment where language is presented, learned, and used in and through interaction situated in social contexts.

Then, one answer arouses my interest: "it made me feel better useful"; indeed, the structure of the workshop is structured in an interactive way, where students are at the centre and the subjects of the lesson. Cummins (2009: 8) calls for collaborative efforts to make classrooms into "an interpersonal space within which the acquisition of knowledge and formation of identity is negotiated. Power is created and shared within this interpersonal space where minds and identities meet". Within this environment, the student feels safe and part of something different from usual learning, where, even a very shy student, can feel that his/her work is appreciated by the whole group.

Furthermore, the "fun-factor" should not be underestimated and, as Spolin (1999: 39) claims, "If the environment in the workshop is joyous and free of authoritarianism, everyone will play and become as open as young children". Often, students involved in a workshop are called "players", such as the activities are sometimes called "games"; according to Spolin (1999: 4-5): "Skills are developed at the very moment a person is having all the fun and excitement playing a game has to offer – this is the exact time one is truly open to receive them". In fact, two students carried on with the workshop because "it was fun", while another one enrolled the following years because she was happy with the project.

Six students enjoyed the whole experience of the workshop and described it with different – but positive – adjectives: four students called it a "nice experience", one uses the word "enriching" experience and another have found it an "amazing experience". All of them appreciate this new experience and approach to educational drama for foreign language learning, as Carson (2008: 17) finds out: "they appreciate the possibility to apply their language knowledge to a discourse outside the classroom which called for a constant interaction between people in the

target language". Finally, four students put the improvement of the target language as the main reason to carry on with the workshop, more proof of the positive effects of drama on language learning.

Among the sixteen participants, two-thirds had previous experience in the theatre field, or, to be precise, ten out of sixteen. While six of them had acted only in Italian, four of them had also had experiences with theatre in a foreign language. Students without theatrical experience represent a third of the group. For a clear idea of the division, see the figure below.

Previous theatre experience in the theatre field

- No experience
- Experience in Italian
- Experience both in Italian and English
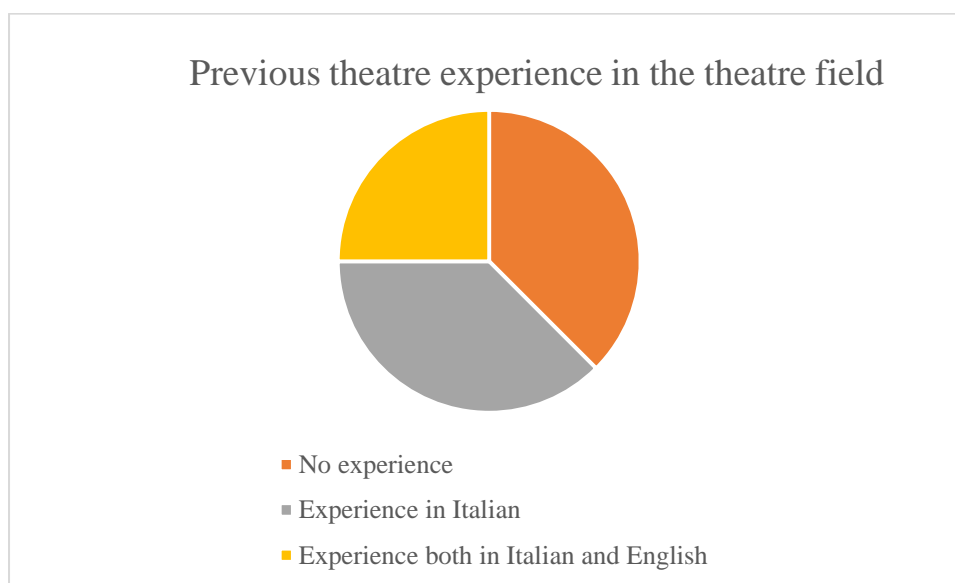
Figure 1. Previous theatre experience in the theatre field

This question has consequences on another one from the same section: "why did you start the English theatre workshop?" The answer type is the verbal one, so students have the possibilities to express more than one single opinion. Several answers come out from the questionnaires, but one seems definitely to be prevalent and which I summarize under the title "love or interest in theatre and acting". The majority of students who gave this answer had done theatre before and they chose to start the workshop because of their previous theatrical experience. Once again, educational drama appears to be strongly motivating in the field of foreign language learning, already analysed in the previous chapters. The research of Belliveau, Bournot-Trites, Séror and Spiliotopoulos (2007: 26) proves to be another contribution to this theory: "Our results strongly suggest the benefits to students and teachers of using drama within FI classrooms to increase motivation, cultural

awareness and literacy." Then, three other students claim to have started the workshop due to a "love or interest for English language and English literature". That is another form of motivation for foreign language learning; as Schewe (2013: 9) points out, "The goal of foreign language didactics is to create a new approach to teaching and learning, whereby emphasis is placed on forms of aesthetic expression". Literature is a form of aesthetic expression and as the new goal is to find new language teaching approaches, the decision to insert literature elements in the workshop (primarily with the script, usually a piece of English literature) motivates students to enter this new form of teaching and learning. Schewe (2013: 10) states about the connection between language teaching, language learning and aesthetic elements:

> It is, above and beyond the disciplines usually associated with foreign language teaching and learning (e.g. general pedagogy, first language didactics, psychology, linguistics and literature), actively seeking dialogue and exchange with the arts, in particular with theatre arts and also school/university subjects related to the aesthetic field (including music, visual art, dance, literature, film).

Educational drama fits into the field of innovative ways, which "have been sought and found to tap literature as a resource for learning language, as an indispensable means, in fact, for initiating students to the complexity of a second language, its culture and its values" (Savoia, 2010: 116).

Two students claim to have started the English theatre workshop out of mere curiosity and at a first sight that could seem as a superficial answer; however, curiosity is a strong and important feeling, essential for learning. William Arthur Ward (Ward, cited by Wikiquote, 2008) has described curiosity as "the wick in the candle of learning"; furthermore, Kang, Hsu, Krajbich, Loewenstein, McClure, Wang and Camerer (2009: 963) argue curiosity to be:

> The complex feeling and cognition accompanying the desire to learn what is unknown. Curiosity can be both helpful and dangerous. It plays a critical role in motivating learning and discovery, especially by creative professionals, increasing the world's store of knowledge.

The desire to meet new people is another answer that comes out from the questionnaire, and which I believe to be a consequence of curiosity and, as with the previous question, two students express this position. In this kind of workshop, one is highly likely to meet new people, and due to its structure is very easy to socialize, even for shy students. Interaction between students is a constant of the workshop and "group participation and agreement remove all the imposed tensions and exhaustions of the competitiveness and open the way for harmony" (Spolin, 1999: 11). Furthermore, seven people decided to start the English theatre workshop in order to improve their language and another one to improve language by doing something dynamic and fun. This is a very interesting result and it shows that language development is not only a consequence of the workshop, but also a students' desire that contributes to its choice. Therefore, the use of English during rehearsals should be encouraged by these students, as Lauer (2008: 14) claims:

> I am also convinced that the students' strong commitment and willingness to learn the language, in addition to their excitement over the project, contributed to their constant increase in using the target language during the rehearsals.

However, as we will see later in the students' suggestions, that is not always the case; sometimes group members tend to revert to their mother tongue. Another two students underline the willingness to "get out from their comfort zone", when deciding to take part in the workshop. It is not easy to take this decision, due to the difficulties of some people to enter an unknown situation; nevertheless, this new situation have multiple advantages:

> The fictional situations created in some of the activities enabled the participants to widen the range of emotions and experiences expressed in the target language, but also to compare these with the way they were expressed in their respective languages. Importantly, this included emotions seldom expressed in the language classroom, such as anger, fear or intimacy (Beaven & Alvarez, 2014: 9).

The last answer is shared by three students and involves the "reward" they can obtain with the participation in the workshop: three ECTS credits. They claim to have started the workshop in order to obtain the credits and then to have continued

with it for the reasons explained before. Even though the three credits are a very small amount compared to the amount of time needed to finish the workshop, it proves to be a good strategy to attract students. They can follow single conferences and write a report or go on a two-week internship to obtain the same amount of optional credits; however, as we have seen, some students are attracted by this alternative method of language learning and dramatic interaction.

The following questions are multiple-choices, where students have to express their opinion about the activities carried out during the workshop. The first one asks which activities have they performed during the project and there are six possibilities: actor/actress, work on the text, publicity of the play help with the props, lights and other.
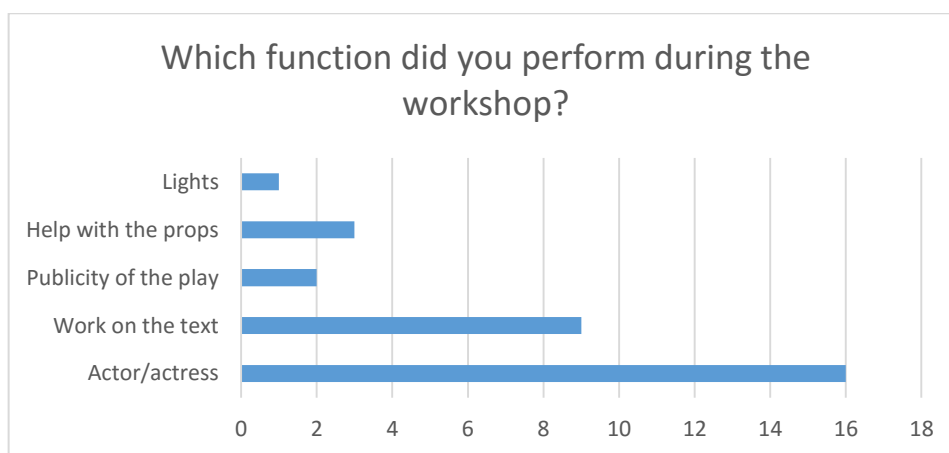

Figure 2. Functions in the workshop.

