How Does an Embodied Approach to the Curriculum Impact upon the Acquisition of Grammar in an ESL Classroom?

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Declaration

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Summary

This was a practitioner-based research study investigating the implementation of an embodied approach to facilitate the acquisition of grammar within an adult ESL classroom. It was a small scale study involving 10 participants which took place in a pre-intermediate English classroom in a Dublin language school in February 2018. A mixed-methods approach was adopted to collect qualitative data whilst also providing a quantitative element to strengthen the triangulation of the data. The methods used were a Likert-scale survey presented both pre and post-intervention; a structured third-party observation; audio recordings of embodied activities and student reflections, and still photographs of selected embodied activities.

The Likert-scale survey consisted of 10 questions and a space for open comments. The questions investigated the participants’ perceptions of the following: their ability to use grammar, preferred method of learning grammar, comprehension of the target grammar and relationship to grammar in general. This was completed by participants pre-intervention as a source of baseline data and again post-intervention to compare both surveys and record any changes, thus obtaining quantifiable data.

The structured, third-party observation was completed by Dr Elif Kir (PhD in Linguistics, expert in Process Drama), a visiting Postdoctoral fellow in Trinity’s School of Education, on Day 3 of the intervention. Dr Kir observed the class on Wednesday 14th of February 2018 from 1.45pm to 5pm. She completed an observation template designed by the researcher which outlined the key areas to be observed (comprehension of, engagement with and accurate use of target grammar and the frequency with which each was observed throughout the class). Dr Kir’s observation provided both quantitative and qualitative data on the participant’s grammar acquisition from the perspective of an expert in the fields of linguistics and drama.

The audio-recordings were divided into two categories: embodied activities and student reflections. The embodied activities were photographed and audio-recorded simultaneously, then analysed as a single data set to investigate the embodiment of the target grammar through comparing the images with the language being spoken. The student reflections were recorded at the end of each day to receive student feedback and gain a deeper insight into the participants’ own perceptions of their experience.
Following the intervention, the collected data was analysed using a system of content analysis. The raw data was refined where necessary (the audio-recordings were transcribed and the survey results consolidated and represented in bar charts) followed by an open-coding stage during which each data set was organised and closely examined in order to determine main categories and possible themes. Each data set was individually thematically analysed using a manual colour-coding system to identify emerging themes and then cross-analysed to determine which themes were reoccurring across data sets and to what significance.

The findings that emerged during analysis suggest a positive impact of embodied cognition on grammar acquisition; a possible link between embodied emotion and second language comprehension; a strong student preference for integrated skills; and the potential for an embodied approach to increase collaborative learning and incorporate all learning styles. These findings reflect the results of many recent studies into the impact of embodiment upon language acquisition (Lapaire, 2006, Even, 2011, Kaligorou, 2016) and correlate with current neurophysiological research into the link between verbalisation and physical gesture (Gentilucci & Corballis, 2006) and the interconnection of motion, emotion and language (Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia, 2006).

The use of an embodied approach within the ESL classroom is strongly supported by the findings of the study, not only to enhance grammar acquisition, but also to create an effective learning environment which promotes student engagement, autonomy and creativity. It enables meaningful collaborative learning and enhances students’ connection with the curriculum through the integration of skills and learning styles.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, Europe has seen a huge growth surge in the English as a Second Language (ESL) sector. In Dublin, where this study took place, the demand for ESL schools has skyrocketed, with hundreds of schools competing to meet the ever-growing requirements of a wide variety of students. With the constant flow of short-term language students (the majority of whom take courses lasting less than six months) and the increasingly competitive market, ESL schools in Dublin tend to focus on quantifiable, marketable results such as exam success rather than investing in long-term, quality educational models. As a result, many language schools (including the one in which this study occurred) have a strong focus on exam preparation and hold weekly skills tests which require preparation during class time. Language students are under increasing pressure to achieve higher levels of success in shorter periods of time. Many students view grammar as the most important aspect of language as it is a significant component of the exams and an element which they can ‘learn’ quite quickly through rote memorisation, prioritising exam preparation over meaningful communicative practice. Meanwhile, modern textbooks, despite advocating a communicative approach, still frequently present grammar as a segregated entity disconnected from the communicative curriculum. This study was undertaken in response to this disconnect between the importance placed upon grammar and the failure to integrate it successfully within the ESL curriculum.

1.2. Rationale

Since Cartesian dualism, the traditional view of human consciousness in Western philosophy has adopted a compartmentalised perspective: emotion and intellect severed into distinct and often opposing forces and both separate from the physical body itself (Shusterman, 2008). This has long been reflected in Western education systems, including traditional language schools, to the detriment of language students for whom language is often presented not as a living, human process of expression and communication, but as a dry list of rules severed from emotion or physicality. This has been challenged in recent years by researchers studying the importance of emotion and motion in language (Capra, 2015) and through the introduction of new, innovative pedagogies driven by alternative teaching methodologies seeking to implement a more humanistic approach.
One such philosophical approach is embodied learning, an area of research which is of current relevance to the educational community in general and to the field of English language learning in particular. Embodiment has long been discussed and debated in the field of cognitive science but has seen a recent resurgence in the field of education. The importance of embodiment in the learning process has been investigated in a wide range of recent studies, from the necessity of including physical activity in primary classrooms as part of the cognitive process (Mahar et al., 2006) to the role of the body in learning dance and its applications to the wider field of cognition (Byczkowska, 2009).

This connects with and supports research within the field of Drama in Education (DiE) which has long embraced the theory of embodied consciousness and its application to learning as drama is in itself an embodied process (Nicholson, 2005). There are a number of innovative practitioners exploring embodiment as a means of enhancing L2 acquisition, including Susanne Even (2011) and Jean-Remi Lapaire (2011), whose work has had a great influence on this research study. It is hoped that this study can follow in the footsteps of such practitioners to begin addressing the problems of grammar acquisition within the ESL classroom.

1.3. Researcher Background

The motivation to undertake this research stemmed from my professional background in Montessori education, an educational philosophy which seeks to present abstract concepts using concrete materials, incorporate physical movement and real life experience into every lesson, and present new topics holistically in a way which relates to the student’s world. This inherently embodied approach to learning was also reflected in my studies of drama as an educational medium and I developed a deeper appreciation for the role of the body in cognition. Drama in Education became a core element of my personal philosophy as a teacher and when I began to teach ESL students I continued to present the lessons in as concrete and dynamic a way as possible. However I found myself hindered by the need to follow the curriculum which I found to be very disconnected, particularly in regards to grammar. This inspired me to investigate the area of grammar acquisition more thoroughly and to explore the impact of an embodied approach by extending it not only to teach grammar but to present the entire language curriculum in a more creative and connected way.
1.4. Research Question and Aims

The research question underpinning this study is: “How does an embodied approach to the curriculum impact upon the acquisition of grammar in an ESL classroom?” There were three main aims of this research:

- To design and implement original embodied exercises through which to present the grammar;
- To enable ESL students to explore and integrate the newly acquired grammar through drama;
- To investigate the impact of these lessons upon the students’ grammar acquisition through gathering and analysing data.

1.5. Methods

This practitioner-based research study was approached through a pragmatic, mixed-methods paradigm that focuses on the practical requirements of the research in question (Cresswell, 2002). This mixed-methods approach was conceived to strengthen the triangulation of the data, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods. These methods are as follows:

- Likert-scale survey presented both pre and post-intervention;
- Structured third-party observation;
- Audio-recordings of embodied activities;
- Audio-recordings of student reflections;
- Still photographs of selected embodied activities.

These methods were used to gather data from an Intermediate class in a busy English language school in Dublin city centre. The study consisted of 10 participants, all of whom were full-time students in the teacher/researcher’s Intermediate English class. The study took place over one week from February 12th to 16th 2018 and consisted of five lessons over fifteen hours.
1.6. Thesis Layout

This introductory chapter has outlined the research gap, methodology and methods of the study. Chapter 2 consists of a literature review in which the relevant theories, recent studies and pertinent literature have been reviewed, analysed and critiqued in relevance to the research question. The main areas of research were embodiment, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Drama in Education (DiE) with a focus on the development of an embodied approach via drama to enhance L2 acquisition. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology used in this research and describes the instruments used to collect the relevant data. Chapter 4 is an analysis of the data collected while Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the main themes and ideas that emerged as a result of the findings. Chapter 6 consists of a conclusion in which the main details of the thesis are summarised, the major findings outlined, any limitations acknowledged and recommendations for the future suggested as appropriate.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

In order to address the research question of how an embodied approach to the curriculum impacts upon the acquisition of grammar in an ESL classroom, this chapter will review and critically analyse relevant literature from the three main fields of research: embodiment, Drama in Education (DiE) and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) to gain a deeper understanding of their connection to each other and to the study itself. The leading theories and central concepts of these areas will be discussed, with relevance to the research question, under the following headings: Section 2.2 will examine the role of grammar in SLA with a view to identifying the best practises and optimal conditions for enabling grammar acquisition. Section 2.3 will offer a working definition of the term “embodiment” as understood in the context of this research and assess the role of embodied cognition in education with a focus on SLA. Section 2.4 will examine DiE as an inherently embodied pedagogy with a focus on three embodied pedagogies relevant to this study.

2.2. Grammar Acquisition in Second Language Learning

One of the challenges of conducting research in the field of L2 acquisition is the lack of an accepted, comprehensive theory, an issue which reflects the diversity and complexity of the field (Ellis, 2006). Even the term ‘acquisition’ itself is used to describe both the subconscious absorption of language distinct from conscious learning (Krashen, 1981) and as a synonym for learning itself. For the purposes of this study, ‘grammar acquisition’ is best defined as the process of perceiving and comprehending new grammar, integrating it into existing schemata and producing original language which accurately incorporates the new forms (Ellis, 2006). Current linguists agree that comprehension of grammar is integral to the language learner’s ability to both comprehend and produce rich and meaningful language (Scrivener, 2010).

It is widely acknowledged within the field of linguistics that the optimal conditions for successful grammar acquisition are a focus on form within meaningful context (Benati, 2013), a combination of rich and varied input alongside opportunities for creative, communicative production (Scrivener, 2010), and encouragement of the student to become an autonomous learner engaged in their own learning process (Little, 1991).
Current research also indicates that a relaxed, engaging environment that promotes student confidence and motivation is an essential factor in the acquisition of grammar as it enables students to be creative and feel free to make mistakes, a necessary step in exploring and integrating new language (Nunan, 2003). In essence, there is a clear need for L2 students to explore grammar in a meaningful, communicative context. As Ellis put it: “Instruction needs to ensure that learners are able to connect grammatical forms to the meanings they realise in communication” (2006, p.101). It is the position of this thesis that neither traditional nor current methods within L2 learning adequately meet all of the afore-mentioned criteria and that new approaches to the acquisition of language, particularly grammar, must be explored in order to meet the needs of language students in today’s L2 classroom. In order to justify this position, both traditional and current L2 methods were researched and critiqued as follows.

2.2.1. Traditional Approaches to Grammar
As the focus of this study was the impact of an embodied approach upon grammar acquisition, it must first be considered why such an approach might be more effective than traditional methods. The field of SLA has seen many conflicting methods and theories emerge over the years, beginning with traditional language learning methods such as grammar-translation, the audio-lingual method and the direct method (VanPatten & Williams, 2014). Despite granting grammar a central role in the curriculum, all of these methods are generally agreed to have failed to meet the criteria for optimal grammar acquisition for a number of reasons. Although grammar instruction was central to the curriculum, the methodology used to present it failed to give meaning or context, two factors which are essential to grammar acquisition (Ortega, 2008).

In the case of grammar-translation, the focus was on learning the correct forms through translating literary texts and memorising long lists of vocabulary and grammatical rules with no connection to everyday language or functional communication. Focusing on form without meaning has been shown to inhibit language learners’ ability to internalise the structure of a new language as they have no context for it (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). Nor were the students given an opportunity to apply the grammar in real conversation, thus depriving them of the necessary productive stage in which newly acquired language is explored, errors corrected and the students’ understanding refined (Takac, 2008).
While the audio-lingual and direct methods pioneered a shift in focus from reading and writing to speaking and listening and emphasised everyday vocabulary rather than literary texts, the teaching approach remained quite systematic and teacher-led with the methodology consisting mainly of controlled practise activities or question and answer exchanges between teacher and student. This meant that despite a greater emphasis on communication, the input was still lacking in variety or richness, while students had little control over what was being communicated and thus little opportunity to exercise the autonomy or creativity necessary in developing true communicative competence (Benati, 2013). Lack of learner autonomy, meaningful input or communicative production combined with a focus on form without meaning greatly impeded students’ acquisition of grammar within traditional L2 classrooms.

It is clear from reviewing traditional L2 methods that while recent years have seen a movement towards bringing grammar back into focus within the curriculum (Pitt, 2005), this will not be achieved through a revival of past teaching styles but through the development of new methods. As the methods of the past are insufficient to meet the grammar acquisition needs of the modern L2 student, more recent trends in L2 education must be examined to establish the context for this study and inform best practice.

2.2.2. Changing Perceptions of Grammar

There have been many SLA methods over the years, influenced by the emergence of new theories of language acquisition, such as Noam Chomsky’s theory of Universal Grammar. In the 1980s Chomsky claimed that all human beings are born with an internal, innate system of grammar; a genetic component which enables us to naturally acquire our first language (Chomsky, 2006). The implications of this for L2 acquisition were enormous: if grammar is innate, explicit instruction becomes redundant. If language learning is a natural, internal process, then the focus should be on the needs of the individual learner rather than the teacher and error correction becomes superfluous as learners will self-correct as they progress. Chomsky’s theory, whilst offering no practical teaching methods in itself, nevertheless ushered in a sea change in the field of SLA and signalled a move away from the authoritarianism and behaviourism of the past towards a new, humanistic future (Takac, 2008).
Just as influential as Chomsky was theorist and practitioner Stephen Krashen (1981), whose natural approach built upon Chomsky’s theory of language acquisition as an innate, internal process and placed the emphasis on providing rich and comprehensible input for the learner. Krashen formulated the so-called Monitor Hypothesis which states that language acquisition is a process responsible for fluency. This, Krashen posits, is distinct from learning; learning linguistic structures (such as grammar) functions as a monitor during the acquisition process (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). In the 1960s and 1970s, these theories naturally led to a much less formal approach to grammar teaching as it was assumed that the learner would naturally acquire the grammar given the right conditions and thus any form of explicit instruction was not only redundant but potentially harmful to the process.