All members of the group performed the role of actor or actress, some with an important role and other with a smaller role, but everyone acted in front of an external audience. The other functions listed in the question are the typical product drama activities, which some students have performed alone or in small groups; the teacher asks the group if someone wants to try to fulfil these tasks and a consistent part has given a positive answer. In fact, nine students have also collaborated with the creation of the script, atopic that has been fully discussed in the previous chapters and which involves lot of time and concentration. Three students have helped with the props: all the features regarding costumes, stage and scene setting and other materials fall within this definition. According to Bancheri (2010: 103), "building the set, preparing costumes, finding props, and determing music are time-

consuming tasks"; indeed, the work has been divided between students, and, before the performance, every actor will have his or her things, which are going to be used on the final performance. The teacher is usually able to find students who are willing to fulfil these tasks; often they show a positive enthusiasm as they have "the opportunity to show their practical talents and skills" (Bancheri, 2010: 103). In particular, I remember a student who made the poster of the performance "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in the year 2012-2013 and the effort and fantasy she used to draw the picture the co-ordinator used to advertise the play. Although students are involved in the publicity of the play (two students according to the questionnaire), the tutors do most of the work, with the advertisement on the website of the department. Finally, the lighting of the show is not a student issue, but one for the director who, with the help of an external student/technician, handles this problem. The show always takes place in the evening, in order to allow the audience to come to the show; therefore, the lighting is a delicate issue and the experience of an expert (the director in this case) is essential. Marini-Maio (2010: 369) sustains the thesis of the lighting importance: "the designer should have a basic lighting cues and a detailed cue sheet before tech week".

The second multiple-choice question demands students to express their opinion on the favourite activity during the workshop, which I have summarized in the table below. They had only one choice to give as answer.
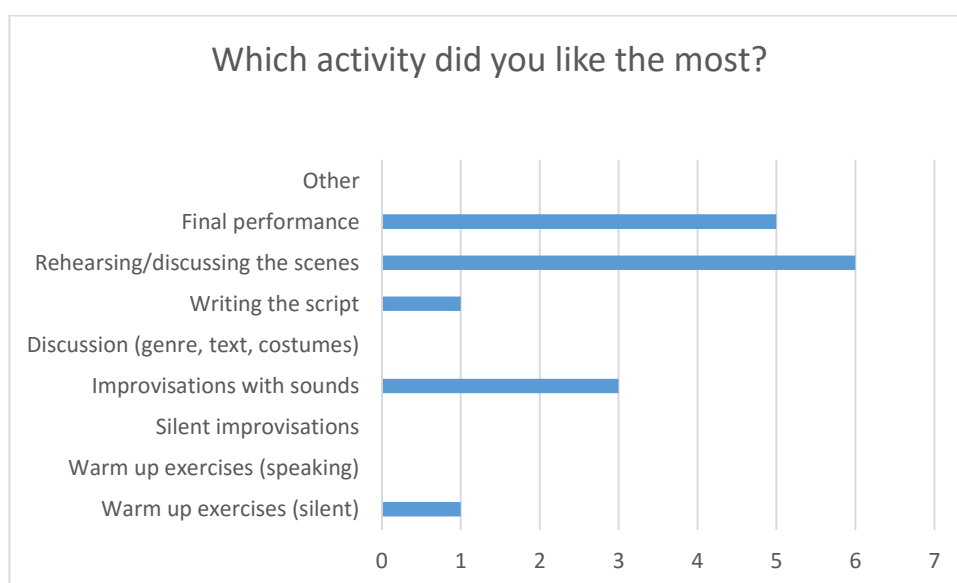

Figure 3. The favourite activity.

The favourite activities are the rehearsing and the discussion of the scenes and the final performance, where the same scenes are acted out in front of an external audience; six students have chosen the former, while the latter is the favourite activity of five students. More than a third of the group appreciates these two product drama activities the most, proving that the final performance is highly useful in an educational drama workshop. During the rehearsals and discussions of the play, students have to act out their parts in front of the whole group, the director and the co-ordinator. While the co-ordinator corrects the language features, the director adjusts the scenes and all the theatrical elements; moreover, such as improvisational exercises, rehearsing the scenes can function as a form of what is been called "devising theatre", which is been already handled in this dissertation. Although students have their script during the rehearsing of the scenes and there is nearly no space for verbal improvisations, the language of the body, the movements, the tone and the manner of vocal exposure can vary, depending on the students. Students' behaviours can provide inspiration to the director for the final performance, who could change his mind after the rehearsals and asks students to perform a scene differently. Usually, devising theatre starts from an improvisation, but inspirations can arouse even from a written text as starting point, as it can be seen in Oddey (1996: 28):

> In 1981 I took Arrabal's play, Picnic on the Battlefield as a starting point for devising a contemporary pieces about the hunger strike of Bobby Sands in Northern Ireland […] the final devised product was performed at the school, and attempted to explore the deeper issues of the Irish situation.

In the case of Padova, the director takes inspiration for small changes and not for radical adaptation of the text; nevertheless, the discussion and rehearsals of the scenes is an important activity, which is also appreciate by students themselves, as it can be seen from the questionnaires. In second place and with five choices there is the final performance, the main goal of product drama, which results as one of the favourite activity by students. The advantages and disadvantages of process and product drama have already been analysed, as well as the positive outcome that

creates after their combination; however, it seems very clear that the Padova workshop would not have the same appeal for students without the second part of the workshop, the product-oriented approach to drama. According to Lauer (2008: 1), it is extremely important to perform a final performance:

> While I believe that instructed learning within a classroom environment is essential for developing advanced language skills, I am convinced that my students and I need to think beyond the scope of the classroom. This is why I have fostered my students' insight into the target language outside the classroom through organizing and directing a play performance

Several students perform the show in front of an audience for the first time, one of the main reasons to understand this data; if I think to my the first time in front of an audience, I remember the fear before the show, which changed into joy soon after the performance. The third favourite activity is the improvisation with sound (three votes); on the contrary, the silent improvisation has collected no preference by students. Students find silent improvisations harder than those with language, as their spontaneity and fantasy is limited by the absence of verbal communication. Although I think that silent improvisations are very useful to train body movements and facial expressions, it appears that students appreciate spoken improvisations the most. Improvisation activities are also useful for possible inspiration for the final performance (devised theatre), as has been said before in "rehearsing and discussing the scenes". In one of the previous answers, two students express the need to get out their "comfort zone"; that is exactly what happens in improvisation, and perhaps one of the reasons why this exercise is one of the students' favourite. At first, it can cause fear and insecurity, but once students understand the need to laugh at themselves, the activity will be satisfying:

> For example, many students will begin an improvisation, or a scene, in a rather feeble way. It's as if they're ill, and lacking in vitality […] no one has sympathy with an adult who takes such as attitude, but when they are children it probably worked. As adults, they're *still* doing it. Once they've laughed at themselves and understood how unproductive such an attitude is, students who look 'ill' suddenly look 'healthy'. The attitude of the group may instantly change (Johnstone, 2007: 31).

Going on with the results, the writing of the text has received one vote; in the next question, we will see how the writing of the script is one of the most challenging activities as well. It is a kind of writing activity which is not very common in the normal classroom, where the writing exercises concentrate more on academic essays or short stories, rather than theatrical texts. The last students' vote goes to 'silent warm-up activities', a choice that surprised me: I find it an interesting initial exercise, but I believed it to be a little embarrassing for the majority of students. The activities consist in bodily movements and interaction between students without speaking; it is a way to start to know each other and the space around you. Johnstone (2007: 57) named space as "a fluid that flows around actors". In his opinion (2007: 57), "only when the actor's movements are related to the space he's in, and to the other actors, that the audience feel 'at one' with the play." Warm-up activities are usually the initial part of educational drama workshop and, from the following question, it will also be possible to understand the difficulties that such activities create.

The next question asks students to give their opinion about the most challenging activity, followed by an explanation of their choice. Here, the answers are much more varied, because each student has his or her own problems; I will add the figure below, to show the results.
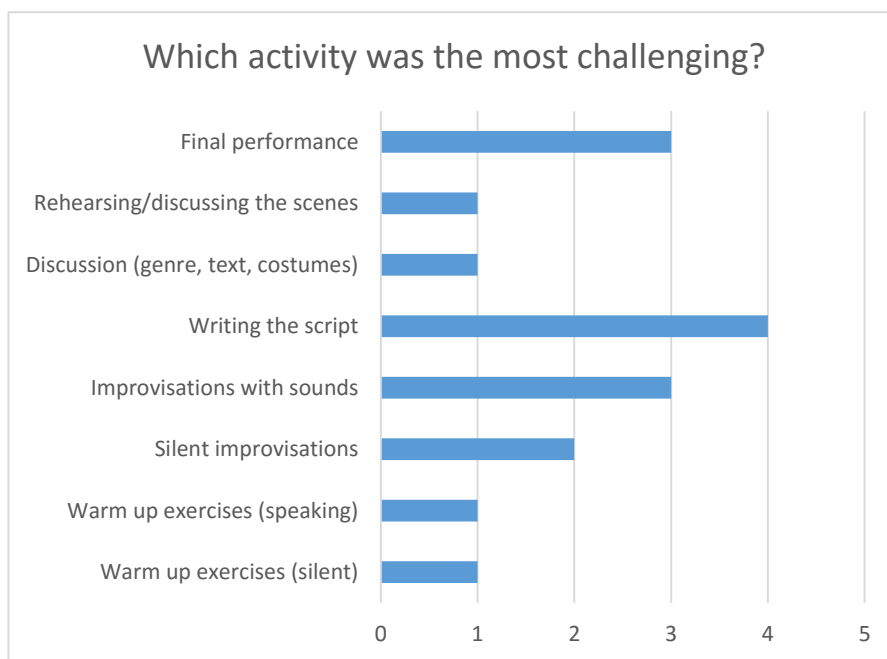
Figure 4. The most challenging activity.

The first interesting result is that four students find the writing of the script very challenging, and, if we think that only nine of them participated in this activity, the number includes almost half of the total amount. Two of them claim that the difficulties derive from the complexity of adaptation, while for the other two the problem is the newness of the activity and the absence of experience in the writing of a theatrical text. As we have seen before, adaptation is no easy work and Bellieveau & Kim (2013: 7) clarify the multiple problematics involved in this task: "engage with a story, looking at the narrative and characters from multiple perspectives and interpretations, and then responding to the work in diverse and often interactive ways." However, students involved in this task-based activity show strong motivation: "students involved in playwriting found a huge implement in their language skills, as they had the opportunity to practice through a motivating project" (Bellieveau & Kim, 2013: 14). Finally, the writing or rewriting of the script requires much time: "it takes time to rewrite because it requires continuous changes and many drafts, depending on the play performed" (Bancheri, 2010: 95). The final performance is the second most challenging activity in the list, with three students' votes, the same amount as the activity "improvisations with sound"; I will now start to analyse the first one. Acting in front of an audience is one of the most difficult

activities, especially as regards the contrasted emotions it conveys, as Crutchfield (2015: 2) points out:

> Any artistic process will produce both "negative" (or unpleasant) and "positive" (or pleasant) emotions. This is especially true of artistic processes involving performance, where the "work" is the body itself, or rather, embodied action before witnesses, and the performer is exposed in a profound, frightening and unpredictable way (in fact, this is what it means to perform).