Current theorists are critical of Krashen’s approach and the methods it inspired, many of which abandoned grammar instruction completely. The application of Chomsky’s theory of Universal Grammar to L2 acquisition has also come under criticism. Lenneberg (1967, in Ortega, 2008) found Chomsky’s theory of first language acquisition to be inapplicable to adult L2 learners as they are past the critical neurological period to absorb language and thus must take a more conscious approach to acquiring it. Likewise DeKeyser (2007) proposed that a focus on form was necessary as L2 acquisition is not the same as learning one’s first language, and that adult learners require an awareness of the underlying rules of language in order to integrate and apply them accurately. Studies of French immersion programmes showed empirical evidence that focusing entirely on the meaning of language with no attention to grammatical form is inadequate (Harley & Swain, 1984 cited in Nassaji & Fotos, 2011) and that some focus on grammar is necessary to ensure L2 acquisition.

These critiques support the premise for this study as they indicate a need for adult L2 learners to consciously engage with grammar in order to acquire it. However, as the previous section has established, the methods which traditionally focused on grammar failed to do so in a contextual, communicative way. Clearly a middle ground was needed between the grammarcentric traditional methods that failed to prioritise the needs of the students and the studentcentred, communicative approach of the 1960s and 1970s which eschewed grammar altogether. The following section will examine one such attempt to achieve a balance between form and function: Communicative Language Theory (CLT).
2.2.2. Integration of Grammar in a CLT Based Curriculum

CLT emerged as a multi-syllabus approach with the primary goal of enabling learners to develop communicative competence (Hymes, 1971). It is pertinent to this research project as it is the main approach used in the school in which the study occurred and in the majority of Dublin-based language schools. Elements from different methods which had proven successful during the 1960s and 1970s were absorbed into the CLT classroom, including the student-led approach of Community Language Learning (Curran, 1972), the focus on discovery developed by the Silent Way (Gattegno, 1963), and the use of physical activity to express language advocated by the Total Physical Response (TPR) method (Asher, 1966). TPR’s use of movement to enhance language acquisition is of particular relevance to this study and will be discussed in greater depth in the following section (See 2.2.3).

Whilst not considered to be a specific language learning method in itself, CLT is recognised as having a distinct set of principles governing its practise. Grammar is introduced inductively through tasks or conversation and the students encouraged to extrapolate the rules from the examples. The teacher can then elaborate on any areas of confusion and correct errors if necessary. Error correction in CLT is viewed as a positive tool for improving language competence, but in keeping with a humanistic approach it is done with consideration of affective factors such as student ability, confidence, and personal issues. (VanPatten & Williams, 2014).

The principles of CLT clearly reflect the conditions necessary for optimal acquisition of grammar: a focus on form within meaningful context, rich and varied input with communicative production, a supportive, engaging environment and the encouragement of learner autonomy. So why then does controversy still remain regarding grammar? The issue is one of theory versus practice. CLT encompasses a wide range of theories, approaches and methods which can be overwhelming for new teachers starting their careers (Scrivener, 2011). There is a plethora of textbooks and resources available, all of which treat grammar differently and require different techniques and strategies to incorporate it within the curriculum. The majority of them (including the textbook upon which the lessons designed for this research project are based), still divide grammar from the rest of the curriculum, treating it as a separate entity to be learned and then practised through the four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking (Sayer, 2016).
In a sea of confusion, new teachers can often resort to simply following the activities in the textbook rather than attempting to truly incorporate the grammar naturally within a meaningful, communicative task. Furthermore, there is still a stigma attached to grammar as being boring, difficult or scary. Many students in ESL classes have already received very traditional grammar instruction in their previous education and have developed a wariness or even aversion to it (VanPatten & Williams, 2014). Teachers can often struggle to motivate students to engage with grammar as they switch off when they hear it mentioned. Conversely, students accustomed to grammar-translation methods may protest against newer approaches and demand grammar exercises, seeing them as a necessary evil to understanding the language. Even (2011) points out that it is much faster to teach grammar instruction explicitly than to present it in a manner which encourages its’ practical integration and that this creates a false sense of more ‘learning’ being accomplished.

So what might the solution be? How can this separation of grammar from the rest of the interactive, communicative CLT curriculum be rectified? It is clear that a different approach is needed to engage students in grammar and to introduce it in a way which enhances comprehension and retention. Positioning the learner at the centre of the curriculum, it can be argued that “Learner’s acquisition of a second language (L2) depends on their experience of this language and on what they can make of it” (Ellis & Collins, 2009 p.329). If students have a negative experience of grammar within the classroom or are not given opportunities to use it in meaningful and engaging ways, they will struggle to acquire and retain it. The challenge of modern L2 teachers (and the driving force behind this study) is the question of how to introduce grammar in a positive, engaging way which also meets the requirements of the curriculum. Before looking beyond SLA for solutions, one method long associated with motor skills and engagement is worth examining: namely, the Total Physical Response (TPR) method.
2.2.3. Total Physical Response (TPR)

Total Physical Response (TPR) is particularly relevant to the current study as it is the best known example among applied linguists of an embodied approach to language learning. As such, it is important to describe and discuss its main features in some detail. TPR is a method developed by James Asher (1984) that connects language learning and physical movement in an attempt to replicate the role of physical activity in cognition as witnessed in young children during L1 assimilation. Asher (1966) piloted TPR in a number of controlled studies, each of which showed a higher success rate for the TPR groups than for the controls, particularly in retaining the target language over longer periods of time.

Asher (1966) developed a hypothesis suggesting that a possible reason for the success of TPR was the ability of the learner to physically respond immediately upon hearing the command: students could begin enacting the sentence as soon as it was uttered and thus break it down into easier chunks. Such a process could not be achieved through simply writing as more time is required to write than to act, particularly for students encountering an unfamiliar alphabet (e.g. English speakers learning Cyrillic) which may create an extra hurdle in the acquisition process. This hypothesis supports the underpinning premise of this thesis that embodiment of language allows for a more instantaneous integration, ensures deeper comprehension and enables retention of the entire sentence structure as well as individual words.

TPR was originally conceived as a more engaging, effective way to ease beginners into a new language by imitating the physicality of young learners which was believed to aid their acquisition of the language. The typical TPR lesson began with simple imperatives and commands to which the students responded with the appropriate action. The complexity of the language increased as the lesson continued with sentences such as “Take that flower from the desk and give it to her” introducing pronouns, prepositions, nouns and verbs as well as correct sentence order. It was also intended to simplify lessons and reduce stress: adult language learners were invited to respond to imperatives and ask and answer questions with physical components, for example: “Where is the book? Here it is!” (Ortega, 2008).
This mainly receptive, comprehension-driven approach contributed to the image of TPR as a method suitable for beginners but not of much use beyond the introduction of simple verbs and commands. However some practitioners saw in TPR the opportunity to totally revolutionise their approach to teaching language. Woodruff (1978) identified a problem in her high school German classroom in the 1970s that is sadly still prevalent in modern language schools: the over-focusing of teachers on production of grammar rather than coherent input in order to ensure students would pass their tests.

Woodruff addressed the issue by adapting TPR methods to include a wider range of grammar and presented the physical actions as a game to the students whilst also using it as a drill in order to test their progress. Her students began to explore the grammar through embodied activities and she witnessed a change in atmosphere in the classroom as their collective sense of humour became engaged in the fun and silliness of the activities. In her own words: “Everyone’s sense of humour is activated and this improves attention as well as motivation” (Woodruff, 1978, p.5). She found her methods to be so successful in engaging the students and helping them to grasp the grammar that she recommended that 70% of class time for beginners should consist of embodied activity to introduce, practise and produce new grammar points.

Woodruff’s work with adapted TPR practises is a valuable contribution to this study as it demonstrates the potential of embodied activity to enhance grammar acquisition. The overall success of TPR across different age groups and languages indicates a universal human affinity for embodied learning and supports the theories underpinning this study. Other more modern studies also support the efficiency of TPR in enhancing language learning. A study of thirdgraders in Indonesia found that TPR increased their acquisition of new vocabulary whilst also building confidence (Fahrurrozi, 2017). A study of Russian language learners found that TPR had a positive impact upon students’ ability to master difficult directional verbs (Elliot & Yountchi, 2009).

However, although it seems to enhance comprehension and clearly contributes to a more engaging, comfortable environment through promoting social interaction and engaging the students’ sense of humour, TPR is an inadequate method for the purposes of this study as there are several vital criteria for grammar acquisition which TPR fails to meet. The focus on command and response places the teacher in control of the learning process and diminishes learner autonomy as the student must follow the teacher’s lead.
Even if one gets around this by inviting students to command each other, the language itself remains quite constricted by the command and response structure and does not meet the criteria for rich and varied input. The biggest concern is the lack of communicative production as there is no room to explore the language beyond the rigidly defined parameters. This severely limits the students’ ability to explore language creatively which in turn inhibits integration of the new language into existing schema.

In summary, TPR is a useful starting point when designing embodied activities such as those used in this study in order to introduce and practise the target language. However it fails to offer a solution to the problem of fully integrating grammar within the wider curriculum and runs the risk of being yet another ‘game’ within the lesson rather than a fully realised approach to the curriculum itself. In order to adequately meet the needs of modern language students, to create an environment supportive of grammar acquisition and to harness the potential of physical activity to enhance language learning, the discussion ventures beyond the idea of a curriculum which includes embodied activities to explore the concept of an embodied approach to the curriculum.

2.3. The Role of Embodiment

The term ‘embodied approach’ denotes an educational viewpoint influenced by the philosophical theory of embodied consciousness or cognition (McCutcheon & Sellers-Young, 2013). Simply put, an embodied approach to the curriculum means planning and teaching the curriculum in a manner which engages the physical body in connection with the mind in order to enrich and enhance cognition. Embodied consciousness is the theory that learning occurs not only within the mind but through the interconnection of the mind and body as a unit interacting with the environment (Weiss & Haber, 1999).

The following definition from the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy outlines the position taken by cognitive science: “Many features of cognition are embodied in that they are deeply dependent upon characteristics of the physical body of an agent, such that the agent's beyond-the-brain body plays a significant causal role, or a physically constitutive role, in that agent's cognitive processing” (Wilson & Foglia, 2017, p.6). This section will investigate the philosophy of embodiment and its application to language learning within the context of the research question.
2.3.1. The Philosophy of Embodiment

As stated in the introductory chapter, Western philosophy has a long tradition of disconnect between mind and body (McCutcheon & Sellers-Young, 2013). In contrast to the popularity of dualism in Western tradition, Eastern philosophy tended to take a more holistic approach to the question of consciousness. The disciplines of Zen Buddhism, yoga and tai chi all strive to achieve enlightenment and a higher level of consciousness through embodied practices such as meditation and movement (Shusterman, 2008). These disciplines share a perception of consciousness as being intrinsically linked with, and indeed dependent on, physical existence, claiming that true knowledge cannot be obtained simply by means of theoretical thinking, but only through bodily recognition or realisation (Yasuo, 1987).

This perception of consciousness as an embodied phenomenon began to gain credibility with several Western thinkers such as the philosopher Husserl, who believed that the conscious self requires experience of the world to exist and that sensory data and movement are essential for conscious understanding. He declared that “The world is so constituted that the “I” itself steps forth as embodied” (Baldwin, 2007, p.5). His work was further developed by the French philosopher Merleau-Ponty who sought to unify empiricism and intellectualism through his description of the body as both object and subject. Merleau-Ponty proposed that human perception is not just the passive reception of data received through the senses of a body acting merely as a physical instrument but rather the creation of meaning through direct contact and active engagement with the world. (Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

He argued that the physical body was the core of human consciousness, not just through the processing of input in the form of sensory data but as the medium of expressive capability and creation of original thought. His theory of embodiment depicts human consciousness not as pure mental cognition within a physical instrument but as a complex, subjective, interconnected system that incorporates emotion, rational thinking and relationships with the environment and other human beings (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). This theory is highly compatible with DiE as it reflects the holistic viewpoint of the drama practitioner and the embodied nature of drama itself.
Merleau-Ponty’s view of embodied consciousness was shared by several other theorists, among them the philosopher John Dewey, who described consciousness as an ongoing interaction of mind, body and environment to create a dynamic equilibrium (Dewey, 1928). Before Merleau-Ponty’s concept of body-schema was proposed, Dewey had developed the concept of body-mind unity: a framework through which mental life emerges as a result of physical and psychophysical functions, not disembodied reason. He also agreed with MerleauPonty in defining consciousness as more than pure cognition, describing it as a union of emotion, cognition and action dependent on social conditions (Dewey, 1928).

Where Dewey differs from Merleau-Ponty is in the practical application of his theory of embodiment. Merleau-Ponty focused largely on the unreflective habits of consciousness, mainly studying primary perception and the spontaneous expression of the body. Dewey’s interest, however, lay in the possibilities of training oneself to become aware of such habits and to correct them if necessary (Shusterman, 2008). Dewey’s work is credited with influencing the development of the Alexander Technique, an educational process often used by drama practitioners, which was developed by Frederick Matthias Alexander to retrain the body to move in a way which avoids unnecessary muscular tension.

Processes such as the Alexander technique and the afore-mentioned Eastern practises such as yoga and tai chi are described as somatic disciplines-techniques which use the mind-body union to enhance learning (Weiss & Haber, 1999). This connects with the focus of this research: investigating whether the use of specifically designed, embodied drama practises will enhance the ability of students to absorb new grammar and integrate it successfully into their existing schema. Both Dewey’s (1928) work on somatic disciplines and Merleau-Ponty’s (1962) theory of embodied consciousness inform the theoretical framework of the embodied drama practises piloted in this study.
2.3.2. Embodied Cognition in Second Language Acquisition

Merleau-Ponty (1964) argued that language is in itself an embodied phenomenon as it requires the physicality of the body to produce it. Through the physical action of our breath moving across our tongue and teeth, we are capable of giving our thoughts and ideas corporeal form. He also emphasised the importance of gesture in language and argued that true communication is always a blend of words and motion (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). As Abercrombie argues: “We speak with our vocal organs, but we converse with our entire bodies.” (1968, p.55).

Considering that language is already an embodied phenomenon incorporating facial expression, signs and gestures alongside spoken words in order to convey meaning, an embodied approach to L2 education seems a logical step. This need for inclusion of gesture and body-language as part of language learning is reflected in the recent surge of articles and studies on the topic. An article on non-verbal communication in foreign language teaching by Surkamp (2014), states that “No language learner can achieve communicative competence without having some knowledge of non-verbal phenomena which make communication authentic” (p.1).

Surkamp (2014) goes on to argue that neglecting to include non-verbal communication in the L2 curriculum excludes vital social and cultural signs which are necessary for language learners to know in order to understand the language in context and avoid misunderstanding. Language is a social construct and the signs we use to communicate non-verbally are intrinsically linked to societal values and cultural norms. For example, to make steady eye contact is a sign of respect in the US and a sign of disrespect in Asia. The same hand signals can convey ‘peace’ in one country and an insult in another (Capra, 2015).

Ignoring the non-verbal element of language in L2 teaching removes the social context and loses much of the significance of what is being communicated. It is vital to address the embodied nature of language within the L2 classroom to encourage familiarity with different bodily forms of expression across cultures. Surkamp’s (2014) argument for the inclusion of gesture and body language to create context is pertinent to this study as it has already been established that meaningful context is a prerequisite to successful grammar acquisition.
The inclusion of embodied activities within the L2 classroom reaps benefits beyond the integration of non-verbal communication. A study by Retzlaff (2008) investigated the impact of introducing a mind-body fitness technique known as NIA (Neuromuscular Integrative Action) into a German language class in order to explore language through movement. Retzlaff’s lesson structure reflects the design for this study as she also introduced new topics through an embodied practice (NIA) and explored them more deeply through a dramatic context.

The results of the study showed that students developed a deeper understanding of the use of body language and gesture in German which improved both their comprehension and communicative competence. Retzlaff’s study also showed a remarkable increase in confidence and engagement amongst the students, with several of them reporting that the classes had enabled them to overcome their inhibitions and express themselves freely. “To my surprise, this method not only strongly impacted my wholesome understanding of the German language, but it also buttressed my confidence in my own self and ability to express my thoughts and ideas” (Retzlaff, 2008, p.54). As successful grammar acquisition requires an environment that fosters confidence and engagement, this is a strong argument in favour of embodiment as a means to approach grammar.

The effectiveness of an embodied approach upon students’ ability to comprehend and retain new information is also an important factor to consider. Neurophysiological studies by Lindstromberg and Boers (2005) have shown that physical activity combined with language learning leads to depth of processing which in turn enhances language acquisition. Neurological research has shown that when language is linked with non-verbal signs we remember it for a longer period of time (Knabe in Surkamp, 2014). This could be of importance when teaching difficult grammatical structures which students often struggle to recall.

The studies considered thus far on the impact of embodiment on L2 acquisition suggests that if correctly designed and implemented, an embodied approach more than adequately meets the criteria for optimal grammar acquisition and that embodiment in some form is actually necessary within the L2 classroom to enable the integration of non-verbal communication into the curriculum (Capra, 2015). Research indicates that it may be a successful means of establishing an environment which supports exploration, promotes confidence and fosters engagement (Weiss & Haber, 1999). It is also cognitively beneficial as it focuses on form in a manner which enhances comprehension and memory (Lindstromberg & Boers, 2005).
In providing both a conscious focus on language and an environment which promotes engagement and meaningful, communicative context, embodiment appears to offer a solution to some of the problems with traditional and current L2 methods outlined in previous sections. However, from examining the limits of TPR it is also clear that integrating embodiment into the classroom requires more than a few motor skills exercises in order to be truly effective. To understand what factors contribute to an effective embodied approach, it becomes imperative to examine effective embodied pedagogies in order to determine best practise when designing this research project.

2.4. Embodied Pedagogies

The term ‘embodied pedagogy’ refers to the exploration and creation of knowledge through the interaction of cognitive processes and the physical body through movement and the engagement of the senses (McCutchen & Sellers-Young, 2013). As previously noted, language is not merely a list of grammatical rules but a complex, embodied process involving cognition, physical movement, emotional expression and social interaction. It seems natural to use an embodied pedagogy to explore an embodied process. Yet the question remains whether an embodied pedagogy can meet the requirements of the CLT curriculum in order to be successfully implemented in a busy language school. In order to address this, the following section will examine three embodied pedagogies designed with similar objectives as those driving this study and with proven success rates in the field of L2 learning: Process Drama, Drama Grammar and Grammar in Motion.

2.4.1. Process Drama

It is important to distinguish the difference between the use of dramatic techniques and a fully developed drama pedagogy. The term ‘technique’ in education refers to strategies such as games and activities employed within the classroom to achieve a certain goal (Bowell & Heap, 2013). CLT classrooms generally include a lot of drama techniques such as role plays, hot-seating and games as communication practise, or more than often as energisers to break up the monotony of the lesson (Scrivener, 2011). The fact that these drama techniques are used in an educational setting does not equate them with the pedagogical approach of Drama in Education (DiE).
O’Neill (1995) defines DiE as an approach to learning which enables participants to explore new issues, scenarios and ideas through active identification with imagined roles and situations. Process Drama (PD) emerged as a pedagogy within DiE in the late 1990s. It emphasises the social, emotional and cognitive value of working through the processes of drama. The goal of PD is to develop a wider context for exploration through the mutual creation of a dramatic world (Kao & O’Neill, 1998). A typical PD proceeds as follows:

The first essential element of a PD is to introduce a pre-text (O’Neill, 1995): an image, object, music or other element designed to engage the students and introduce the theme of the drama. The structure of the drama can then be divided into three phases: initiation, experiential and reflective (Piazzoli, 2012). During the initiation phase, students gradually ease into the drama through their immersion into role (O’Neill, 1995). It is important for the teacher/practitioner to ensure a suitable ‘frame distance’ at this point to ensure adequate emotional protection for the participants. Frame distance refers to a degree of distancing between the participants’ context and the dramatic context, for instance, a drama exploring the themes of displacement with refugees would be better framed within the context of something distant like space exploration rather than war (Davis, 2014).

The experiential phase involves the creation and exploration of a dramatic world through various dramatic conventions (Piazzoli, 2012), incorporating problem solving and dramatic tension in order to engage participants on a deeper level (Davis, 2014). The final reflective phase (Piazzoli, 2012) invites participants to explicitly reflect upon the drama in order to engage with their learning on a conscious level, a stage which echoes DeKeyser’s (2007) previously referenced claim regarding the importance of L2 learners consciously engaging with the target language.

Upon examination of the phases of PD, it appears to meet the criteria for optimal language acquisition. It provides an opportunity to explore relevant, functional language within a meaningful context. In fact, if used correctly, drama can open up the possibilities of perception even further than real experience as it allows the exploration of alternative worlds, scenarios and perspectives that might otherwise be inaccessible to the learner (Bowell & Heap, 2013). It can be a means of exploring concepts creatively in a safe environment, an aspect of particular importance to language learners who are often intimidated or embarrassed by their level of fluency to speak out in a regular lesson, thus meeting the emotional needs of the students as outlined by Krashen’s (1981) description of affective factors.
Perhaps the biggest benefit of using PD in a L2 environment is that when unstructured improvisation is used, it forces students to go off script whilst simultaneously providing an environment in which they feel safe to do so. It is easy for students to grow comfortable and repeat the same phrases in endless variations rather than risk making a mistake, particularly in the case of grammar where the textbook activities are often fill-the-gap exercises requiring rote memorisation rather than meaningful communication (Ellis, 2006). In the context of drama, the situations and concepts are frequently so fantastical or imaginative that students are forced to step outside of their comfort zone and are too deeply engaged in the drama to be inhibited by their errors.

All of these factors make a strong case for adopting PD as an approach to an ESL curriculum. However there are circumstances to be considered which may impede its’ efficiency within the classroom context in this particular research setting. As mentioned previously, the rolling enrolment policy of the school can lead to new students arriving mid-week, a factor which would hinder a continuous, week-long PD as new students would have missed the vital initiation phase. The requirement to complete the unit of the textbook within the week is also a mitigating factor as it necessitates the incorporation of several disparate grammar points, vocabulary and reading and writing comprehensions within a short time frame. To try to squeeze all of these elements into a PD would inhibit the natural flow of the drama and limit the students’ freedom to explore it. With this in mind, it is prudent to also investigate other, less time-consuming embodied approaches to language learning and to consider the possibility of combining them with PD.

2.4.2. Drama Grammar

*Drama Grammar* is an embodied pedagogy developed by Even (2011), which intersects grammar instruction and drama pedagogy. Even’s incentive to develop a new approach to grammar stemmed from the same issues as those which inspired this study: the failure to adequately integrate grammar into the communicative curriculum and the resulting problem of students struggling to translate grammar theory into real communication and experience (Even, 2004). *Drama Grammar* consists of six distinct phases. The first is awareness-raising, during which the target grammar is elicited via a drama activity, for example, passing an imaginary object around the circle to elicit polite request forms (Even, 2011). This is followed by contextfinding, when the students are encouraged to expand upon the single sentences within a larger context, asking to borrow a phone in a train station for instance.
The **linguistic** phase involves a deliberate break in the drama to consciously focus on the grammatical forms and functions that have emerged during the previous stages. This is followed by a **dramatic play** phase in which students design a drama based around the new structures they have learned and then perform it for their peers during the ‘presentation’ phase. The sixth and final phase is **reflection**, which, as in PD, is a stage during which the students are encouraged to ask questions, share insights and discuss the language and the drama.

*Drama Grammar* differs somewhat from traditional PD through the inclusion of the performative element in the *presentation* phase, considered by some to diminish the importance of the process by focusing on memorised speech rather than being in the moment and reacting naturally within the drama (Davis, 2014). However many DiE practitioners embrace the use of performative drama as an educational pedagogy, both in its own right and in combination with PD (Fleming & Mills, 1992). Studies have shown the rehearsal and performance of drama to be very beneficial to L2 learners as it improves pronunciation, builds confidence and increases awareness of the correct usage of vocabulary and grammar within a relevant context (Paul, 2015). It must also be taken into account that Even’s students created the drama themselves, a project requiring social collaboration, creativity, autonomy and deep engagement with the drama and with the grammar.

With regards to the present study, *Drama Grammar* is an exciting and innovative example of an embodied, drama-based pedagogy with proven success in impacting the acquisition of grammar. Even’s (2011) results revealed that her students reported a more thorough grasp of grammar, a deeper understanding of the context of different grammatical forms, and a greater willingness to take verbal risks and make mistakes. Even (2011) also noted an increase in self-monitoring during the sessions as students became more comfortable, confident and willing to accept their role as autonomous learners. Such results are very relevant to this research as they echo the desired impact of the project. Even’s work will definitely inform and inspire the design of the drama for this study.

However whilst *Drama Grammar* is a fine example of an embodied approach to grammar, it does still separate the analysis of form and function from the embodied drama activities, an element which may prove challenging given the time constraints of this study and the students’ level of English. In order to explore the possibility of incorporating the analysis of grammatical forms and functions within the embodied activities themselves, it is useful to address a third embodied pedagogy, namely: *Grammar in Motion.*
2.4.3. Grammar in Motion

Grammar in Motion is an embodied approach developed by Lapaire, a French linguist and current expert in the field of Applied Cognitive Grammar. Identifying philosophically with Merleau-Ponty, Lapaire (2006) views cognition as an embodied process and states that grammar is not merely an abstract linguistic code but an assemblage of symbolic concepts interpretable through bodily action. He further asserts that as grammatical forms are fundamentally subjective and metaphoric in nature, they can be grasped through the senses if embodied in a logical, aesthetically pleasing way which engages both cognition and movement.

Lapaire (2002) began to put his theories of embodied grammar into practise when asked to design a new method to teach English with the aim of simplifying grammar and making it more accessible to young learners. Recognising that vision and movement are intrinsically linked to thought and speech, he began to investigate the impact of concrete visual and kinaesthetic learning tools to access the abstract concepts of grammar (Lapaire, 2006). Lapaire’s initial approach consisted of three main elements: PictoGrams, NarraGrams and KineGrams with the goal of engaging the imagination in cognition through image schemata, metaphorical idioms and conceptualising gestures (Lapaire, 2002). PictoGrams engage the learners visually by translating grammar concepts into images, for example, illustrating the past tense with steps to symbolise walking back into the past. NarraGrams are simple narratives to explain the role of certain grammar functions, for example, personifying irregular verbs as students refusing to wear uniforms (Lapaire, 2002). Finally, he developed KineGrams, actions which physically embodied aspects of the grammar, for example, gently pushing on someone’s back to indicate ‘must’, stretching arms and fingers wide to demonstrate superlatives.

Lapaire (2002) found his approach to be hugely successful as it engaged students’ imaginations and enabled them to conceptualise grammar in a way which appealed to their sense of narrative structure and need for sensory engagement. In developing his ideas for a wider, adult audience, he chose to focus exclusively on the KineGram aspect of his approach for several reasons. While the PictoGrams engaged the learners and were aesthetically pleasing, Lapaire recognised that there was a high level of subjectivity in the images which had the potential to lead to confusion and misunderstanding. He transferred the visual element to the physical actions themselves, referring to them as “Visuo-kinetic images of linguistic processes” (Lapaire, 2011, p.36).
This placed the learner back in control as they could manipulate their bodies to create images which made sense to them rather than passively receiving and struggling to interpret images chosen by the teacher. Likewise for the narrative aspect: rather than telling engaging stories to express the grammar as he had with the children, Lapaire now encouraged his adult learners to create their own narratives through the bodily movements themselves.

Lapaire’s current, fully realised Grammar in Motion approach is a truly embodied pedagogy, forging links between the physical and mental, abstract and concrete. His work draws on Turner’s (1996) concept that grammar is in itself inherently symbolic, as is all language, and that it can thus be understood by delving into the metaphors behind the constructs. In Turner’s words, “Grammatical constructions often represent basic abstract stories” (Turner, 1996, p.103). In keeping with this focus on symbolism, the introduction of new grammar begins with a LogoGram—a short, metaphorical phrase such as ‘Stretching to the limit’ which provides verbal cues alongside physical actions in order to give context to the more abstract KineGrams (Lapaire, 2011). The KineGrams themselves are very carefully constructed to utilise iconic, natural body language as much as possible whilst eliminating unnecessary gestures or facial expressions which might distract from the language being explored. Students explore the grammar by repeating the KineGrams and then adjusting them as they see fit in order to fit their own schemata.

Whilst Lapaire has been accused by some theorists of being a “grammatical entertainer” rather than a serious linguistic theorist (Lapaire, 2002), his work is appreciated by educators and students across the world. It is also highly relevant to this study as an example of an effective embodied approach to grammar. Lapaire’s work builds upon the innate human need to physically express language by incorporating universal gestures and expressions into the KineGrams to be expanded upon. It ensures learner autonomy through the students’ individual exploration of the movements and creates an environment in which rich input and creative production are nurtured and confident creativity is encouraged. Lapaire exhorts practitioners to “Invite learners to experience grammar as an embodied socio-cognitive process, not just a mindless and meaningless collection of forms” (2011, p.46) a sentiment which echoes the goal of this research project, while the success of his embodied approach demonstrates the potential for an embodied approach to truly impact upon the acquisition of grammar for L2 learners.
2.5. Conclusion

This critical evaluation of the literature most relevant to this study has highlighted both the need for a new approach to grammar and the exciting possibilities of achieving this through adopting an embodied pedagogy. It is clear that the issues regarding grammar in the CLT curriculum extends far beyond my own classroom and are experienced across the SLA spectrum, from Woodruff’s classroom in 1978 to Even’s classroom in 2011. This both validates the purpose of this study and implies a greater implication for the results of the research, as the findings may be of use not only to the classroom and school in which it took place but for the larger SLA community.