Students find the final performance as the most challenging activity due to the stress of some students before the show, which can affect the whole group and cause problems during the acting. As in Crutchfield (2015: 3), "students explicitly link their nervousness to their imagination of the performative moment, and in particular to the desire to have an effect on the audience". Furthermore, one student feels that the absence of a dress/tech rehearsal before the final show was the main problem: according to one student, "the first performance was kinda improvised". Another student blames the "crippling anxiety" as the main obstacle to a calm performance. Although the initial emotions are negative, Crutchfield (2015: 6) argues that "the intensity of the 'negative' emotions stands in direct proportion to the 'positive' effect the student experienced in the end". In to this perspective, negative emotions are a necessary part in the performance:

> Thus the initial resistance and fear, etc., far from being "negative" in the sense of a negation, were actually necessary and integral part of this student's overall experience of the course. And as he himself acknowledges in his self-reflection, they were clearly symptomatic of the fact that the personal stakes for him were quite high, and hence that something real, something truly transformative, might happen in performance (Crutchfield, 2015: 6).

The emotions at the end are clearly visible from the joy and the good atmosphere that is created after the show, where the audience (mostly friends or parents) congratulate students; moreover, the previous results highlight the final performance as one of the students' favourite activities, despite all these difficulties. Improvisation with sound are also a challenging activity according to three students; the reasons are low self-confidence, shyness and the need to respond as quickly as

possible, without having time to think of the right answer. To overcome these problems, a safe space for improvisation should be prepared and the teacher should have a crucial role: as Noè-Le Sassier and Boyd (2010: 231) argue:

> Most students need to be coaxed to use new vocabulary and express emotion in the target language. Some students need help in making the physical changes that result in more comprehensible pronunciation; others need coaching in appropriate use of gestures.

The role of fellow students is as important as that of the teacher: "student-to-student interaction creates comfort that encourages the shy and less fluent to participate" (Noè-Le Sassier & Boyd, 2010: 230). Silent improvisations are also quite difficult and two students have found them more challenging than the other activities in the workshop. Between the two kinds of improvisation, there is a huge difference: the use of verbal communication. I did not expect that the students would find spoken improvisations more challenging than the silent ones; however, I tried to find a reason. Although "it is very hard to communicate without words" - as a student writes in the questionnaire – it could be easy to hide behind the absence of words. In other words, while with spoken improvisation students must have an explicit interaction, they could easily avoid participating in the discussion during silent improvisation. Especially if there are more than two people involved in the acting, the silence and the absence of interaction of one single person may not be so evident due to the silence in the interaction. Yet, as this is only my personal opinion, I suggest further investigations on this topic.

Finally, each one of the other four possible answers received one choice: the activities are considered not so challenging and there are no important remarks to make. Rehearsing and discussing the scene are said to become tedious after a while; Spolin (1999: 38) suggests that, "if during workshop sessions students become restless and static in their work, it is a danger sign. Refreshment and a new focus is needed". As concerns the warm-up activities, one member of the workshop says she did not feel comfortable at the beginning; as we have already said, the group and the environment are new, so students could face initial diffidence and problems towards the new atmosphere. However, as Spolin (1999: 52) points out, a warm-up activity "induces the student to meet himself or herself and make the first physical

analysis of personal 'feelings' (in determining tensions) and reduces fears of the audience, the activity, and the teacher-director".

In the following question, everyone agrees that the two languages used during the meetings are English and Italian, which, according to the students depending on the occasions and the teacher, could shift from one language to the other. With the director the students use Italian, while they shift to English when speaking to the co-ordinator; they use both languages when speaking with each other, according to the situation.

Fourteen out to sixteen students believe they improved their English level and each of them chose the linguistic feature that he/she felt improved the most. These are the results (Figure 5):
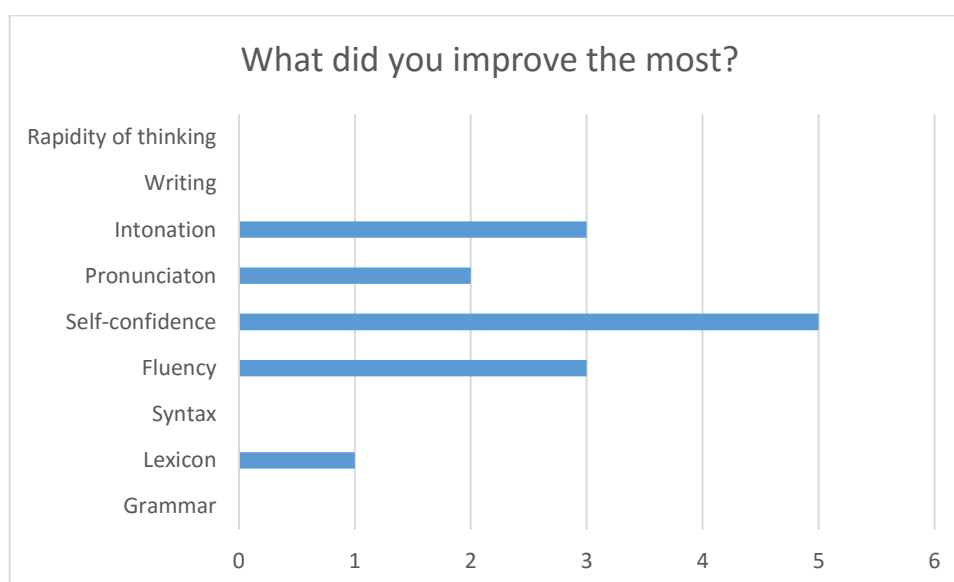

Figure 5. What did you improve the most?

Once again, self-confidence is the most important feature that improved in the workshop (five student votes); students feel more comfortable in speaking and that is the first step towards successful foreign language learning. There are several instruments to help self-confidence, but I think that the mere practice of educational drama activities and the involvement in the group are the starting point to become more self-confident. Nevertheless, there are other techniques to enhance self-confidence, as Del Fattore-Olson (2010: 281) claims: "One technique for helping students develop confidence is encouraging them to scream and create exaggerated and strange movements during the practice of *pronuncia in azione*". Often, raising

the voice is an instrument that helps students feel more confident; every technique could be used to enhance their self-confidence: "they are merely students facing the challenge of performing before an audience in a foreign language, so any tool to help them feel more comfortable, powerful, and strong onstage is justified" (Del Fattore-Olson, 2010: 281).

To achieve this aim the most useful activity to adopt is improvisation; according to the students, the fact of having no other choice but acting is very helpful. Moreover, another positive outcome is "the understanding of their own limits", which helps self-confidence as well. In second place and with three votes, there is fluency and intonation. Due to a task-based orientation and dynamic interaction, students are always exercising their language skills, especially as concerns oral proficiency: the development of fluency emerges as a natural consequence of the workshop. Intonation is developed through activities such as "Montecchi and Capuleti", where students have to repeat the same words with different intonations and moods, as well as through teacher's corrections during rehearsals. Intonation is strictly related with pronunciation, the fourth language feature to be present in the answer, with two students choices. Pronunciation is another language skill that is amply developed in the workshop, especially through the teacher's corrections; during single or small group sessions, students have the chance to read their part in front of the teacher who corrects their pronunciation. Such as the case analysed in in Del Fattore-Olsen (2010: 280), "basic theatrical exercises are intermingled with the practice of pronunciation and intonation in order to bring students to a deeper understanding of phonetic rules and a more harmonic rhythm in speaking." Moreover, during improvisation exercises or in other speaking activities, the teacher is free to interrupt and correct students' intonation and pronunciation. Lightbown & Spada (1993: 115) says about this topic:

> Excessive error correction can have a strong negative effect on motivation. On the other hand, teachers have a responsibility to help learners do their best, and this sometimes means drawing their attention to persistent errors or to errors for which communicative language interaction does not provide natural sources of correction.

The last language feature cited by students is lexicon, with only one student who claims to have improved it the most. In our workshop, the activities are not primary directed at the development of lexicon, but, on the other hand, every activity helps this feature indirectly, such as the case cited in Ryan-Scheutz (2010: 304): "There was no specific treatment pertaining to vocabulary and grammar, though numerous words and structures were used frequently in the course of class meetings and rehearsals".

The following question asks about the other benefits students have found in the project, where they have the possibilities to express as many preferences as they want. This is the result (Figure 6):
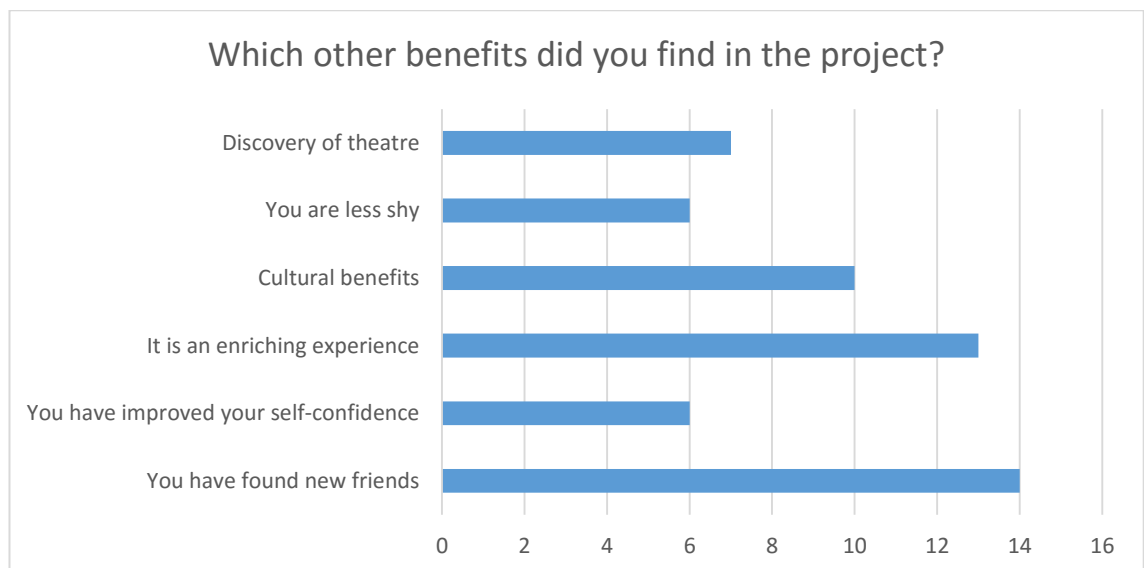

Figure 6. Benefits in the project

Almost everyone (fourteen students out of sixteen) found new friends during the workshop and associate it with a benefit. Everything starts from the atmosphere of interaction typical in this kind of workshop, where students create a "cooperative learning", as Capra (2015: 2) points out:

> The key phrases for cooperative learning are positive interdependence and individual accountability. 'Positive interdependence' occurs when students realize that their individual success is inextricably linked to the success of each other member of the group:

its counterpart is 'individual accountability', that is each group member's individual responsibility and contribution, for her or his part, to the group effort and success.