With regards to designing an embodied approach for this study, the evidence clearly suggests that pedagogies which incorporate movement and emotion into cognition are successful in engaging students and enhancing language acquisition, from the unique approaches such as NIA and TPR to the effectiveness of Drama Grammar and Grammar in Motion. The question is no longer whether or not to adopt an embodied approach but rather how to implement it in a way which best suits the needs of the students and meets the criteria of the curriculum. This literature review also served to clarify the design of the embodied approach to the curriculum required for this research. The grammar was introduced through embodied actions based on Lapaire’s (2011) KineGrams and explored in a larger, dramatic context as demonstrated by Even’s ‘context-finding’ phase (Even, 2011) which also introduced the target vocabulary for the day. The students integrated both grammar and vocabulary within a meaningful context through a PD related to the theme of the unit and incorporating the skill due to be practised that day.

Finally, this review of relevant literature across the three main fields of research (L2 learning, embodiment and DiE), was an important step towards establishing the context for this study. The study of seminal texts and recent research served to illustrate the history of drama and embodiment within L2 learning and to introduce relevant theory and practice. It also served as a reminder that this is a small-scale, practitioner-based study situated within the intersection of three vast and complex fields in which new theories and pedagogies are constantly emerging and competing. Comprehending this state of affairs was a vital step which informed the research design of the project. The research methodology and methods chosen will be examined in greater detail in the following chapter.
Chapter 3: Methods

3.1. Introduction

The following chapter outlines the methodology and research design employed to answer the research question “How does an embodied approach to the curriculum impact upon the acquisition of grammar in an ESL classroom?” There are several important criteria to consider when creating a research design, including the researcher’s worldview and psychological attributes, her training and experience, the nature of the problem and the audience for the study (Creswell, 2002). After reviewing the literature and considering my personal philosophy and background as a Montessori educator, drama practitioner and ESL teacher, I considered the context of the study itself, the methodology, methods and analysis of the study. I adopted a pragmatic paradigm which informed both my choice of practitioner research as my methodology and the decision to take a mixed methods approach.

3.2. Methodology

3.2.1. Pragmatic Paradigm

A pragmatic paradigm is one in which the researcher chooses research methods based on what will best suit the research in question rather than choosing a qualitative or quantitative approach and then designing methods accordingly (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). This paradigm can be particularly suited to educational and arts-based research (Thomas, 2013). It is a paradigm that focuses on what works best for the research in accordance with the researcher’s values (Cresswell, 2002), and as such is also congruent with practitioner-based research which is often small-scale and focused on problem-solving (Coe et al., 2012).
3.2.2. Mixed-Methods

A mixed methods approach is one which incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods to allow for a richer depth of data (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Under the umbrella of a pragmatic paradigm, a mixed-methods research design was chosen for this project for the following reasons: given the small scale and short time frame of this study, it was imperative to choose methods which would both maximise the qualitative depth and make it possible to triangulate the data.

As this was practitioner-based research, in which the researcher was both observer and participant, it was also necessary to ensure that the chosen methods would incorporate objective viewpoints to avoid an overly subjective slant. Finally, considering that the research involved the investigation of a quantifiable phenomenon (the acquisition of grammar) through a qualitative methodology (embodied drama activities) it was therefore important to design both qualitative and quantitative instruments in order to accurately measure and assess the effect of the embodied curriculum upon the participant’s acquisition of grammar.

3.2.3. Practitioner Research

In recent years there has been a trend towards practitioners researching their own educational settings and individual practice to identify problems and explore new aspects of teaching and learning (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1998). Practitioner research is an appropriate methodology for this study as it involves an attempt to solve an identified problem within the researcher’s educational focus (grammar acquisition) through the exploration of new pedagogies (embodied drama activities.)

3.3. Research Context

This research project took place in an Intermediate English classroom in a busy, energetic city centre language school. It was a small scale study consisting of 10 participants in an Intermediate English class of which I was the teacher. The duration of the data collection was one week, Monday-Friday, February 12th-16th 2018, and consisted of five blocks of three-hour lessons. The number of students in attendance reaches peak levels during the summer months and is lowest between September and January. As this study took place in February the participants were a mix of students who had just begun their studies and students who were reaching the end of their term.
The school operates a policy of rolling enrolment which can make it very challenging to engage in any long term project work as students are frequently joining or leaving the class. It can also be a challenge in creating a sense of trust and community within the classroom as the class dynamic is constantly in flux. These factors led me to design individual daily drama lessons sharing a common theme rather than continuing the same process drama for the entire week as I would have preferred.

It was also a concern when obtaining ethical consent from the students that new students would arrive in the middle of the research and feel obliged to participate. I addressed this ethical issue by choosing to collect data only from the original 10 participants and when three new students did arrive midway through the study I explained that they were welcome to participate in the lessons but that they would not be recorded, photographed or in any way obliged to provide data.

3.4. Research Sample

There were 10 students participating in this study. They came from a variety of different backgrounds culturally, professionally and socially. The following table outlines each student’s age, nationality, gender, occupation, level of English and length of time attending the school, under the designation by which they are known throughout the data. Names have been changed to protect the students’ identity in accordance with the ethical procedures of the research.

Table 3.1. Research Sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation chosen for this study.</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Level of English</th>
<th>Length of time in school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isabella</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Brazilian</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Chef</td>
<td>B2+</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Brazilian</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Admin. assistant</td>
<td>B2+</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rafael</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Brazilian</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>B2+</td>
<td>1 week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luigi</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>B2+</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vincent</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>IT Consultant</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>5 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Hotel clerk</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>4 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Barista</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>4 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marielle</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Psychologist</td>
<td>B2+</td>
<td>1 week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Brazilian</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Receptionist</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caterina</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Brazilian</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5. Research Methods

In any research it is important to choose methods which reflect the methodological paradigm, the nature of the data being collected, the requirements of the participants and the environment involved (Berry, 2004). After careful consideration of these factors, the following methods were chosen:

- Grammar survey combining Likert-scale questions and an open comments section to be administered both pre and post intervention;
- Structured observation by an external observer, Dr Elif Kir (PhD in Linguistics and expert in Process Drama) using a pre-designed observation template;
- Audio-recordings of the embodied activities
- Audio-recordings of the students’ reflections
- Photographs of some of the embodied drama activities.

In the section below, each method is outlined and justified.

3.5.1. Grammar Survey

A Likert-scale survey was chosen for this study as it was considered to be a reliable, well-known format with proven results in providing accurate numerical data. It also enables the collection of quantitative data while still allowing qualitative questions regarding the subjective experience of the participants. Potential pitfalls with this style of survey include the possibility of forcing a participant to choose a side on an issue in which they may not have an opinion (Connolly, 2007). This was addressed when designing the survey through the inclusion of a neutral option. Another concern is the potential exclusion of participants’ authentic voices by requiring them to respond to statements rather than produce their own (Lichtman, 2013).

A comments section was therefore included at the end of the survey inviting the participants to express their opinions. Four areas to be investigated were identified: 1. The participants’ perception of their ability to use grammar; 2. Their preferred method of learning grammar; 3. Their comprehension of the grammar to be taught during the intervention and 4. Their relationship to grammar in general. The questions (See Appendix D) consisted of statements such as “I am confident in my use of grammar in conversation” to which the students chose their response from those provided on the scale. The scale was as follows: 1: Strongly disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: I don’t know, 4: Agree, and 5: Strongly agree.
The survey was piloted with another Intermediate class to gauge its accessibility to the participants. Feedback suggested that it would be helpful to read through the survey first as a class to ensure everyone understood all of the vocabulary and how to answer the scale. This advice was acted upon and there was a group read-through before conducting the survey. This also helped to clarify what was meant by each of the grammar terms in Q6, Q7 and Q8 (Appendix D) as some students knew the grammar forms but were unfamiliar with the terminology. The survey was completed both pre and post-intervention; this served the dual purpose of providing baseline data on the participant’s relationship with grammar and acting as a source of quantitative, comparative data between Survey A and B to analyse any changes following the intervention. Whilst this survey was designed to gather quantitative data, it must be acknowledged that there are limitations to any self-reporting data. The potential subjectivity of the students’ perception of their own abilities was therefore balanced with more objective data, including the following observation.

3.5.2. Structured Observation

A structured observation is one where data is gathered through observation of the participants without direct interaction, using a pre-designed set of criteria or template (Jackson & Taylor, 2007). This was chosen as a method to introduce a more objective viewpoint of the drama which I could not personally provide due to my dual role as researcher and practitioner. A visiting Postdoctoral fellow with Trinity, Dr Elif Kir (PhD in Linguistics and expert in Process Drama) was invited to conduct the observation as her professional background meant she would understand both the complexity of language acquisition and the creative processes of drama. Drawing on Observation Methods (Smart et al, 2013), the template (Appendix E) was designed to look out for the participants’ use of the grammar being taught and their ability to integrate it into their language and the drama. It was sent to Dr Kir for consultation and she gave some very useful suggestions on how to make the template clearer and more concise. The template was revised accordingly, then sent it to Dr Kir several days before the observation to give her time to familiarise herself with the format and thus minimise the potential for error or confusion on the day.

Dr Kir observed the class for one full day of lessons on Wednesday 14th of February 2018 from 1.45pm to 5pm. She completed the template by hand during the lesson and returned it at a later date having typed her notes to ensure clarity. The structured observation by Dr Kir was a valuable source of data as it provided both quantitative and qualitative data on the participants’ grammar acquisition from the perspective of an expert in the fields of linguistics and drama.
3.5.3. Audio-Recordings

Audio-recording was chosen as a method because it provides accurate data without imposing or interrupting the lesson in the same manner as video recording would. I was sensitive to the fact that the participants might feel self-conscious and react differently if being recorded and chose to use my phone rather than a more obtrusive recording device. The least obtrusive way to record the lessons was to familiarise the participants with the sight of me holding my phone and to press record just before I introduced an activity so that the initial focus was on my explanation rather than on their response. This helped to ease any awkwardness and the participants paid little attention to the phone after the first day.

The audio-recordings were analysed as two separate data sets as they represent two different kinds of data.

a). The embodied activities (embodied grammar practice and drama) were recorded whilst being photographed and were analysed alongside the photographs as a combined data set in order to provide an external perspective on the student’s engagement with the process.

b). Reflection sessions, held at the end of each lesson, provided a space for the students to share their impressions of the drama and to give constructive feedback. The recordings of these sessions yielded valuable qualitative data regarding the students’ internal processing of their experience and were grouped as a distinct data set so as to better analyse the students’ responses and insights.

3.5.4. Photographs

It was decided to use photographs to collect data in order to visually capture the moment of embodiment during the drama activities whilst simultaneously audio recording to connect the language and embodied action as authentically as possible. The participants were informed that anyone who did not wish to be photographed could be exempted from the images or have their face obscured, but all participants declared themselves happy to be photographed. The photographs provided a vital source of visual data of the participants’ embodiment of the grammar which could then be cross-verified with the audio-recordings to create a richer source of data. They are presented along with the audio-recordings of the embodied activities as a combined data set.
3.6. Overview of Lesson

The aim of this project was to complete the unit of the textbook: *Outcomes Intermediate, Unit 7: Education* (Sayer, 2016) through an embodied approach, to assess the effect this had upon the students’ acquisition of the target grammar. To achieve this, the content of the curriculum was explored entirely through drama for one full week. A full scheme of work and sample lesson plan have been provided in Appendices F and G. The following table offers a synthesis of the structure.

Table 3.2. Lesson Structure Overview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Stage</th>
<th>Sample lesson: Quantifiers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction to new grammar points through embodied drama practises combining physical movement with language.</td>
<td>Students watched <em>Grammar in Motion</em> video (<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-arOD1H-sE&amp;t=21s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-arOD1H-sE&amp;t=21s</a>) Repeated actions for “all”, “each”, and “every” as demonstrated in video.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Exploration of the grammar through the embodied practises: creating own movements and connecting the target grammar with meaningful actions and situations</td>
<td>Students created sentences to match actions individually and in pairs. Students interacted using quantifiers and actions in group game, e.g. “I will shake hands with everyone wearing a scarf”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Introduction of target vocabulary and exploration through drama activities incorporating the grammar.</td>
<td>Students discussed the personal qualities of teachers and students and embodied in created freeze frames for peers to discuss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Integration of grammar and vocabulary along with the relevant skills (listening, reading, writing, speaking) through a process drama.</td>
<td>Students created roles as students and teachers attempting to solve problems. Students wrote and read emails and held face to face meetings with different “teachers”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.7. Data Analysis

In accordance with the pragmatic paradigm informing this research, a system of content analysis was chosen as being the most appropriate means to analyse the predominantly qualitative data. Prior to analysis, the raw data was first converted into a more suitable format for analysis where required. The grammar surveys were processed into a series of bar charts in order to visually represent the quantifiable, numerical data of each individual survey. This data was then consolidated to compare group scores for each question answered across Survey A and Survey B. The group scores of both surveys were then compared to track numerical changes between surveys and the data displayed visually in bar chart form. These quantifiable findings were then cross-referenced with the qualitative data using a thematic approach.

As with the surveys, the raw qualitative data were first converted into a more appropriate format for analysis. The audio-recordings were transcribed and divided into two distinct data sets: the student reflections, which contained data pertaining to the students’ subjective response to the embodied activities, and the audio-recordings of the embodied activities themselves, which were then paired with their relevant photographs to compare the language being embodied with the corresponding image. The body language and facial expressions in each of the photographs were visually analysed within the context of the language being embodied.

Both data sets were then individually analysed using a manual, colour-based coding system designed to track key phrases, repeated words and observed phenomenon in order to identify themes emerging naturally from the data. Emerging themes were assigned a colour to enable swift visual recognition of similar themes within the data set. This process was repeated with the observation, student reflections and survey comments. The data was then cross-referenced to determine which themes were reoccurring across the data and to identify patterns and trends. These themes were consequently reanalysed and consolidated into larger themes where necessary. Finally, the emergent patterns were discussed and critiqued to assess the impact of the study. The full analysis and discussion of the findings are presented in Chapter 4.
3.8. Triangulation

Triangulation is an approach to data collection which facilitates the validation of data through cross verification of several different sources (Lichtman, 2013). The data was triangulated in two ways during the research: by utilising several different methods of data collection and by collecting data from several perspectives (the students, an observer, the teacher/ researcher). Both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered using the pre and post-intervention surveys which gave valuable insight into the perception of the participants, both of the study itself and of their own approaches to grammar. The researcher’s observations and students’ comments were balanced with a third-party observation conducted by Dr Elif Kir, thereby cross-verifying the subjective impressions of the participants and teacher/ researcher with the objective observations of an expert in the field. Finally, audio-recordings and still photographs were used as an objective source to contrast and compare with the perceptions of the teacher/ researcher, the students and Dr Kir. This made it possible to identify common themes, cross-verify the data and explore the findings in greater depth.

3.9. Reliability, Validity and Trustworthiness

Reliability, validity and trustworthiness refer to the consistency, effectiveness and accuracy of the instruments used and of the data they collect. The researcher must be consistent, for example, ensuring that all participants receive identical surveys and that post-intervention and pre-intervention instruments measure the same data (Gay et al, 2009). The research sample should accurately represent the population or phenomenon being studied. The reliability, validity and trustworthiness of the instruments used in this research study were assured in several ways.
Firstly through the review of relevant literature to investigate best practice within the field of educational research and to determine which methods would deliver the most reliable data. Secondly, through the careful researching and piloting of instruments used to gather the data. Thirdly, through the inclusion of external viewpoints such as Dr Kir’s observation to provide a counter-balance for the subjective perceptions of the participants and teacher/researcher. The reliability and validity of the data was also protected through triangulation, through acknowledging and attempting to minimise any personal bias, and by maintaining a high ethical standard at all times.

3.10. Researcher’s Bias

It is important in any research project to acknowledge the impossibility of being entirely objective as one cannot divorce oneself from personal views and prejudices. With regards to this study, I acknowledge that as a student of DiE and a teacher who embraces the pedagogy passionately within my own classroom, I am biased in favour of drama and may have been inclined to expect positive outcomes when assessing the drama intervention. I was very aware during the study that since I was frequently a participant within the drama myself in order to guide the students as practitioner, I ran the risk of projecting my own experience onto that of the students.

With this in mind I chose to audio-record a selection of the activities within the drama lessons so that there was an objective record of what occurred outside of my own perceptions of the event. It allowed me to review the drama as an outside observer as well as a participant and thus highlighted any areas I may have otherwise overlooked. I also invited Dr Kir to observe and analyse one of the lessons. This provided an objective expert opinion, an invaluable source of data to which I could compare my own observations, thus highlighting any obvious personal bias which may have inadvertently occurred.
3.11. Ethics

This project was carried out in compliance with the ethical protocol of the School of Education, Trinity College Dublin. It received ethical approval on February 2\textsuperscript{nd} 2018. I have protected the anonymity and confidentiality of all the participants of this study by using aliases when discussing the school or individual students and by carefully removing any identifying features which may compromise a participant’s privacy. However, it is essential to acknowledge that in this thesis the participants are identifiable through the photographs. I provided a separate consent form (Appendix C) for the inclusion of photographs, so that participants could choose to have their face obscured and only those who specifically consented would have their faces visible. All participants agreed to have their photographs included in the thesis.

Furthermore, as the participants were not English native speakers, I was careful to present all information clearly and simply, to check the participants’ level of understanding at each stage of the process and to make each participant fully aware of their right to withdraw at any point. I am satisfied that this research study was conducted in an ethical fashion and that the rights of all participants were acknowledged and respected. All of the data collected during this research project was done in an ethical manner following careful study of the required practises laid out by Trinity College and with all possible efforts made to eliminate bias and strengthen reliability and validity. This data is presented and analysed in the following chapter.
Chapter 4: Data Findings and Analysis

4.1. Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 3, the data gathered from this study was analysed using a manual system of content analysis. The raw data was refined where necessary: the audio-recordings were transcribed and the survey results consolidated to convey both individual and group data patterns which were then converted into bar charts. This was followed by a colour-based open-coding stage during which each data set was organised and closely examined in order to determine main categories and possible themes. To facilitate the coding process, each data set was assigned an identification number to allow for swift cross-referencing. As this identification system has also been used in the following chapter, a brief clarification is necessary.

In regards to the surveys, the students were assigned a number from 1-10 with the letter A indicating pre-intervention surveys and B indicating post-intervention (For example, Isabella was Student 1, therefore the identification number S1A indicates Isabella’s pre-intervention survey). As the still photographs and transcriptions of the audio-recorded embodied activities were analysed simultaneously, they were assigned corresponding identification numbers to ensure ease of analysis (For example, the designation T1D2 indicates the first transcription from Day 2, while the designation P1D2 indicates the corresponding image: the first photograph from Day 2). In keeping with this identification system, the data set obtained from Dr Kir’s observation was designated O1D3 (Observation 1, Day 3) while the transcribed audio-recordings of the reflection sessions were labelled in chronological order as R1, R2 etc (Reflection 1, Reflection 2). This chapter presents the findings from each of these data sets and analyses their significance with regards to the research question.
4.2: Baseline Data: Pre-Intervention Survey A

Prior to the study, students completed a grammar survey consisting of 10 Likert-scale questions covering areas such as the participants’ confidence in using grammar across the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), their preferred means of learning grammar and their knowledge of the grammar points to be covered during the study. It also included space for the students to comment freely on their experiences of learning grammar. The purpose of this survey was threefold: to provide baseline data on the students’ perceptions and attitudes towards grammar; to act as a source of comparison for a post-study survey; and to analyse any significant changes. This data was then tabulated as follows:

![Baseline Group Data: Survey A](image)

**Scale:** 1: Strongly disagree. 2: Disagree. 3: Don’t know. 4: Agree. 5: Strongly agree

As the table shows, student confidence in using grammar across the four skills (Q1 and Q2) varied considerably from student to student and also between skills for some individuals. When the individual results were combined into group scores for each question, reading scored the highest with a peak of 39, followed by listening at 38, speaking at 37 and writing at 35, reflecting a higher comfort level with skills involving passive comprehension of input rather than active production.
This is significant when compared to the results on how students feel they learn grammar most successfully. The highest scoring answers were 43 for learning best through combined skills (Q9) and 41 for learning best when physically active (Q5), 40 for practising through conversation (Q4) and 38 for practising through written exercises (Q3). This suggests that while students believe active production to be the best way in which to learn and practise grammar, they feel more comfortable with passive activities, perhaps as those are the methods with which they are most familiar. It also reflects the disparity between the curriculum and students’ learning needs: the high scores for combining skills and being physically active indicate a strong need for blended learning and movement. This is also evident in a student’s comment: “For me it is easier to learn when teacher explanation is good and have a combination between reading, writing, listening and speaking” (Isabella, S1A).

The survey showed a high proportion of negative or neutral responses to the questions regarding how well they understood the target grammar for the week: first conditionals (Q6), quantifiers (Q7) and noun and verb forms (Q8). This was significant as the class had already studied both first conditionals and quantifiers in previous units of the textbook through written exercises and conversation, supporting the claim that the textbook-based curriculum is not conducive to successful grammar acquisition. This is further strengthened by a student’s comment stating that while learning grammar is OK, it is hard to remember new grammar when only the book is used (Marielle, S8A). Q8 also received low scores, however as noun and verb forms had not yet been covered in the curriculum, this result was to be expected and was included to chart progress between the baseline and post-intervention surveys.

The final question on the survey, Q10, asked students to rate how much they enjoy learning grammar. While three chose “I don’t know”, the rest agreed or strongly agreed, a surprisingly positive result given the general attitude of the students to grammar activities in the classroom. This suggests that the lack of engagement is not due to a dislike of grammar itself but of the method through which it is delivered within the curriculum, an argument supported by a student who stated that visual aids such as videos depicting rules and playing games in class is a more effective way for them to learn (Max, S6A).
4.3: Post-Intervention Survey B

In order to gain quantifiable data on the impact of the study, the students were asked to answer the same Likert-scale survey (Survey B) at the end of the project, a week after completing Survey A. As this method combined both qualitative and quantitative data it was necessary to employ two different means of analysis. The students’ comments were analysed alongside the other qualitative data using the afore-mentioned coding system which searched for repetition of key words and phrases within and across data sets in order to identify themes. The numerical responses were categorised and consolidated to create a group score for each question which was then compared with Survey A as seen in the following chart:

![Group Data: Survey A and B.](image)

As the chart shows, the combined group scores increased from Survey A to Survey B across all but one of the questions (Q1B), some slightly, some significantly. The purpose of Q1 and Q2 was to establish any changes in confidence with grammar use across the four skills during the study. Writing was the only skill which did not see an increase in score, a factor that will be examined further in the discussion section (See 5.4.1). The consistent increase in scores across the other three skills indicates that the embodied approach to the curriculum did promote more confidence in the use of grammar in speaking, listening and reading. Q3, Q4, Q5 and Q9 all dealt with student preference for approaches to learning.
The consistent increase across all four questions is significant as it indicates that rather than students changing their preference from written exercises to physical activity following a week of embodied learning, students instead became more definite in stating their individual learning needs. This suggests a deeper impact upon the students’ awareness of their learning styles as a result of the study and will be further explored in the discussion section.

The next area covered by the surveys was comprehension of the grammar. These are the questions which saw the most dramatic changes: Q6 and Q8, which increased by seven and eleven points respectively, and Q7 with an increase of five points. The increase in comprehension of the newly introduced grammar is evidence of successful grammar acquisition through an embodied approach and is strongly supported by students’ comments such as Vincent: “For me this way of learning is very good because it makes me think faster so I can learn better and faster. I think you are on the right way. I think it should be more natural and without dead time between activities” (S5B). The increase in comprehension of the previously studied grammar is of even greater relevance as it strongly suggests that students were better able to comprehend the grammar through embodiment than through the traditional textbook.

Finally, Q10 saw an increase of an already high score for student enjoyment of grammar, with the three students who had chosen 3 (the neutral option) on Survey A changing their score to 4 (Agree) on Survey B. This indicates an increase in engagement as a result of the embodied approach, as does the higher response rate for students’ comments. Whilst only five out of ten students chose to comment on their experiences of grammar on Survey A, all of the students responded on Survey B with comments that reflect a deeper engagement: “The drama grammar was a good experience and I allowed understand [sic] some rules better. Also [sic] is a good idea and good way to learn, playing or doing different activities. I liked that week because we can express our ideas and emotions and sometimes we are surprised at what we can get” (Max, S6B).

Overall, the survey results suggest that the embodied approach impacted positively upon the students’ experience of grammar and have raised interesting themes such as embodied cognition, integrated skills, student engagement and learning styles which will be further explored across the remaining data sets and analysed in the discussion section. However, one of the risks of relying on numerical data is the possible loss of individual nuance, a factor of particular importance in such a small-scale, phenomenological study such as this.
(It is also important to note that as 3 on the scale denotes a neutral, “I don’t know” option, a student choosing to change an agree or disagree score to a 3 may not necessarily indicate an increase or decrease in agreement but rather a deeper consideration of the issue). The data gathered from the surveys reflects the students’ perspectives, and as such provides a valuable depth of insight into their experience of the intervention. However it is also subjective in nature and therefore cannot be considered in isolation. To ensure reliability and trustworthiness of the data, the surveys must be compared with data gathered from external perspectives; the audio recordings, photographs and third-party observation.

4.4: Visual Content Analysis of the Photographs

During the study, qualitative data was collected on the embodied activities (embodied grammar practices and process drama) via a combination of audio-recording and photographs. The photographs were visually analysed to investigate the students’ choice of body language and facial expressions used to embody the grammar. The audio-recordings were transcribed and analysed alongside the corresponding photographs in order to establish connections between the language and the embodied action. A number of interesting phenomena were observed as a result of this analysis. Some examples follow:

Figure 4.3. Embodied Grammar: Max (standing) points to Isabella (sitting) to embody the sentence “You must sit on the floor”.

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On the first day of the intervention the students were asked to practise modal verbs ‘will’, ‘might’, ‘must’ and ‘can’ by creating phrases and representing them physically. To embody the phrase “You must sit on the floor” (T4D1), Max chose to stand up straight and point his finger (Figure 4.2), a gesture commonly associated with indicating an instruction or order and in keeping with the use of ‘must’ in this context to indicate obligation. Figure 4.3 shows Isabella sitting down, her back straight and her head tilted upwards, directly following Max’s body line as he points down to her. Isabella’s seated, attentive position creates a sense of compliance, reinforcing the depiction of obligation created by Max’s upright stance and pointed finger.

On the third day of the study, the students were asked to create freeze frame images of students and teachers representing different characteristics. Marielle and Maria (Figure 4.4) chose to embody the qualities of disappointment and sadness. The photograph captures the opposite, complementary poses that both students chose to embody. It shows the two states through contrasting postures and facial expressions: Maria sitting down, her back slouching with a closed fist covering her mouth, eyes looking down, and Marielle standing up in an erect pose, firm and authoritative, jaw locked and direct gaze with her finger pointed towards Maria.

Figure 4.4. Marielle and Maria embodying ‘Disappointed and sad’ in a freeze frame.
The students were asked to observe and identify the emotions represented. When Luigi suggested that Marielle’s character was disappointed because she was using her finger, Anna immediately said “She is saying ‘You must!’” (T7D3). Max agreed and suggested that Marielle’s character was saying “You must pay attention” (T7D3). The students’ connection of the word ‘must’ with the action of pointing a finger indicates that the embodied practice enabled them to both comprehend the meaning of the word during the activity and remember it two days later in a different context.

This supports the comments made by several students, including Max (S6B), that they were able to learn better and remember more grammar as a result of the embodied activities. Another interesting phenomenon which emerged from the embodied activities was the student’s instinctive urge to connect language with movement even when not specifically asked to do so. In the same discussion of the freeze frame, another student suggested that Maria’s character was feeling down because she was looking down, connecting the physical direction of her gaze with the direction of her emotion (T7D3).

This symbolic connection of language and body was further evident during the adjective order embodiment (T3D3). This activity required students to respond physically depending on the type of adjective they were: fact, opinion or noun, Adjectives which were facts (green, round, big etc.) had to stand still, indicating inflexibility, adjectives which were opinions (ugly, beautiful, interesting etc.) had to move, indicating flexibility and nouns in use as adjectives (glass, plastic, guitar etc.) had to sit on the ground to indicate their position as the adjective closest to the word being described.
At the beginning of the activity, students were asked to respond physically when an adjective was called out. When the word ‘Tall’ was called out, Vincent stood still with the other students to indicate that it was a fact but also instinctively stretched his body to make himself taller.

Figure 4.5. Vincent (left foreground) embodying the adjective ’Tall’.