In this atmosphere of cooperation, the stage becomes "the field of what, in a sport metaphor, could certainly be defined as a team game" (Capra, 2015: 1). From this interaction, the boundary between students evolved into a real friendship, one of the essential needs for a human being. After to this social benefit and according to thirteen students, the workshop is an 'enriching experience' in every way, either social or academic. Furthermore, ten students have placed "cultural benefits" in an important place within the benefits of the workshop; but what does "cultural" mean? As explained in the first chapter of this dissertation, culture is developed in the workshop under several aspects. First, "culture" is shared through the exchange of experiences and knowledge between students, from the same group or from different universities; for example – during a trip to Vercelli (Università Rienate Orientale), part of the group performed a short show, together with other three universities from Italy, France and Germany. In that occasion, the exchange between students from different universities created a fruitful atmosphere, where "culture" was shared and everyone found himself or herself enriched. Furthermore, as mentioned by Schewe (2013: 11) with the example of University College Cork in Ireland, educational drama workshops – such as the one in Padova – enhance cultural exchanges through different techniques:

> 'Culture Transfer Projects' work on the basic assumption that foreign language departments commit themselves to function as 'bridge builders' between different cultures by translating and adapting dramatic texts for performance in a specific location and cultural setting.

The workshop of Padova allows students to develop literary knowledge, due to the building of a final performance, which is usually based on a literary text. All descriptions fall within the answer "cultural benefits", which represents an important benefit according to students. Seven students put the discovery of theatre as another important benefit of the workshop; while most of them had never acted or followed a theatre course, others discovered new aspects of theatre such as new theatrical texts or new strategies of acting. Finally, the last two answers are "you

have improved your self-confidence" and "you are less shy", each of them with five votes; I will not make further considerations on these two questions because of the large amount of information on this topic in this dissertation.

From the students' perspective, the most important benefits to have found new friends, followed by the improvement of self-confidence, as can be understood from the table (Figure 7; each student has given a maximum of two possible answers):
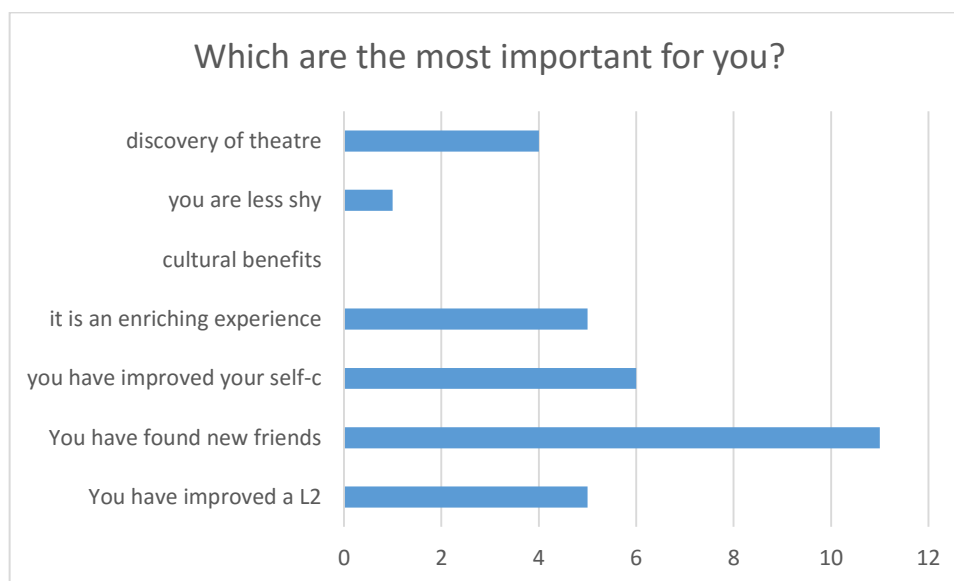

Figure 7. The most important benefits

The table highlights the social importance of the workshop, the enrichment of the participants' language level and personal behaviour, the discovery of theatre as well as the little importance given to the cultural benefits of the workshop. The final benefits partially match with the reasons that induced students to start the workshop: the initial desire to meet new people and improve the target language seems to have been satisfied.

The next question asks for the students' opinion of the workshop, by giving them the chance to make suggestion about the project. Five students propose starting the work on the script and the final performance a little sooner; usually the work on the show starts at the end of March, but there is not enough time, according to students. Moreover, one student feels the need to spend less time on single scenes and to go on faster with the rehearsals of the scenes. These suggestions do not imply that the initial work (process drama) is not important, but are an expression of the

need to work longer on the final performance in order to feel better prepared for it. Four students express the desire to meet and rehearse in a theatre with a permanent stage and not in a classroom; although that would be a nice experience, the problem is not very easy to solve. Lauer (2008: 5) highlights the positive effect of a permanent stage:

> During the rehearsals, it turned out that the sparse equipment of the Black Box Theater and the rather dark atmosphere of the setting not only helped to facilitate students' acting, but it also nicely supported the dramatic plot structure. Instead of focusing on costumes or properties, the focus was on the students and their acting.

Another supporter of rehearsals in a place with a permanent stage is Bancheri (2010: 102):

> Indeed, I think that the stage itself transforms the students; the same exam in a regular setting – and we have done this in the past – does not give the same results. I suppose that the stage, costumes, music, and props are all elements that foster in students high levels of concentration and motivation.

Bancheri (2010: 102) also cites music as an important element to motivate students; in fact, a theatre with a permanent stage has other technology such as lights and sound, which are hard to find in a normal classroom. In fact, as Botes (2015: 1) points out:

> Music creates a positive climate in the classroom, lowers learners' affective filter, and reinforces semantic memory. Music is also particularly significant in language learning: music's rhythm facilitates memorisation of vocabulary, positively influences pronunciation and intonation, and reduces the perceived complexity of linguistic structures.

Another student criticises to the language used during rehearsals and suggests less use of Italian in favour of greater use of the English language. The issue has already been handled in the dissertation and the reasons for the use of both languages in the workshop have already been explained. Although the use of just the English language would be more useful for target language learning, the difficulties of the relationship with the director undermines this purpose. Finally, one student asks for

a smaller group composed of fifteen or twenty people and not thirty students; that would be easier to handle, as the problems for large groups to put on a final performance have been explained previously. However, as the workshop is a unique opportunity in this field at the University, it is also difficult to exclude some students from taking part in it. In fact, the year 2015-2016 saw a rise in the participants' number and the workshop was split in two groups; that allows for a greater number of students to follow the course, without having a huge group.

The entire group (sixteen students) found the workshop a positive experience; everyone would recommend the experience to other fellow students. The last question of the questionnaire asks participants the reasons they have to recommend the experience to other students. They have given several answers, which obviously match the benefits they have found in the workshop. This is the list of the reasons they have found to recommend the workshop to other students: to improve their language skills, to meet new people, it is an enriching experience, students can improve their self-confidence, fun and enjoyment participating in this kind of workshop, it enriches university life, discovery of English literature or music and movie genres.

CONCLUSIONS

Before moving on to the final analysis of the results and to the conclusions, I would like to specify the reasons that have led me to the start of this dissertation. For three years, I participated in the English theatre workshop at the University of Padova and enjoyed the experience described in the previous chapters, along with having developed new competences and improved old skills. This three-year experience made possible the realization of this analysis of the benefits educational drama has in higher education for foreign language learning and has helped me in the understanding of the issue. The questionnaires have been a confirmation of my opinions towards the workshop, with few exceptions especially as regards the activities, where every student has different opinions. Now, I will summarize the most important features that have emerged from the questionnaires and from the entire study, with my personal reflection on the importance of a dynamic approach to language learning which I, after this research and the reflection on this topic, feel to be one of the most valuable approaches to foreign language learning. In fact, I agree with Jensen & Hermer (1998: 178) when they call for a different approach to language learning:

> Both of us, like many thousands of others, were taught various foreign languages traditionally: swotting up on vocabulary, analysing and learning grammar, translating authors. That led to the absurd situation of us being able to read newspapers, understand writers – but not be able to order a sandwich once abroad.

The group involved in the workshop is somewhat heterogeneous, as regards age and course of study, and another discrepancy is between the number of male and female students. However, as already mentioned, about twenty students made up the group and, with a few character adaptations, the building of the final performance was not a problem. The majority of the group were following a literature and language course at university and that could be seen both as a "limit" and as an advantage. In the first case, the fact that almost everyone has studied languages means that the group is already well disposed towards the activities linked to the workshop, for example studying the script or improvising in English.

It may seem obvious that this group of students will interact in English, so and there is not much improvement in this regard. However, due to the lack of interaction in some traditional language courses, that is not always the case and such a workshop also helps students who are already well-disposed towards communication in a foreign language. On the other hand, it can be argued that a group of foreign language students would be an advantage for the building of a successful final show. Most of them have already studied English literature, so many literary texts could be adapted and performed due to their literary knowledge. The second section of the questionnaire confirms what has been said so far, and highlights the intercultural orientation of these students, who have studied or worked abroad and are used to meeting students with different backgrounds.

The third part of the questionnaire is more specific and helps to understand what students think about the workshop and what they have found beneficial or not useful for their language learning purposes. In fact, the majority of them started the course in order to develop language skills or because of their attraction to theatre and acting; only a few of them claim to have started it in order to obtain the three ECTS credits. Nevertheless, I find it an important incentive to attract those who are more reluctant to spend time on an extra-curricular activity; although they could love theatre or just be curious, the absence of a "reward" or time constraints could have a discouraging effect if not supported by the three credits incentive. Of course, that proves to be useful but not essential for the participation in the workshop, while the dramatic orientation of this foreign language course proves to be the greatest incentive. As Schmidt (1998: 194) points out, in the workshop "the social aspect is integrated into the artistic activity […] it is where different people meet either through their personal artistic development and/or through the themes of the play." Students' favourite activity is the final performance, followed by the discussing and rehearsing of the scenes, and both are product-oriented activities. That shows the importance of the product-oriented approach to drama for foreign language workshops, because students are highly motivated and involved in the project; moreover, a final performance can enter in a task-oriented language learning activity, whose benefits have already been explained in the previous sections.

As the workshop is an extra-curricular activity and as the final performance and the rehearsals of the scenes are the two favourite activities, it seems clear that for this type of workshop a product orientation is essential. However, we have seen the importance of process-oriented activities – such as improvisation – and the benefits the latter has for foreign language learning. In particular, intonation, pronunciation and fluency are the three linguistic features which students feel they have improved the most, especially after process-oriented activities. Indeed, a combination of the two approaches is useful to put on a better final performance, due to the linguistic and personal development students acquire especially in the first part of the workshop. In light of the considerations that we have shown up to this point, I agree with Crutchfield's conclusions (2015: 15):

> While there can no longer be any doubt that class-time devoted to carefully-designed creative, artistic or aesthetic activities is time well-spent, the present study would suggest that such activities offer their greatest benefits when culminating in some form of public (i.e. theatrical) performance, a performance "with" one's peers and "for" the larger community, however defined.

Although linguistic improvements are evident, the social aspect should not be underestimated: self-confidence is the most important benefit students have gained from the workshop. Week after week, they are more confident not only towards the language use, but also in social relationships with the other group members. Drama is seen as a tool to develop language competences and to establish social relationships in an intercultural context: rehearsals are meant to be a place where students are encouraged to express themselves and take risks, without being judged. Culture exchanges are at the basis of an educational drama workshop for foreign language and, as mentioned in the previous sections, drama can be used to develop cultural awareness. Several aspects can stimulate students' cultural awareness, such as the cultural background each student brings in the class or the cultural richness of literature, which is analysed in the workshop. Fleming (1998: 149) asserts:

> Drama here is not serving merely as an arbitrary means to an end but is actually affecting the end or outcome. In this case the end 'learning a foreign language' changes to 'learning

a foreign language in a way which focuses on the richness and complexity of human behaviour' or, to put it another way, it is to approach language in its cultural context.

Linguistic improvements, self-confidence, personal developments: everything means communication, which is the final aim of the workshop. Learning to communicate in familiar and unfamiliar context while using a foreign language and trying to be more self-confident and to use an appropriate language. The benefits of the workshop lead students to a personal transformation, which allows them to become more aware of the "other" and to improve their attitude in intercultural relationships. This atmosphere eases the development of foreign language skills, which becomes a natural consequence of the workshop. Of course, students need to collaborate actively in the tasks and should be stimulated to take risks, both in social interactions and with foreign language use. If all these elements fit together, students will obtain both linguistic and social benefits – the two features students put in the first place for importance. The questionnaires and the interview with the director (Pierantonio Rizzato) highlight an alleged benefit of a permanent stage in such a workshop; a permanent and real stage gives students the chance to rehearse from the very beginning in the same place where they will act at the end of the year. That gives them the time to know the place, to understand the differences with normal classrooms; it eases concentration and increases students' commitment. I would suggest further investigation on this topic, as it could be one of the possible improvements in this kind of workshop. It could also be argued that the effort needed to build this workshop and let it continue throughout the year is larger than the outcome of the same workshop. Students have to follow the workshop as an extra-curricular activity, involving a lot of time both for rehearsals and for memorization at home. Furthermore, teachers are fully involved in the organisation and as they are also responsible for the good result of the workshop, they have to put in a great deal of effort. Lastly, universities have to find funds for this project and invest in the collaboration with the director (often an external one, such as in the case of Padova). Nevertheless, as we have also seen from the evidence provided by students and foreign teachers, these efforts are well rewarded; there are several positive outcomes and I would say that the issue is worth it.

The research also shed light on other positive outcomes, which are a cultural one – as mentioned before – and the discovery of theatre, for those students who had no previous experience in this field. Many students have remained attracted by theatre after this experience and have continued to act in different companies. I would see this result as another benefit, especially in this time where theatre may be going through hard times, due to a lack of spectators and interest. Some of the participants discovered new literary texts, which they had never handled before during literature courses; indeed, the workshop can be seen as an extra literature course aside from the normal course of study, but always very useful. Could language development be improved in the workshop? I think that everything can be improved and so language development as well: more commitment and concentration of students can be a starting point and a larger use of the foreign language can be of great help. I think students need to memorize their part for the final show a bit earlier, so that they can rehearse easily and concentrate more on pronunciation and intonation.

After these results, I would suggest that involvement of drama in education for foreign language purposes in the academic environment could be of great help, especially for people with difficulties in social relationships and interactions in a foreign language. I would argue that – when it is possible – a one-year workshop is one of the best options for this kind of project, because there is more time to plan the course and to end it with a final performance, whose benefits have already been explained. Teachers should be encouraged to adopt a new approach of teaching, more dynamic and flexible, and consider how they can make foreign language teaching and learning more effective. Finally, there are several questions that need to be analysed in detail and which emerged from this dissertation: Would it be possible to implement such a workshop for every foreign language course? How many students should be involved without excluding any of them and at the same time without having too large a group? Is it possible to evaluate the exact degree of language development? For further investigations in this topic, I would suggest to hand out a questionnaire before the start of the workshop and one at the end of it, in order to try to evaluate the degree of linguistic benefits students can obtain after a one year-workshop in educational drama for foreign language learning. In

conclusion, I look forward to a wider involvement of educational drama for foreign language learning because I believe theatre and language learning are an explosive and wonderful mix.

SUMMARY IN ITALIAN

E' possibile sviluppare nuove competenze linguistiche o semplicemente migliorare una lingua straniera attraverso il teatro? Quali sono i benefici che si possono ottenere abbinando questa forma d'arte al contesto educativo, per quanto riguarda la lingua inglese? Queste sono le principali domande a cui questa tesi di laurea mira a dare delle risposte quanto più possibili soddisfacenti, abbinando un'analisi della letteratura presente riguardante questo argomento e una ricerca su un campione di studenti dell'Università di Padova. Questa tesi è il prodotto di una indagine sui possibili benefici di un approccio alle lingue straniere che da poco sta prendendo piede in alcune università europee e non solo, e che si esprime in un metodo dinamico di insegnamento, che abbina l'uso dell'arte teatrale al contesto dell'apprendimento di una lingua straniera. L'autore di questa tesi ha partecipato per tre anni ad un corso extracurriculare per l'apprendimento dell'inglese attraverso il teatro presso l'Università degli Studi di Padova e, dopo esserne rimasto colpito positivamente, ha deciso di analizzarne alcuni elementi in modo dettagliato. La tesi è suddivisa in una breve introduzione, tre capitoli centrali e una conclusione, a cui si aggiunge il presente riassunto in italiano dell'intero elaborato. Il primo capitolo analizza dettagliatamente la questione dell'uso del teatro e delle arti drammatiche abbinato all'apprendimento di una lingua straniera, con numerosi punti di riflessioni ripresi anche dalla numerosa letteratura presente (specialmente inglese e americana) riguardante questo argomento. Dopo questa base utile per comprendere al meglio l'argomento, il secondo capitolo si propone come un'analisi di tre progetti in questo ambito di tre differenti università: una italiana (Università degli Studi di Padova), una francese (Grenoble University) ed una tedesca (Reutlingen University). Vengono analizzati le affinità e le differenze per quanto riguarda la struttura, le attività svolte, gli obiettivi ed i risultati dei suddetti progetti, non con lo scopo di decretare il migliore o il peggiore, bensì con quello di cercare di evidenziare i vari temi trattati e quindi capire come lo stesso argomento possa essere messo in atto in modo differente ed ugualmente efficace. Inoltre la testimonianza di realtà diverse da quella vicina a noi ci è utile per avere un termine di paragone e ottenere una visione più ampia dell'argomento. Il terzo capitolo, più pratico e con un lavoro sul

campo, analizza un questionario somministrato agli studenti di Padova che hanno seguito il corso di teatro in lingua inglese nell'anno accademico 2014-2015. In questa ricerca, i dati emersi dalle domande sottoposte agli studenti vengono commentati in maniera dettagliata e cercando di dare un significato ad ognuna di essa, utilizzando il materiale utilizzato nei primi due capitoli come base di analisi e commento. A seguito di questa analisi, le conclusioni ed eventuali spunti per riflessioni future chiudono questo elaborato.

Entriamo ora nel dettaglio del primo capitolo: esso è suddiviso in nove sotto-capitoli ed inizia con una breve riflessione sulla differenza tra *theatre in education* e *drama in education*, due termini simili e che in italiano non presentano una traduzione letterale univoca, sempre legati all'educazione. I due termini sono strettamente legati ai due differenti approcci delle arti teatrali con l'educazione: nel caso di *drama in education*, in questa tesi vengono intese le arti e tecniche drammatiche abbinate all'educazione, di cui fanno parte per esempio le improvvisazioni e i giochi di ruolo, e vengono riassunte sotto il termine *process drama* o *process approach to drama*. Questo approccio presta maggiore importanza al processo di apprendimento e a tutte le tappe e gli esercizi che aiutano a sviluppare le competenze per quanto riguarda l'apprendimento di una lingua straniera. Il termine *theatre in education* è invece legato a quello di *product drama* o *product approach to drama*; qui l'enfasi è verso il prodotto che scaturisce da tutti i molteplici esercizi teatrali e lo spettacolo finale è all'apice delle varie attività svolte. Tutto ruota attorno alla preparazione e alla messa in atto dello spettacolo e le attività svolte sono quindi incentrate verso questo fine. Il primo sotto-capitolo propone una panoramica sulla storia del rapporto tra arte teatrale (qui non facciamo differenza tra i due approcci, ma li mettiamo sullo stesso piano) ed educazione e di come il teatro avesse una funzione educativa fin dall'antica Grecia e dal Medioevo dove aveva una funzione di indirizzamento morale soprattutto per i giovani. Durante il Rinascimento esso assume toni più di critica e di analisi delle situazioni politiche e sociali dell'epoca, per poi arrivare ai primi segni dell'attuale arte drammatica abbinata all'educazione, specialmente in Gran Bretagna, madre delle più importanti e famose teorizzazioni su questo argomento. Di seguito troviamo un approfondimento su un metodo di insegnamento nato negli ultimi decenni del