Figure 4.5 captures the dynamism of this moment, as Vincent almost springs up, raising his hands in the air in a sharp movement, with the rest of the students standing still and observing his body reaction to the command. There is a sharp contrast between Vincent’s dynamic pose (foreground) and Marielle’s rigid pose (background, far left), as she was embodying the inflexible nature of the adjective as an unchanging fact in contrast to Vincent’s choice to embody the meaning of the word itself.

Another example of this internalised connection between language and body emerged in the following activity, during which one student had to collect ‘adjectives’ personified by the other students and put them in the correct order to form a sentence. When Isabella was given the word ‘free’ as her adjective, she kept moving and refused to allow herself to be collected, laughing and saying “No, I am an opinion, I am free!” (T3D3).
As Figure 4.6 shows, Isabella (right foreground) actively responded to the prompt by moving in the space, her arms swinging, to make a connection between the abstract notion of freedom and her body posture. The photograph captures the sense of motion and speed which emerged in contrast to the straight-backed stance of her fellow students as Isabella ran around them. Isabella’s facial expression also reflected her embodiment of ‘free’: relaxed features, wide smile, her gaze directed forwards.

Figure 4.6. Isabella (right corner) embodying the adjective ‘free’.

This incident led to a group discussion on the difference between ‘free’ in terms of cost and ‘free’ as a state of being, with the students ultimately deciding that in this context, ‘free’ was a fact as it described a guitar course requiring no payment. This is illustrated by the following excerpt from transcript T3D3:

1. Isabella: Opinion no? Free?
2. Teacher: Ah, sorry, so free can be like free-spirited, yes. Or it can also mean you don’t pay money.
3. Anna: MMMM! ....
4. Teacher: So actually for this- 5. Caterina: It’s a course?
6. Teacher: It’s a course, yes.
7. Caterina: Oh! So…
8. Teacher: So you decide if it is an opinion or a fact in this context. If it’s for the course…
9. Caterina: (To Anna) Opinion or fact?
10. Anna: Fact.
11. Teacher: Fact. Ok
12. Anna: Ok, ok. Come on Max, let me see yours! Isabella?
13. Isabella: No! (Laughing).

(Discussion followed concerning which opinion to choose)

15. Teacher: So now what is our sentence?
16. Anna: My brilliant free guitar course

(T3D3)

As well as recording the group collaboration to establish the correct use of ‘free’ as an adjective, this transcript also captured the depth of Isabella’s commitment to her embodiment of ‘free’ as she jokingly refused to hand over her card to be read (Turn 13). Her connection of the term ‘free’ with a refusal to be physically captured or compelled to action is a fascinating example of embodiment in action.

The audio-recordings also provide a valuable source of data on the integration of the target grammar into the students’ existing vocabulary. On each of the five days of the intervention, there were clear examples of the target grammar and vocabulary being explored and used correctly within the process dramas. On Day 1, following the embodied practise of ‘will’, ‘might’, ‘can’ and ‘must’, the students engaged in a process drama in which they discussed dropping out of school with various family members and school authorities. The students were able to use each of the forms correctly and in some cases also experimented with negative forms:

1. Anna: “You can’t sell your body, you know this!”
2. Rafael: (Laughing) “Alright, I won’t. Or maybe…”
3. Anna: “You won’t!”
   (T7D1)

This transcript captures a moment between two students deeply immersed in role: Rafael as a student disillusioned with college, Anna as his long-suffering mother desperate for her son to have decent prospects. The conversation was spontaneous and unscripted with no input from the teacher or prompts of any kind, thus serving as an example of students engaging in the drama creatively and collaboratively to explore the target language through the negotiation of meaning as described by Kao and O’Neill (1998).
This natural integration and exploration of the language was also observed on Day 4 during a drama in which each student had to create a role and participate in a board meeting to discuss the problems of a school. During the drama, students repeatedly used the target vocabulary of the day (noun and verb forms, for example, motivation, motivate, knowledge, know), as one in the following example: “We can motivate the own [sic] students to study for themselves, but in a group because they can share they [sic] own knowledge” (Anna, T7D4). Students also consistently used grammar and vocabulary which had been introduced during the previous days of the study, for example, qualities to describe students and teachers, modal verbs, future time clauses (T7D4).

The open format of the board meeting created a space in which any student could participate but none were obliged to, a format which removed the pressure to answer ‘correctly’ which is often present in closed drama activities such as scripted role plays (Bowell & Heap, 2013). Rather than being presented with an established problem, students were asked to raise any problems in the school which concerned them, thus giving them ownership over the direction of the drama, a factor known to increase motivation and engagement (O’Neill, 1995).

As with the previous example, negotiating the drama through improvised language seemed to encourage the students to use the target language more naturally, an observation supported by Rafael’s comments on his participation in the board meeting scene: “I didn’t even think about those words before I start to talk, I don’t know, I just talked. I think it’s more easy [sic] when you go natural to talk because thinking, [sic] you start thinking where’s your words and then get a little crap” (Rafael, R4). Overall, the visual analysis of the embodied activities shows an increase in student engagement and creative exploration of the target language. The analysis also points to the students having an innate need to embody language in order to process it.

4.5. Structured Observation

During Day 3 of the study, Dr Kir observed a full three-hour lesson and completed a predesigned observation template keeping track of the students’ use of the target grammar. The target grammar included revision of previously introduced grammar (quantifiers) and the introduction of new grammar (adjective order). The observation template was divided into the following categories:
• Correct verbal use of the grammar
• Ability to respond appropriately to the grammar in conversation
• Ability to translate the grammar into physical action
• Recognition of the grammar when physically represented
• Confidence/ comfortability in using the grammar
• Student engagement in the embodied activities

Dr Kir was asked to observe the 10 participants throughout the lesson, to consider each of the above categories and to tick a box corresponding with the degree of frequency to which each phenomenon was observed: completely absent, infrequently observed, frequently observed, or continually present. Her observations indicate a high level of engagement and comprehension amongst the students in both the revised and newly introduced grammar. In the case of adjective order, a grammar point which was new to all 10 participants, Dr Kir ticked “Continually present” for all categories (O1D3).

This positive score indicates that the students both understood adjective order and used it correctly throughout the class despite none of them having previously encountered the concept. The students’ ability to comprehend and integrate adjective order so quickly seems to suggest that an embodied approach does support the acquisition of new grammar. In the case of quantifiers, (a grammar point previously studied but which received low scores on the surveys for student comprehension), Dr Kir noted that correct verbal use and appropriate responses to quantifiers in conversation were frequently observed, indicating that students were using the grammar correctly when speaking (O1D3).

Interestingly, when asked to observe the students’ ability to use and respond to quantifiers when represented physically (that is, through embodied action) Dr Kir noted that they were both frequently observed and continually present, suggesting that student comprehension and ability to use grammar increased when they engaged in embodied activities. Dr Kir also noted an example of student creativity during the embodied grammar practice (O1D3) which will now be examined further.
The students practised *Kinegrams* for the quantifiers ‘all’, ‘each’ and ‘every’ after observing them in a *Grammar in Motion* video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-arOD1HsE&t=21s), then created sentences to accompany the actions. Vincent and Luigi were particularly engaged in the activity and began to combine the actions to create a story without being prompted. They combined the actions for ‘each’ and ‘every’ into a continuous, fluid action and paired it with the sentences “There is cake for everyone” (Luigi, T1D3) and “I will cut each person a slice of cake” (Vincent, T1D3).

Figure 4.7 shows this embodied action: Luigi (right) stands with feet planted far apart, wide stance, rounded arms indicating an object being held (the ‘cake’) head bent down, jaw tensed and gaze focused on the empty space between his arms representing the cake. Vincent (left) stands erect yet relaxed, right arm fully extended and hand held stiffly in a chopping motion, palm facing inward, embodying the slicing of the ‘cake’ being held by Luigi. (These embodied poses are the students’ original adaptation of the movements depicted in Lapaire’s previously referenced *Grammar in Motion* video).

Figure 4.7. Vincent (left) and Luigi (right) embodying the phrases “There is enough cake for everyone” and “I will cut each person a slice of cake”.

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This then led to the example noted by Dr Kir in which Luigi (T1D3) created the sentence “I have taken all of the apples” to accompany the *Kinegram* for ‘all’ demonstrated in the video, then expanded this concept with the sentence “Some of the apples are bad” (Luigi, T1D3) and created his own original *Kinegram* to demonstrate the quantifier “some” as seen in Figure 4.7. This edited image depicts Luigi twice: on the left hand side he is shown with rounded arms, as if holding a pile of apples, to embody the quantifier ‘all’. On the right hand side he is shown changing his movements, his right arm remaining rounded as though holding a smaller amount of apples as his left arm sweeps in a wide arc, palm facing away, to illustrate pushing away the ‘bad apples’.

![Figure 4.8. Luigi embodying quantifiers ‘All’ and ‘Some’.

This example is relevant for several reasons. Vincent’s and Luigi’s adaptation of the quantifiers to create a logical link between the sentences illustrates their comprehension of quantifiers through embodiment, and their ability to use it to explore connections within the language. It also highlights the potential for collaborative embodiment to enhance learning as both Vincent and Luigi have different levels of English yet worked together successfully to assist each other’s learning. Luigi’s subsequent creation of an original *Kinegram* to illustrate a quantifier that had not been introduced during the lesson is an exciting indication of his potential to extend the embodied grammar practice beyond the target language to enhance his learning autonomously. The implications of this finding will be discussed in the following chapter.
4.6. Students’ Reflections

During the study, the students were invited to participate in a reflective session at the end of each day to offer feedback on the activities. These sessions lasted between 10 to 15 minutes each and were audio-recorded, providing a valuable source of qualitative data as the students reflected upon their experience while it was still fresh. The topic of each reflection varied depending on the day and emerged naturally from the students’ observations and discussions. The most significant data emerging from the reflections is the claim by the majority of the students that the embodied approach positively impacted upon their language acquisition. They reported finding it “easier to learn language when it was linked with physical action” (Luigi, R1), that it “enabled them to grasp grammar concepts such as adjective order which they had previously not understood” (Vincent, R3) and that it was “an easier, smarter way to learn than the traditional curriculum” (Rachel, R2).

This data correlates with the increase in scores observed on Survey B and supports the data on comprehension and memory gathered during the embodied activities and from Dr Kir’s observation. There were also new themes introduced. Max observed the following about the role of emotion in embodied learning: “When you do something in [sic] your face, you change your mood and you remember sometimes [sic] these things and you learn more easily” (R1). His comment reflects recent studies on the link between emotion and memory which will be examined in Chapter 5. Anna reported that incorporating new vocabulary into drama had helped her to improve her English; she spoke passionately about the positive effect of creativity on her ability to learn, saying that the best part of the drama for her was the chance to explore and “Create such crazy things!” (R5).

Another aspect of the embodied approach which emerged through the reflections was the inclusion of different learning styles, an issue previously identified in the surveys, both through the numerical data and the students’ comments. Whilst an embodied approach can be expected to impact positively on kinaesthetic learners such as Vincent, who admitted that he struggles to learn through reading the book and said that “movement helps him to remember” (R3), several other students also reported that the embodied approach had met their needs in ways the traditional curriculum did not.
For example, Marielle (R5) expressed that as a visual learner, she found that the gestures incorporated in the embodiment of first conditionals helped her to remember them (Figure 4.8). Caterina (R3) and Maria (R3) stated that they learn best when combining the four skills with physical action and drama, a preference strongly supported by the survey comments of several students both pre and post-intervention. This need for greater integration of the skills was also expanded upon by Isabella (R3). She admitted that she found the textbook “boring” and that it was easier to understand when the curriculum was connected through drama, words and actions, an opinion she reiterated in her post-survey comments.

Figure 4.9 depicts the embodiment of first conditionals mentioned by Marielle (R5) which she gave as an example of an activity which had engaged her as a visual learner. In the left side of this edited image, Max stands with a relaxed posture, head tilted slightly to the left as he observes Marielle, maintaining her gaze as she traces a circle in the air with her hand to symbolise a potential, imagined world-her embodiment of ‘If’. In the image on the right, Marielle observes Max as he responds to her action with his embodiment of ‘Will’.

In contrast to his relaxed pose in the left image, Max’s posture is straight and upright, gaze following the line of his outstretched right arm held at shoulder height, hand rigid, palm facing inward and thumb tucked in as if pushing through a barrier. This strong, definite action encapsulates the certainty of ‘Will’ as a concept, pushing through the imagined world of Marielle’s ‘If’ to create a solid, definite consequence. The connection between the concepts of ‘If’ and ‘Will’ is also embodied within the students’ response to each other: they hold each other’s gaze, receptive and standing in a relaxed pose as they accept the action of the other.
Another theme that appeared across all five reflections was an increased engagement with grammar as a result of the embodied approach. Luigi asserted that it was better than “sitting in the chair just listening to the teacher” (R1) and Rafael commented that he found it easier to get more engaged as it was “more fun” (R3) a comment which also incorporated the grammar of the day (noun and verb forms: engaged, engage). He also stated that “It’s a good alternative approach” (R3), using the target vocabulary learned that day, an interesting example of a student incorporating the acquired target language in order to discuss the process through which it was acquired.

The discussion of engagement led naturally to the factors which contributed to it. Several students mentioned the increased social interaction as a factor, stating that working together made it simpler to learn English (Luigi, R2). It is intriguing to note that this comment originated with Luigi as it aligns Dr Kir’s observations of his engagement during collaborative work with Vincent (O1). Max also expressed a preference for more social interaction as he found it more interesting and enjoyed talking to all of the students (R3). Finally, Caterina (R4) commented that working with the whole class rather than just small groups meant more interaction with new students, a compelling observation given that three new students had joined the class the previous day and participated in all of the lesson despite being exempt from the study.

4.7. Conclusion

Whilst many interesting topics arose over the course of the week worth reflecting on as a practitioner, for the purposes of addressing the research question the analysis has focused only on those themes which correlated with the other data presented here. In summary, the emerging themes were the role of embodiment in cognition, the effects of collaborative learning and the creation of an effective learning environment. These will be discussed in Chapter 5 with reference to relevant literature.
Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings

5.1. Introduction

This chapter addresses the main themes identified during the data analysis. For the sake of clarity the discussion has been consolidated into three overarching themes: embodied cognition, collaborative learning and effective educational environment. The chapter discusses these themes and the connections between them with reference to relevant literature and pertinent studies in order to examine their potential implications for this research and for the wider fields of embodiment, DiE and L2 research.

5.2. Embodied Cognition

Some of the emerging findings regarding embodied cognition were expected as they resonated with reviewed literature, recent studies and personal observation: an increase in comprehension of the target language and a greater capacity to remember it when presented and explored through embodied activities. However, the data also indicated a connection between embodied emotion and language acquisition, an unanticipated finding which prompted further investigation following the data collection. This section will examine each of these themes.