ventesimo secolo, e alla base dell'attuale tendenza verso un metodo più comunicativo (*communicative language teaching*). Questo approccio si distanzia da quello precedente per quanto riguarda un ruolo più attivo da parte dello studente e un suo coinvolgimento dinamico e diretto nell'apprendimento della lingua straniera, in cui alla base troviamo la comunicazione. Essa è infatti essenziale nello sviluppo di nuove competenze ed è da preferire ad un approccio più statico, dove la parte principale è svolta dal docente. Un'altra sezione comprende le varie problematiche sull'apprendimento di una lingua straniera, cosa che comporta meccanismi totalmente differenti dall'assimilazione che ogni individuo ha per la propria lingua madre. Caratteristiche che risultano influenti per migliorare l'apprendimento sono da trovare per esempio nelle motivazioni personali e da altri fattori esterni come l'ambiente ed i modi attraverso cui si propaga la trasmissione della lingua (ad esempio volontario o involontario). I due seguenti paragrafi analizzano in dettaglio le attività teatrali dapprima corrispondenti con l'educazione in generale e poi con l'apprendimento delle lingue straniere. Vengono evidenziati tutti i benefici di questo approccio dinamico che utilizza attività teatrali, attraverso il quale viene stimolato l'insegnamento di nuove competenze, sia generali che linguistiche. Questo approccio crea caratteristiche uniche e difficili da replicare in un normale ambiente accademico, come un piccolo gruppo di studenti che collabora in modo attivo nella creazione di piccole scene o situazione di vita quotidiane, nel quale è richiesto l'uso della lingua straniera, che viene quindi messo alla prova in modo continuo, in seguito al quale allo studente è quindi richiesto uno sforzo maggiore sia in termini di concentrazione sia in termini di coinvolgimento. Lo studente diventa quindi il "focus" della lezione e ognuno contribuisce a creare un qualcosa di speciale che in situazioni normali è impensabile che accada (pensiamo alle normali lezioni frontali in una classe dove il parere dell'insegnante è totalmente preponderante rispetto a quello dello studente). Qui invece, il docente cerca di "abbassarsi" al livello degli studenti, in modo tale da stimolare e facilitare l'ingresso di questi ultimi nella discussione o nell'attività, favorendo un'atmosfera più rilassata e scevra da giudizi, che potrebbero influenzare negativamente lo studente in questione. Le motivazioni e le argomentazioni differenti da quelle usuali portano inoltre ad un interessamento maggiore degli studenti e quindi ad un maggiore

coinvolgimento, provocando benefici durevoli nel tempo. Ovviamente tutto ha anche i suoi lati più problematici, come la difficoltà di trovare spazi adeguati a queste esigenze e alle problematiche legate alle relazioni tra studenti stessi, che se non buone, potrebbero portare a situazioni spiacevoli all'interno dei vari gruppi. Il successivo argomento riguarda la cultura e di come essa sia trasmessa all'interno di queste situazioni sotto vari aspetti. Innanzitutto è difficile dare una spiegazione ideale di cosa si intenda per cultura in questo caso, date le varie situazioni in cui essa viene stimolata. Provando ad analizzarle, possiamo notare come questi ambienti siano un veicolo unico di cultura, intesa qui nel senso di esperienze personali, che ogni studente (specie se di culture diverse) porta con sé durante ogni fase del della lezione – o durante ogni fase dei "workshop", come possiamo descrivere le situazioni presenti all'interno della tesi, analizzate nel secondo e terzo capitolo. Cultura può essere anche trasmessa dalla preparazione allo spettacolo finale, quando un'opera teatrale deve essere messa in scena; spesso questa opera viene ripresa dalla letteratura antica o moderna, oppure può essere modificata dai componenti del gruppo. In ogni caso, l'opera veicola delle informazioni e delle caratteristiche culturali in base alla lingua e al paese che essa rappresenta, attraverso l'analisi dei personaggi e dai contesti storici che vi possono essere descritti. Dopo l'argomento culturale troviamo una sezione dedicata all'analisi dei due approcci, *process drama* e *product drama*, e di come entrambi possono coesistere all'interno di un unico workshop. Nel primo, il processo di apprendimento attraverso prove informali dove gli studenti sono invitati a partecipare attivamente e a creare un forte senso di comunità risulta lo scopo principale. Nel secondo invece l'attenzione maggiore è rivolta alla messa in scena di piccoli *sketches* o spettacolo veri e propri, con la presenza di un pubblico esterno. Sostenitori di entrambi gli approcci sono molteplici e ognuno con le proprie teorie; alcuni sostengono come il primo aiuti gli studenti a sprigionare la creatività, altri di come il secondo aiuti maggiormente la concentrazione e la motivazione, ma in ogni caso nel maggiore dei casi i due approcci sono utilizzati indistintamente. Nell'esempio del workshop di Padova, in un primo periodo l'enfasi è nel processo di apprendimento attraverso esercizi mirati come improvvisazioni o giochi di ruolo, mentre dopo la metà del corso l'attenzione si sposta sulla messa in scena di uno spettacolo, nel quale però le competenze

acquise nel primo periodo risultano indispensabili. Le ultime due sezioni del primo capitolo analizzano due delle principali attività dei due differenti approcci, cioè improvvisazione e lavoro sul testo teatrale. Nell'improvvisazione l'oralità è il veicolo linguistico principale; gli studenti assumono un ruolo fittizio, e attraverso l'immaginazione, devono cercare di creare dei dialoghi e risolvere delle situazioni con altri studenti, senza avere un testo preparato anticipatamente. Gli studenti devono rendersi quindi dei "rischi" e devono cercare di allontanare le loro paure e non disturbarsi troppo per eventuali errori, che possono essere evidenziati successivamente dal tutor. D'altro canto il lavoro sul testo è la base da cui partire per mettere in scena uno spettacolo e spesso questa attività viene relegata agli studenti, in quanto esercizio utilissimo per la lingua. Trovandosi di fronte ad un testo nuovo, con espressioni o termini sconosciuti, lo studente ha la possibilità di ampliare il proprio repertorio lessicale e, ripetendo a voce alta per verificare la fluidità del testo, intonazione e pronuncia vengono messi alla prova.

Il secondo capitolo è un'analisi di tre workshop sul teatro nell'apprendimento delle lingue straniere, e attraverso la comparazione di essi, si riesce a creare un quadro generale che ci aiuta a comprendere come lavorano e sono strutturati questi progetti. L'indagine viene effettuata a livello universitario e comprende le università di Padova, Grenoble e Reutlingen. La prima comparazione riguarda la struttura del workshop, che ha la durata di un anno nei primi due casi, mentre è di un solo semestre alla Reutlingen University. Tutti e tre i corsi sono aperti per studenti di tutte le facoltà, ma a differenza dei primi due che sono maggiormente indicati per studenti di lingue e letterature, le Reutlingen University è indirizzato per lo più a studenti di Economia, dato l'orientamento del workshop che ha lo scopo di insegnare inglese economico, e non generale come negli altri due progetti. Lo scopo dei tre workshop è simile ma ognuno ha delle sfumature particolari; lo sviluppo di competenze linguistiche è il primo obiettivo (inglese economico per Reutlingen), a cui sono accostati altri obiettivi come lo sviluppo di un ambiente interculturale e di collaborazione per Grenoble e Padova. La comunicazione non verbale è un elemento molto marcato nel workshop di Grenoble, dato il vasto utilizzo di essa nella lingua italiana, oggetto di studio nel corso francese. La successiva sezione approfondisce la questione linguistica e di

come essa è sviluppata nei diversi workshop. A Padova, le attività della prima parte del workshop sono indirizzate allo sviluppo di competenze linguistiche attraverso improvvisazioni e altri esercizi, seguite da piccoli lavori di gruppo per quanto riguarda intonazione, fluidità e pronuncia con i tutor madrelingua. Attraverso le prove dello spettacolo nella seconda parte del workshop, gli studenti si esercitano e assimilano i comportamenti, verbali e non, da tenere durante lo spettacolo. Il regista inoltre può prendere spunto per alcune correzioni nelle scene per quello che abbiamo chiamato *devised theatre*, ovvero i nuovi stimoli o spunti che possono creare tali improvvisazioni e messe in scene di determinate situazioni che potrebbero avvenire durante lo spettacolo. L'università di Grenoble invece lavora maggiormente sull'aspetto fonetico, sui suoni e la musicalità (pronuncia) dell'italiano, con l'inserimento di parole dialettali per creare una ricchezza linguistica notevole all'interno del testo da proporre. L'uso della comicità inoltre aiuta gli studenti a sdrammatizzare nelle situazioni più complicate o di tensione, come potrebbero essere le prove di fronte agli altri compagni del gruppo, o di fronte ad un audience esterno. Infine, il workshop all'università di Reutlingen è completamente incentrato sulla creazione di uno spettacolo, il quale viene adattato in un inglese economico moderno, per creare delle situazioni che ricreano situazioni in cui i futuri studenti potrebbero trovarsi una volta entrati nel mondo del lavoro. Un'altra sezione è dedicata agli attori protagonisti dei vari workshop; una ventina a Padova, circa quindici per Grenoble e Reutlingen. Un gruppo ristretto di studenti è un beneficio per l'attività in quanto è possibile mettere in scena ogni tipo di spettacolo, mentre un gruppo più ampio può creare delle problematiche relative alla presenza di più studenti rispetto ai ruoli disponibili nello spettacolo. Esistono però vari accorgimenti per far fronte a queste difficoltà, come il taglio di scene o battute per diminuire il numero di battute di ogni studente e al tempo stesso per incrementare il numero di ruoli nello spettacolo. Anche nelle attività non legate allo show un numero elevato può creare difficoltà di gestione del gruppo, oltre che della difficoltà di trovare spazi adatti per le esigenze sceniche all'interno dell'ambiente universitario. Di seguito troviamo un ulteriore approfondimento sulla struttura dei singoli workshop e sul peso che ognuno di loro dà al processo e al prodotto finale. Come abbiamo già detto Reutlingen University è composto quasi esclusivamente

da attività legate allo spettacolo, mentre l'università di Padova ha optato per una commistione delle due tipologie. Successivamente, una sezione analizza nel dettaglio alcune attività, con alcuni esempi tratti dall'esperienza nel workshop dell'università di Padova. Un attività che è stata riscontrata essere comune in tutti i workshop è stata quella del lavoro sul testo, il quale non è mai stato ripreso o ricopiato integralmente da un'altra opera, bensì è stato opera in tutti i casi di adattamenti, tagli o aggiunte, per esigenze di scena ed in base agli attori (per esempio alcuni caratteri maschili sono stati tramutati in personaggi femminili nel workshop di Padova, per dar modo al maggior numero di studentesse di poter recitare senza problemi). Tra le attività legate al *process drama*, è necessario citare gli esercizi iniziali di riscaldamento, in cui gli studenti si esibiscono usualmente all'inizio delle prove e nella parte iniziale dei workshop. Essi servono per creare una prima connessione tra gli studenti stessi, che spesso non si conoscono e quindi hanno un'iniziale titubanza nel aprirsi emotivamente con gli altri membri del gruppo.

Il terzo capitolo invece si differenzia dai primi due sotto molti aspetti, in quanto si tratta di un analisi di dati che vengono estrapolati in seguito alla somministrazione di un questionario. Quest'ultimo è stato compilato dagli studenti che hanno seguito in workshop nell'anno accademico 2014-2015 all'università di Padova, ovvero il laboratorio di teatro in lingua inglese; dopo essere stato consegnato a tutti i 21 studenti presenti, i questionari compilati sono stati 16. Questo questionario è pensato per dare voce agli studenti, dopo le argomentazioni espresse dalle varie letterature e dai vari docenti nei primi due capitoli: in questo modo possiamo considerare l'intero aspetto a 360 gradi, cercando di capire le impressioni da coloro che sono il soggetto della ricerca. La forma del questionario è stata scelta sia per la sua rapidità di consegna nei confronti degli studenti, sia per la semplicità nelle risposte; non è infatti semplice trovare dei momenti liberi che coincidano con quelli dei soggetti intervistati e questo metodo è quello più efficiente. È stato possibile inviare il questionario a studenti che non erano presenti fisicamente a Padova ed avere avuto le risposte in tempo breve; inoltre la struttura semplice non esclude la possibilità di ottenere comunque informazioni dettagliate. Il questionario è diviso in tre sezioni: la prima parte contiene informazioni riguardanti il

background generale dello studente, seguite nella seconda parte da domande sul background linguistico, per poi entrare nella terza parte con domande più specifiche sul workshop e sulle attività svolte al suo interno. Il questionario ha diversi tipi di domande, la maggior parte sono a scelta multipla, ma compaiono anche alcune a domanda aperta, dove lo studente ha maggiori possibilità di esprimere il proprio parere. Allora per quanto riguarda la prima parte, è utile per fare una panoramica generale degli studenti intervistati e che hanno seguito il workshop. I risultati evidenziano una prevalenza femminile, probabilmente data dal fatto che la maggioranza proviene da corsi di lingua e letteratura dove abbiano una notevole discrepanza tra maschi e femmine. Tranne due studenti con la doppia nazionalità, il gruppo di lingua inglese di Padova risulta molto eterogeneo, con lo stesso background culturale e un'età media di circa 23 anni. La seconda parte del questionario si apre con una tabella di autovalutazione della lingua inglese, secondo i parametri CEFR: la media è stimata a cavallo di un livello B2 e C1, con leggeri flessioni verso il livello C2 per le competenze di lettura e ascolto di alcuni studenti. Ovviamente il livello riflette l'andamento scolastico della maggior parte degli studenti, di cui solo quattro non seguono corsi di lingua ma provengono da altre facoltà. Dato il simile background culturale, il livello di lingua è simile; inoltre, la quasi totalità degli studenti ha passato del tempo che varia dalle due settimane ad un paio di mesi all'estero ed ha utilizzato l'inglese. Ciò è sicuramente un ulteriore dato rilevante che ci fa comprendere come gli studenti siano già stati in contatto con la cultura target e quindi questa esperienza non sia la prima sotto questo punto di vista. La terza sezione del questionario approfondisce a fondo il workshop, costituisce la parte più corposa e da cui sono emersi i datti più rilevanti ed interessanti. Un terzo del gruppo risulta totalmente estraneo alle pratiche teatrali, mentre i restanti due terzi sono già entrati in contatto in passato con il teatro. Successivamente troviamo delle domande riguardanti le motivazioni che hanno spinto gli studenti ad iniziare a seguire il workshop, e quelle che hanno portato gli stessi a decidere di continuare negli anni successivi. Le motivazioni iniziali sono state la voglia di sviluppare competenze linguistiche, intraprendere un attività legata al teatro, la possibilità di ottenere 3 crediti e una mera curiosità. Le motivazioni che hanno portato gli studenti a continuare con il workshop ricalcano quelle iniziali,

con l'importante aggiunta di una motivazione sociale: il gruppo di studenti da essi trovato si è rilevato essere molto unito e da cui sono nate successivamente amicizie durature, anche al di fuori dell'ambiente universitario. Per quanto riguarda le domande specifiche riguardanti le attività del workshop, sono emersi dati interessanti. Innanzitutto, le attività preferite dagli studenti sono state lo spettacolo finale e le prove per metterlo in scena, evidenziando quindi l'importanza di avere un prodotto concreto su cui lavorare e poter usare come leva motivazionale sugli studenti. La terza opzione è risultata essere l'attività di improvvisazione, che sottolinea come le attività della prima parte sono comunque essenziali in preparazione della fase focalizzata sullo spettacolo. Per quanto riguarda le attività più impegnative è significativo il dato riguardante il lavoro sul testo, con più della metà degli studenti coinvolti che hanno espresso questa opinione. Questa attività è una delle poche in cui l'oralità è secondaria ma rappresenta una fonte importante per l'apprendimento di nuove strutture lessicali e grammaticali. A seguire lo spettacolo finale e le improvvisazioni sono state indicate come attività che nascondono parecchie insidie; al primo sono legate motivazioni di timidezza, paura e stress nei confronti dei primi approcci teatrali nei confronti del pubblico, mentre al secondo la difficoltà nel trovare sempre le parole giuste durante i dialoghi improvvisati e le problematiche creative, troppo poco stimolate durante normali lezioni di lingua. Quattordici studenti su sedici hanno migliorato uno o più aspetti della lingua inglese durante il workshop, e la maggior parte dei miglioramenti sono avvenuti nella confidenza verso l'uso della lingua. L'ambiente ha quindi influito positivamente sul un uso maggiore e migliore della lingua, a cui sono seguiti anche miglioramenti sotto l'aspetto della fluidità, intonazione e pronuncia. Queste tre caratteristiche sono state migliorate soprattutto a seguito delle attività di improvvisazione e durante le prove dello spettacolo; è inoltre doveroso citare i molteplici esercizi con i tutor linguistici per quanto riguarda la pronuncia e l'intonazione delle battute personali di ogni studente. Tra gli altri benefici del workshop abbiamo riscontrato esserci – accanto a quelli linguistici – dei miglioramenti sotto l'aspetto sociale e relazionale e quindi di confidenza in sé stessi. Essa è essenziale sia nei rapporti sociali, sia nell'uso della lingua stessa, troppo spesso rimasta sopita durante lezioni universitarie normali, per lasciare

spazio ad ascolti e allo studio di strutture grammaticali. Il dato principale che emerge da questa ricerca è quindi questa possibilità di apprendere la lingua straniera in un contesto multiculturale e con un elevato tasso di interazioni, in cui gli studenti si spogliano delle loro paure, per prendersi dei rischi e aprirsi psicologicamente verso gli altri. Quando questo sblocco mentale è stato eseguito, la strada è in discesa in quanto le difficoltà sono legate non più alle motivazioni, ma ad una carenza puramente linguistica. Quest'ultima però, può essere colmata con il passare del tempo e con uno studio regolare, a differenza delle problematiche relative alla confidenza nei propri mezzi che sono generalmente più difficile da superare. Questa tesi ha quindi evidenziato i benefici del teatro e delle attività teatrali sull'apprendimento di una lingua straniera e di una necessità di un approccio dinamico e diverso da quello tradizionale in questo campo. Ovviamente, la struttura di questi workshop può essere migliorata e ulteriori ricerche sono necessarie per trovare una formula che possa essere adatta ad ogni tipologia di studente; da questa analisi abbiamo però evidenziato come questo approccio non vada sottovalutato, bensì incentivato all'interno dell'ambiente universitario. Il confronto con le altre università è stato utile anche per capire lacune e punti di forza del workshop di Padova e di come esso possa essere migliorato sotto alcuni aspetti, per poter essere ancora di più un punto di partenza per molti studenti che incontrano difficoltà linguistiche anche dopo parecchi anni di studio.

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- www.coe.int
- www.gov.uk
- www.miracleplayers.com
- www.ucc.ie

APPENDIX

Appendix A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE STUDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PADUA

(The questionnaire is completely anonymous)

First section – general background

Gender: M / F

Age _____

Country _____

Native language (s) _____

Course of study and

year_____

Second section – Language background and competences

Present English language competence

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Reading						
Writing						
Listening						
Speaking						

How long have you studied English?

_____

Do you study/ Have you studied English at the university?

_____

How many years?

_____

Have you spent time in a foreign country?

_____

How long?

_____

____

Was it an English speaking country?

_____

If not, did you use your English skills?

_____

What did you do during your experience?

_____

_____

_____

Third section – Workshop general information

How many years have you followed the English theatre project?

Did you have previous experiences in the theatre field? For how long? In which languages?

_____

_____

_____

Why have you started the English theatre project?

_____

_____

_____

Why have you decided to carry on with this project?

_____

_____

_____

Which function have you performed during the project? (You can choose more than one option)

- ☐ Actor/actress
- ☐ Work on the text
- ☐ Publicity of the play (e.g. posters, flyers, etc.)
- ☐ Help with the props
- ☐ Lights
- ☐ Other -

  _____

  ___

Which activity did you like the most?

- ☐ Warm up exercises (silent exercises)
- ☐ Warm up exercises (speaking exercises)
- ☐ Silent improvisations
- ☐ Improvisations with sound
- ☐ Discussion of the genre/text/costumes
- ☐ Writing the script
- ☐ Setting the scenes
- ☐ Final performance
- ☐ Other

  _____

  _____

Which activity was the most challenging?