5.2.1. Comprehension and Memory

Prior to data collection, the literature-based search conducted as preparation for the present study strongly indicated a possible increase in comprehension and memory following the embodied approach. From Asher’s (1966) TPR studies, to the work of Even (2011), Retzlaff (2008) and Lapaire (2011), studies of embodiment and language consistently report an increase in understanding and retention of L2 grammar when presented and explored through an embodied process. This trend was also evident throughout the findings of this study; in the increase of scores from Survey A to Survey B, the majority of the students’ survey comments (S1B, S3B, S4B, S5B, S6B, S7B, S8B, S9B), Dr Kir’s observation (O1) and almost all of the audio-recorded reflections (R1, R2, R3, R5).
A significant example is the students’ transferral of Max’s embodiment of ‘Must’ (Fig. 4.2) used on Day 1 to decipher Marielle’s embodied emotion (Fig. 4.3) on Day 3, demonstrating the students’ ability to comprehend the concept through association of the word with an action (the pointed finger) to recall the concept two days later as a result of seeing the action repeated, and to use it appropriately in a different context. This data indicates that the embodied activities enabled the students to assimilate the language into their linguistic schemata through the association of movement and words. Considering the volume of data reporting positive results when teaching L2 through embodiment, the question no longer seems to be whether embodied cognition enhances L2 acquisition, but rather, how does it do so and why?

5.2.2. The Inherent Embodiment of Language

The instinctive nature of embodied language has already been addressed in the data analysis with the examples of Maria (T7D3), Vincent (Fig.4.4) and Isabella (Fig.4.5). It correlates with recent neurophysiological studies investigating the link between language and gesture. Studies by Gentilucci and Corballis (2006) found that production and perception of both facial expression and forelimb movement are encoded in the same area of the brain and that making or observing a hand gesture influences the way in which syllables are formed in speech. This indicates a link between the cognitive processes required to verbalise words and those responsible for physical gestures (Fogassi & Ferrari, 2007).

These findings are further supported by studies into the tool use of apes and humans which suggest a strong link between language representation and the organisation of physical action (Steele, Ferrari & Fogassi, 2012). It seems that humans have always connected movement with verbalisation, right from the first emergence of language. The need for embodiment is even greater when learning a second language, as the speaker relies more heavily on gesture, facial expression and tone of voice to convey meaning (Surkamp, 2014). It is the position of this thesis that an embodied approach to L2 acquisition is not only beneficial, but necessary to meet the needs of L2 learners.
5.2.3. The Role of Embodied Emotion in Language Acquisition

One of the unexpected findings of this study was the impact of embodied emotion on L2 acquisition. One student in particular, Max, mentioned emotion on several occasions: “I liked that week because we can express our ideas and emotions and sometimes we are surprised at [sic] what we can get” (Max, S6B). He also reported a cognitive connection between emotion and memory, stating that when he changed his facial expression to convey an emotion, it enabled him to associate the language with his facial expression and thus remember it (Max, R1). This is a strong argument for the interconnection of motion, emotion and language. Figure 5.1 captures Max’s use of facial expression to embody language.

![Figure 5.1. Max’s embodiment of the noun ‘Imagination’ during group activity.](image)

Max (left background), stands out in this photograph in contrast to the group. While the other students have all adopted stereotypical ‘thinking’ poses (fingers on chin, upward, reflective gaze) Max’s animated posture and facial expression depict a sense of exploration and wonder, creating a contrasting image. The uniqueness of Max’s embodiment lends weight to his comments in demonstrating the connection between language, emotion and physicality.
These findings resonate with Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia’s (2007) famous discovery of ‘mirror neurons’; that is, neurons which are activated in the brain when an action is performed and also when that action is observed being performed by someone else. This also extends to physical expressions of emotion, for example, recoiling in disgust or smiling with joy (Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia, 2007), suggesting that empathy is actually the shared physical experience of emotion (Capra, 2015).

From an analysis of the data it could be inferred that ‘mirror neurons’ are responsible for interpreting and coding the meaning of actions, reinforcing the connection between communicative gestures and the development of verbal language (Iacoboni et al. 2005). This research offers an insight into the cognitive processes which occur during language embodiment encapsulated in Max’s reported experience of emotion and motion combining to enhance his acquisition of language.

5.3. Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning is the process through which students develop positive interdependence alongside individual accountability in the pursuit of a shared goal (Coppola et al., 1997). It is a core component of the CLT curriculum (and therefore of the classroom in which this study occurred), usually incorporated through task-based pair or group work, with the goal of increasing student talk time and developing communication skills (Scrivener, 2011). The benefits of successful collaborative learning are significant: increased academic scores (Topping, 2001), increased student engagement (Slavin, 1990) and a more positive, respectful classroom atmosphere (Stockard & Mayberry, 1992), all of which contribute to successful language acquisition.

However, working in pairs or groups does not automatically lead to collaborative learning; students require a meaningful context and clear objectives in order to learn collaboratively (Topping, 2001). It is also necessary to establish a positive, respectful atmosphere before engaging students in collaborative tasks to ensure equal participation and cooperation. The findings of this study suggest that the embodied approach allowed for a deeper level of collaborative learning by encouraging a more natural social interaction and enabling students to create their own meaningful context through drama and embodiment.
5.3.1. Social Interaction

The following images depict several examples of social interaction between the students during the embodied activities and process drama.

![Image of Vincent and Anna exploring embodied first conditionals, Day 5.]

Figure 5.2. Vincent (left) and Anna (right) exploring embodied first conditionals, Day 5.

Figure 5.2 captures Vincent and Anna working on first conditionals, an area of grammar which both students found challenging, as reflected by their scores of 3 (‘I don’t know’) on Survey A in response to Q6 (S2A; S5A). Following the study, both students increased their scores, indicating a perceived increased understanding of first conditionals. Considering this image in the context of their survey scores implies a link between their relaxed, positive collaboration and their successful acquisition of the grammar.

This relaxed atmosphere is also evident in Figure 5.3 which depicts Caterina in quite a vulnerable position: pretending to have her hair ‘washed’ while in role as a customer at the hairdressers. This scene required the students to reply to customer complaints with sympathetic responses.
Caterina’s level of ease while working with her partner in this depicted scene is remarkable as this was the first day they had met. Her experience during this drama may have influenced a comment she made during a later reflection in which she reported that she liked working with the whole class because it meant she “got to know the new students” (R4). The intimacy of the situation also indicates a high level of trust and mutual respect, factors essential for collaborative learning (Wheldall, 2007) and conducive to successful language acquisition (Kao & O’Neill, 1998).

The introduction of more natural social interaction created a positive, relaxed atmosphere within the classroom. The students consistently reported that during the study they were – “having more fun” (Marielle, S8B), “feeling ‘engaged” (Rafael, R3) and feeling that “no one would judge them” (Luigi, R2). This was also reflected in the many instances of laughter recorded in all of the reflections and most embodied activities (T7D1; T1D2; T6D3; T4D4; T2D5). As observed by Woodruff (1978) and Even (2011), embodied activities can engage students’ sense of humour and help to dispel any awkwardness.
Deep engagement in embodied activity can dispel discomfort and create bonds of trust (Nicholson, 2005) factors attributed to the enhancement of students’ language acquisition (Krashen, 1981). This relaxed social atmosphere is also evident in the following photograph (Fig. 5.4).

Figure 5.4. Day 1 process drama: students in role in ‘café’ scene.

Figure 5.4 depicts the students on Day 1 of the study, engaged in a scene which involved the whole class in role as customers in a café. The students worked simultaneously but were in conversation primarily with the student at their table, as in a real café. There was no restriction on interacting with other students however, and some of the students chose to respond to overheard comments from other tables, either indirectly to their partner or directly to the speaker. Isabella (Figure 5.4) can be seen here turning her head to listen to the conversation between Luigi and Vincent while her partner Anna observes their conversation.

This is a clear example of drama creating an environment conducive to collaborative learning through the blurring of usual classroom boundaries. Typical pair or group work in a CLT classroom involves students working together but in isolation from the other groups, sometimes sharing their work with the whole class in a brief summary at the end.
This can cause some students to cling to their group and feel pressured or anxious when compelled to ‘share with the class’ (Pitt, 2005). In this context however, the students were free to engage in their own collaboration whilst also observing others in a manner which did not distract or inhibit their peers. This created an open, flexible work environment from Day 1 which continued throughout the study, impacting positively upon the students’ acquisition of grammar and encouraging students to explore and take risks without fear of judgement, important factors when creating meaningful context through drama.

5.3.2. Creating Meaningful Contexts

The need for meaningful contexts has been established as a prerequisite for grammar acquisition (Ellis & Collins, 2009) and is a vital component of any L2 lesson. ‘Meaningful input’ (Scrivener, 2010) is a key CLT principle, requiring teachers to contextualise lessons in a way which is relevant to student’s needs and experiences. However this is still created by the teacher, depriving students of the chance to explore their creativity and develop autonomy (Nunan, 2003). In DiE, it is the participants who create the context of the drama through their authentic reactions and spontaneous improvisation (Bowell & Heap, 2013) and thus take ownership of the process, developing the depth of engagement necessary for L2 acquisition.

An intriguing consequence of students creating their own meaning through collaboration was their increased scaffolding of each other’s learning. Vygotsky (1978) describes the zone of proximal development (ZPD) as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). Scaffolding (Wood et al., 1976, p. 90) refers to the process of supporting a learner to achieve something beyond their individual capabilities.

There were many instances pointing to students’ exploration of their ZPD boundaries of throughout the intervention: students of different L2 levels collaborating to create stories through embodied grammar (Vincent and Luigi, Fig. 4.6); students clarifying things with each other while in role rather than turning to the teacher (Caterina and Anna, T3D3); and dramatic scenes in which student responses to each other pushed them to challenge themselves. One such example is illustrated in the following transcript (T4D2) of Vincent and Maria in role as taxi driver and customer respectively. The target language being practised was sympathetic responses and prior to this scene the phrases ‘I’m sorry’, ‘I imagine’ and ‘Can I help?’ had been elicited from the class.
1. Maria: Are you ok? Are you eh...you...are you not so good?
2. Vincent: Yeah, I am very stressful for here the work.
3. Maria: Yeah? Why?
4. Vincent: There are so much traffic and my boss is so strange people.
5. Maria: Oh man, yeah, I understand. It’s been a lot of hours being here. I can imagine how you feel.
6. Vincent: It’s hard because I work more than 12 hours per day.
7. Maria: Oh God, you must go home!
8. Vincent: Yeah, my boss want more, more hours.
9. Maria: Why don’t you look for another job?
10. Vincent: Eh, because I don’t want study anything, and I live under a bridge-
11. Maria: Oh that’s terrible!
12. Vincent: Yes, my wife leave me and I don’t know what happen with my life.
13. Maria: Oh God...how can I help you?!
14. Vincent: Come on, help me!

(T4D2)

This scene demonstrates exploration of the target language through improvisation and the participants’ authentic responses to each other. Maria expanded upon the target vocabulary to create original sentences: “I can imagine how you feel” (Turn 5), “Oh God, how can I help you?!” (Turn 7), and introduced responses which had not been elicited: “Oh that’s terrible!” (Turn 11) and “Oh man, yeah, I understand” (Turn 5). She also used the target grammar introduced the previous day “Oh God, you must go home!” (Turn 7) both confidently and in context.

This is a significant finding as Maria self-identified as being uncomfortable with drama, both in her survey comments (S7B) and in the reflection following this scene, stating that “It’s a challenge to me because it takes me out of my comfort zone” (R2). The transcript (T4D2) shows Maria’s language use being scaffolded by Vincent’s escalation of his complaints, prompting her to improvise equally dramatic responses. It also shows a progression in her confidence from the beginning of the scene where she is quite hesitant; “Are you eh-you-are you not so good?” (Turn 1) to the end where she is confidently matching Vincent’s energy. Maria also commented that despite her discomfort, she did feel that the drama had helped her to understand the grammar better (S7B), indicating that working outside of her usual comfort zone had positively impacted upon her grammar acquisition. This is in line with the literature, as students who are encouraged to challenge themselves tend to show greater autonomy and deeper engagement (Little, 1991), both of which are essential components of an effective learning environment.
5.4. Effective Learning Environment

The impetus for this study was to create a more effective learning environment by identifying the obstacles to learning (lack of engagement with grammar) and exploring ways to resolve them (an embodied approach). An effective educational environment is one which engages the learners, meets their educational needs and challenges them to reach their full potential (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995). The previous sections have discussed some of the ways in which these criteria were met during this study: enhanced comprehension and memory through embodied cognition, deeper engagement with language socially and emotionally, increased exploration of language through encouragement to explore creatively and take risks. The following sections will discuss two other significant areas which contributed to the effectiveness of the embodied environment: the integration of the four skills via process drama, and the incorporation of different learning styles.

5.4.1. Integration of Skills

The CLT curriculum avoids teaching skills in isolation and strives to integrate them where possible to create a more natural and effective learning environment (Scrivener, 2010). However many of the textbooks, including the one used during this study (Sayer, 2016), divide the weekly units into separate listening and reading comprehensions and writing tasks, all with disparate themes, making it difficult to present them in a connected way. The process dramas made it possible to integrate not just the skills, but the target grammar and vocabulary as well.

Many DiE practitioners advocate the use of drama as a means of integrating the four skills within the CLT curriculum, championing it as a complimentary rather than competitive method (Kalogirou, 2016). DiE is a dynamic, collaborative medium which allows for flexibility in interpreting any language curriculum (Weiss, 2007). Presenting the four skills in a dramatic context allows for a greater connection of the curriculum which in turn enhances student comprehension (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995). Each of the five process dramas developed for this study integrated reading, writing, listening and speaking within the drama, as well as the target vocabulary and grammar. The following example illustrates how this was accomplished.
On Day 4, the students were in role as teachers, parents and student representatives attending a board meeting to address problems in the school (T7D4). The drama began with the school principal (Teacher in Role) playing a news item (the listening comprehension track) about the failings of modern schools. The students discussed the news report in connection with the fictional school and were given an agenda to read outlining the main points to be discussed during the meeting. The participants were asked to add their own ideas to the agenda and to make suggestions as to how these issues should be solved.

Following the board meeting, students were asked to write emails to the principal with their recommendations for improvements (the target vocabulary) in a tone reflecting their emotional reaction to the meeting and relationship to the principal. They then created freeze frames depicting moments throughout the school day illustrating possible reasons for the problems discussed, for example, student absenteeism. Next, the participants split into three groups to prepare short scenes portraying the future of the students of the school in 10 years if no intervention occurred. The target grammar, noun and verb forms including ‘criticism, failure, knowledge and engagement’, were integrated naturally throughout each of the scenes.