- ☐ Warm up exercises (silent exercises)
- ☐ Warm up exercises (speaking exercises)
- ☐ Silent improvisations
- ☐ Improvisations with sound
- ☐ Discussion of the genre/text/costumes
- ☐ Writing the script
- ☐ Setting the scenes
- ☐ Final performance
- ☐ Other

_____

_____

Why?

_____

_____

Language used during the meetings

_____

_____

_____

Do you think your foreign language has improved during the project?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If the answer is Yes, what did you improve the most?

- ☐ Grammar
- ☐ Lexicon
- ☐ Syntax
- ☐ Fluidity
- ☐ Self-confidence
- ☐ Pronunciation
- ☐ Intonation

☐ Writing

☐ Rapidity of thinking

☐ Other

_____

Which activity helped you the most to improve this feature? How?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Which other benefits have you find in the project?

☐ You have found new friends

☐ You have improved your self-confidence

☐ It is an enriching experience

☐ Cultural benefits

☐ You are less shy

☐ Discovery of theatre

☐ Other

_____

___

Which are the most important for you? (Choose two options)

☐ You have improved a foreign language

☐ You have found new friends

☐ You have improved your self-confidence

☐ It is an enriching experience

☐ Cultural benefits

☐ You are less shy

☐ Discovery of theatre

Other

_____

Do you have any suggestions or critics towards the project?

_____

_____

The project was a:

- ☐ Positive experience
- ☐ Negative experience

Would you recommend it to other students?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Why / Why not?

_____

_____

_____

Table 1. Present English Language Competence

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
READING				3	10	3
WRITING				6	10	
LISTENING				5	7	4
SPEAKING				4	12	

Figure 1. Previous theatre experience in the theatre field
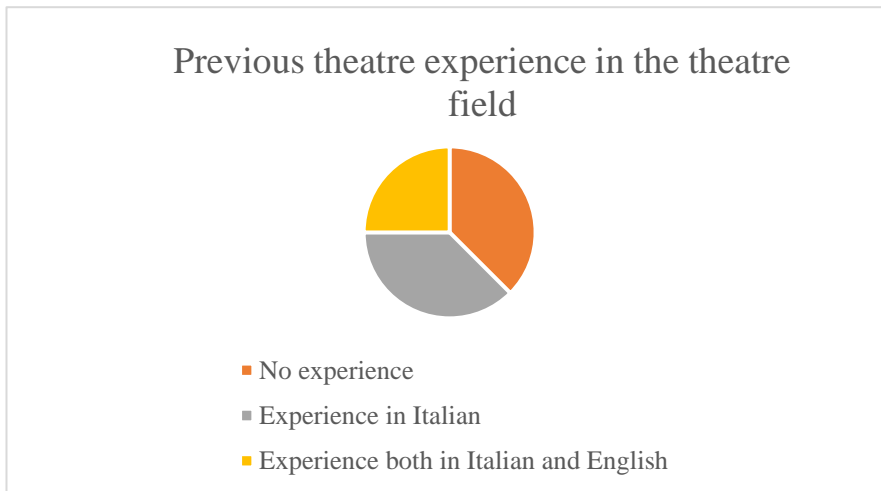
Figure 2. Functions in the workshop
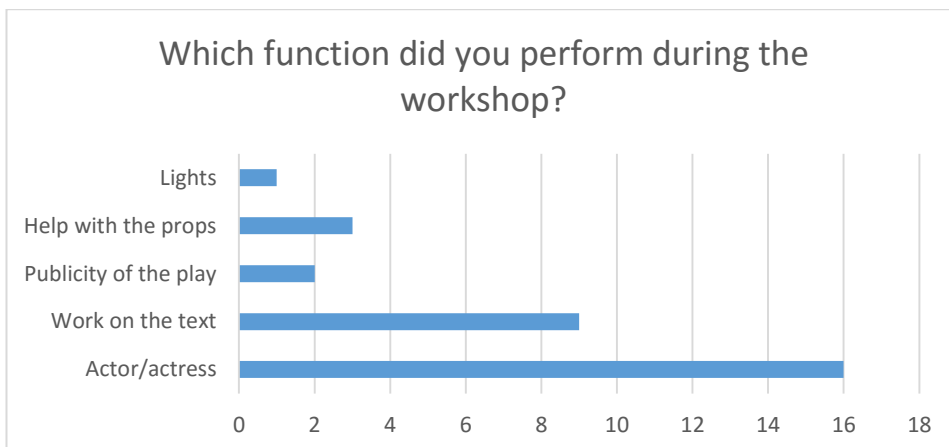
Figure 3. The favorite activity.
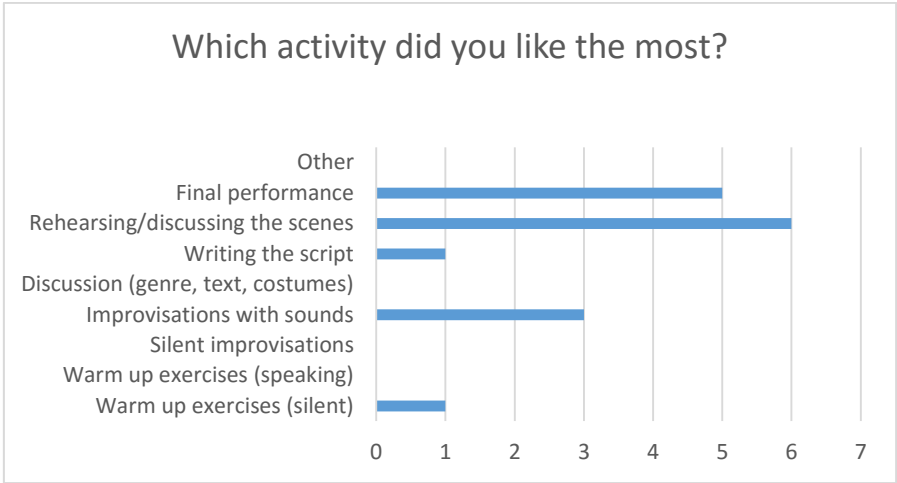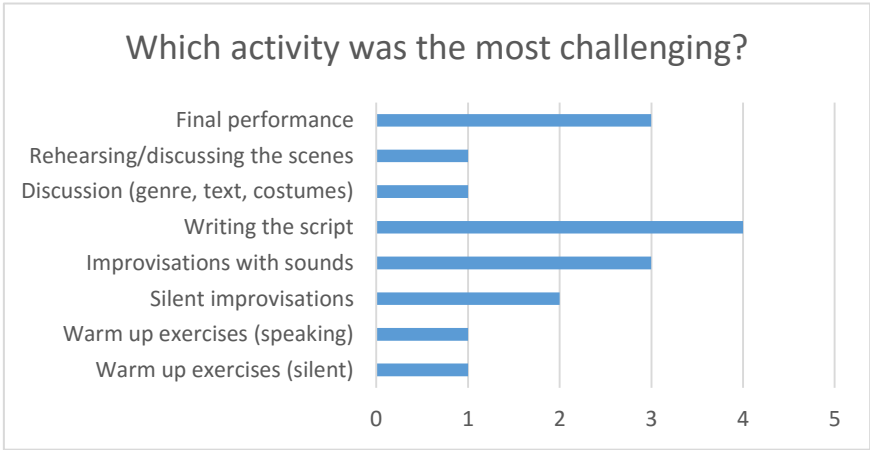
Figure 4. The most challenging activity
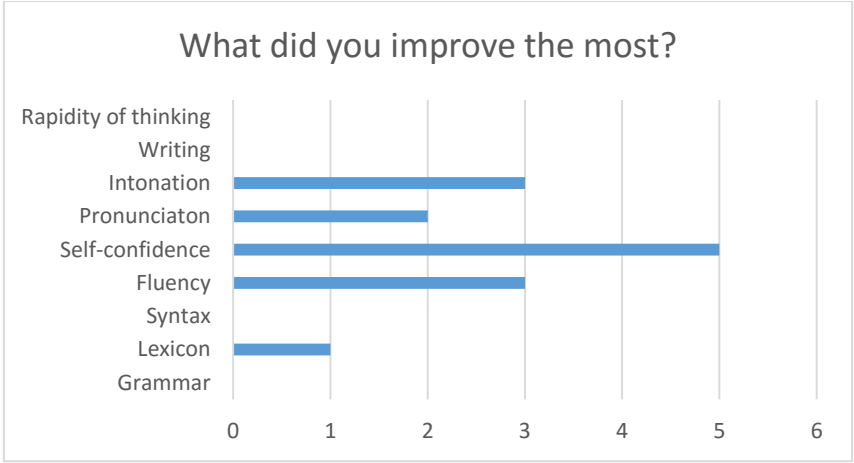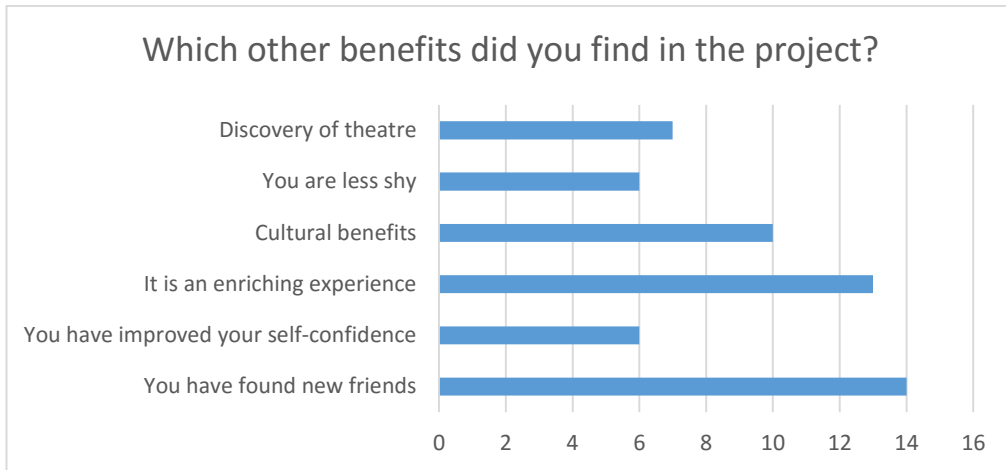

Figure 5. What did you improve the most?

Figure 6. Benefits in the project

Figure 7. The most important benefits