Some students reported finding it easier to learn when the curriculum was connected through drama: “I think all of the parts is [sic] more connected so it’s more easy to understand if you have all the parts, the drama, the words, I think when we put in [sic] the action, when we make the thing [sic], I think [sic] is better to learn” (Isabella, R3). However two students (Maria and Caterina, R3) seemed uncomfortable with the move away from traditional lesson structure, stating that while they enjoyed the drama, they also liked to have their books and take notes. This may have been because the writing included in the drama required more spontaneous, original output than the usual textbook tasks and also had to be completed within the dramatic context, eliminating the possibility of working from the book. Q3 (confidence in use of grammar when writing) was the only question to see no change in the surveys due to Maria (S7B) and Caterina (S10B) lowering their confidence scores following the study, balancing out those who increased theirs. When considered alongside their comments (R3), their decreased scores appear to stem from being ‘outside their comfort zone’, as Maria (S7B) expressed it. While being outside one’s comfort zone can be associated with growth and learning in educational theory, this requires a certain amount of times that changes from learner to learner. A one-week intervention may not have been enough time for Maria and Caterina in this instance.
Another participant who expressed discomfort with the embodied approach was Rachel, a student who was frequently absent and often disengaged when present. During the intervention she was very vocal about her regard for traditional methods, stating that “Reading is the most important thing [sic] to learn English” (R5). She also mentioned finding the activities “boring” (R2) and feeling “annoyed” when asked to “move around” (R4). However, on the final day of data collection, Rachel reported that the embodied activity had helped her to learn because she associated the words with the actions and remembered them because she was having fun (R5). She also opened up about her lack of engagement, admitting: “Some parts when I’m really bored and my mood is down and I need to practise just this exercise, sometimes for me it’s annoyed [sic]. But it’s not all most [sic] the times because I like this interaction” (R5).

Her frankness may have been influenced by the increasingly open classroom atmosphere which developed during the intervention. Maria and Caterina also expressed positive opinions about the embodied approach, reporting that it helped them to “understand the grammar better” (Maria, S7B) and that it was a “nice way” to learn as a group (Caterina, R4). Their survey results also showed positive results (excluding Q3) as discussed in the previous chapter.

Positive comments from these three students are all the more relevant in the context of their negative feedback, suggesting that an embodied approach has the potential to enhance the learning of all students, not just those who learn best kinaesthetically. Their strong opinions regarding their preference for reading and writing also indicate that participation in the study encouraged them to become more aware of their individual learning styles, an important step towards greater learner autonomy (Nunan, 2003) and taking ownership of their language acquisition.
5.4.2. Learning Styles

Research shows that students perform better academically when lessons account for their learning styles (Stockard & Mayberry, 1992) and that the most effective lessons are those which include a combination of visual, aural and kinaesthetic elements alongside the usual reading and writing exercises (Riding, 1997). An embodied approach through drama enables the natural integration of different learning styles just as it does the integration of skills: there is greater flexibility to connect seemingly disparate elements of the curriculum through the theme of the drama (Kaligorou, 2016) and to incorporate movement and emotion in a natural way (Capra, 2015). The findings of this study indicated that an embodied approach impacted positively upon the grammar acquisition of students with traditional, ‘read and write’ learning styles (as seen in Maria, S7B; Rachel, S79; Caterina, S10B). How then does it affect students with learning styles less commonly included in the classroom?

Five of the 10 students (Isabella, R4; Rafael, R3; Luigi, R1; Vincent, R3; Max, R1) identified kinaesthetic learning (learning through physical movement or practical activities) as their preferred style of learning. The most emphatic responses were from Luigi (R1) and Vincent (R3), both of whom repeatedly stated that the physical nature of the activities helped them to understand the grammar more quickly (Vincent, S5B) and made it easier to stay engaged (Luigi, S4B). As discussed in the data analysis, Luigi and Vincent enthusiastically embraced the use of Kinegrams (Lapaire, 2006) on Day 3, culminating in Luigi creating an original Kinegram to depict the quantifier ‘some’ (Figure 4.7).

This example brings together several different strands of the research: Luigi’s comprehension of the grammar through connecting the quantifiers with gestures (Fogassi & Ferrari, 2007), his creative exploration of the grammar through collaborative learning with Vincent (Slavin, 1990), their creation of meaningful context through creating a story to link the quantifiers (Kao & O’ Neill, 1998) and Luigi’s depth of engagement prompting him to challenge himself creatively and explore beyond the target language (Even, 2011). Luigi’s capacity to act of his own volition to enhance his comprehension of quantifiers through the creation of original embodied activity is a solid example of successful grammar acquisition as the result of an embodied approach.
5.5. Conclusion

In summation, some findings within this study, such as increased comprehension, social interaction and engagement, were anticipated in the literature as they correlated with previously researched studies in the fields of DiE, L2 acquisition and embodiment (Even, 2011; Lapaire, 2006). On the other hand, other findings were unanticipated and inspired further investigation into the cognitive link between verbal language and gesture (Gentilucci & Corballis, 2006) and the connection between emotion, motion and language (Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia, 2007). The discussion of these findings and review of the pertinent literature strongly supports the use of an embodied approach within the ESL classroom, not only to enhance grammar acquisition, but also to create an effective learning environment which promotes student engagement, autonomy and creativity, enables meaningful collaborative learning and enhances students’ connection with the curriculum through the integration of skills and learning styles.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1. Introduction

This concluding chapter provides an overall summary of the study, outlines the major findings and offers recommendations for future policy and research. The limitations of the study are also acknowledged and areas for future study identified.

6.2. Overall summary

This was a study of the impact of an embodied approach to the curriculum upon the acquisition of grammar in an ESL classroom. It was a small scale, practitioner-researched study involving 10 participants which took place in a pre-intermediate English classroom in a Dublin language school. The research question was designed in response to a lack of cohesive grammar integration within the CLT curriculum resulting in decreased student engagement, a phenomenon observed both in the classroom in which the study occurred and within the wider SLA field.

In order to address the research question, the study explored literature in the fields of embodiment, SLA and DiE to review established theories, relevant research and current practise. This review highlighted several areas of relevance to the research, in particular, the philosophy of embodied consciousness (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) and the work of practitioners Even (2004) and Lapaire (2006), all of which informed the theory and practice of the embodied approach employed during the study. A mixed-methods approach was designed in order to collect both qualitative and quantitative data during the study and a system of visual content analysis employed to categorise and assess the data. The findings were then discussed and presented as shown in this thesis.
6.3. Major Findings

The following findings emerged during this study:

- **The positive impact of embodied cognition upon grammar acquisition.** The data showed an increase in students’ ability to understand, remember and correctly use the target grammar when introduced through embodied activities, including revised grammar which had previously been introduced through traditional methods. This reflected the findings from similar research studies (Kaligorou, 2016; Even, 2011; Lapaire, 2006).

- **A possible link between embodied emotion and comprehension of L2.** The findings suggested that the incorporation of emotion, movement and language enhanced the learning of some students, a hypothesis strongly supported by neurophysiological research (Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia, 2007).

- **A strong student preference for integrated skills.** The students reported an increase in engagement, comprehension and retention of the target language when presented through integrated skills. Several students also included physical activity and movement in this integration, suggesting that an embodied approach is an effective means of achieving this integration, as suggested by DiE practitioners in the SLA field (Kaligorou, 2016).

- **An increase in collaborative learning.** The data showed a higher level of social interaction and collaboration between students during the study. The impact of embodied learning on student collaboration is supported by other research studies in the field (Kao & O’Neill, 1998).

- **Potential for an embodied approach to meet the needs of all learning styles.** This was evident in the positive comments from students with traditional ‘read and write’ learning styles as well as those with less commonly included approaches to learning. Research suggests that teaching through drama allows for greater flexibility and enables teachers to tailor lessons to meet the learning needs of their students more efficiently (Bowell & Heap, 2013).
6.4. Recommendations

The data suggests the following recommendations:

1. Incorporating DiE within the CLT curriculum to enhance L2 acquisition, increase student engagement and autonomy and develop a more connected curriculum;
2. Integrating emotion and motion in L2 learning as natural elements of communication to enhance student comprehension and engagement;
3. Utilising the instinctive human need to embody language to enable students to explore and understand abstract grammar concepts in a concrete way;
4. Promoting natural social interaction within the classroom to establish an open, respectful atmosphere conducive to collaborative learning;
5. Encouraging students to develop an awareness of their learning style and preferences to foster autonomy and self-awareness.

While these recommendations may seem idealistic in the face of the vast and complex field of ESL, they gain credence when considered in light of the similar recommendations made by many other researchers in the field of embodiment whose work has been examined in previous chapters. On a practical level, the management of the school in which this study took place have invited me to share my research with my colleagues through a CPD session, with the aim of introducing more inclusive, natural ways of language learning into the collective repertoire. Personally, as an ESL teacher and DiE practitioner, I intend to follow these recommendations within my own classroom through continuing my research into the areas of embodiment and emotion in language.

6.5. Limitations of the Study

It must be noted that this was a small scale study based in one classroom and consisting of only 10 participants, a factor which needs to be considered if applying the findings of this study within a wider context. The short time scale was also a limiting factor as the students did not have much time to adjust to the embodied approach, with some becoming more comfortable just as the intervention was ending. The research design was also confined by the necessity of incorporating the textbook as this meant translating the textbook into drama rather than devising the embodied approach based on students’ interests and needs, thus restricting the themes and direction of the drama.
6.6. Areas for Further Study

This research was informative and enlightening to undertake as a practitioner and highlighted the need for creative, performative approaches to SLA. With regards to my classroom practice, it has led me to study the topic of skills integration further in response to my students’ selfidentified needs and my own observations during the study. Whilst I am still required to follow the textbook under the school curriculum, I am challenging myself to approach it in a more integrated, socially collaborative way. The role of emotion in L2 learning was an exciting theme to emerge from this study and one which I intend to research further in the future.

I am also eager to pursue further research on the same topic to see if the same results are achieved following a longer study, particularly for those students who found themselves out of their comfort zone and may have needed more time to acclimatise. Given the increase in student engagement and comprehension of grammar after just one week of an embodied approach, it would be fascinating to study the impact over a full school term. A longer study would also be useful to determine the impact of embodiment as a full time approach to the curriculum comparative to traditional approaches as the data could be compared with another classroom.

Based on the embodied approach designed for this study, I have now created and piloted an alternative ESL curriculum which explores grammar and vocabulary through embodied practices and integrates them into process drama alongside the four skills. This curriculum is the foundation of a 10-week course aimed at ESL students of all levels who wish to learn and practise English in a creative, collaborative environment. As a follow up to the study, it has forged a new direction for me in my career path and will hopefully lead to future research opportunities.
6.7. Final Comments

When I began this M. Ed programme, I was in a career which had long ceased to fulfil me creatively, intellectually or spiritually. Moving into the field of ESL midway through completing a Master’s Degree was an act of desperation which turned out to be a life changing decision. Although I had always loved drama and incorporated it into my teaching, it was only through this research project that I realised the potential of drama, not only as an educational tool but as a force for deep and lasting change, both in the classroom and in my own life. My research topic changed in tandem with my career from a dull, comfortable topic which I had chosen for its familiarity, to one which excited and challenged me, rekindling not only my passion for teaching and drama but also my desire to challenge myself academically and take ownership of my practice. Completing this thesis has been a revelation, a rebirth of myself as both educator and student. This is not just the end of my thesis: it is the beginning of a new and exhilarating chapter in my life.
References


Appendices

Appendix A

Dear Director,

My name is Miriam Stewart and I am currently completing a M.Ed. in drama in education through the School of Education, Trinity College, Dublin. As part of this programme I am conducting research on the use of drama in the ESL classroom. My research is under the supervision of Erika Piazzoli and is entitled “How does an embodied approach to the curriculum impact upon the acquisition of grammar in an ESL classroom?”

This project wishes to investigate the effectiveness of drama as a teaching strategy in approaching the curriculum, particularly in regards to grammar. The project will involve designing and teaching a series of lessons over 1 week (Feb 12th-16th) which will present the unit of the textbook (in this case, Outcomes Intermediate) through the medium of drama, paying particular attention to the inclusion and acquisition of grammar. The data collection for the project will include a survey to be administered before and after the lessons to assess progress. This survey will be for research purposes only and will not be included as part of the student’s general assessment. The data collection will also include audio-recordings and still photographs of some elements of the lessons pending your consent and the consent of the students. The school’s guidelines on image policy will be adhered to at all times in regards to the photographs. There will be no disruption of classes or distraction from coursework. I would also like to ask permission to invite Dr. Elif Kir, from Medeniyet University (Istanbul) PhD. in Linguistics, to observe my class both prior to and during my research project. She is currently a Visiting Research Fellow at the School of Education, TCD and is collaborating with my supervisor Erika Piazzoli on this project. Her insight would be invaluable.

I am aware that you are very busy and I would greatly appreciate your assistance with this project. I can foresee no risks associated with either the school or the student’s participation in this study beyond those of everyday life. Any information gathered will be treated with the appropriate privacy and anonymity. No information regarding the school or the participants will be identified in the research. All information gathered will be stored securely with access granted only to the researcher and examiners. All data will be destroyed after a period of 10 years. The anonymised results will be included in a thesis and may be discussed at conferences or included in academic literature. As your school would be the site of data collection, a copy of the results can be made available upon request.
Please note that neither the school nor the students are under any obligation to participate in this study: all participation is strictly voluntary and any participant may withdraw from the study at any stage without need for explanation or fear of prejudice. If you have any further questions regarding this research please feel free to contact myself or my supervisor at the email addresses provided below. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank you for taking the time to consider my research. Without your generous participation, conducting such research would not be possible.

Kind regards,

Miriam Stewart.   Email: miriamstewart444@gmail.com   Tel.no: 0860836281   Supervisor
details: Email: Erika.piazzoli@tcd.ie

**Director’s consent:**

I…………………………………………………… have read and understood the information sheet included with this consent form and I am happy for Miriam Stewart to conduct research in this school.

Director’s signature:

Date:

Researcher’s signature:

Date:
Appendix B

Student information sheet

Title of project: How does an embodied approach to the curriculum impact upon the acquisition of grammar in an ESL classroom?

The study: I am a student with Trinity College and I am completing a M.Ed. in drama in education. As part of my course I am researching drama as a method of teaching English in an ESL classroom. The thesis is investigating the effectiveness of drama as a means to deliver the curriculum using an embodied approach and to incorporate grammar more efficiently.

Participation Information: If you agree to take part in this study you will be asked to complete a survey at the beginning and at the end of the research project. The survey will take place during class time and will last about 20 minutes. It will consist of 10 statements about language learning and grammar to which you will be asked to choose a response. There will also be a space at the end of the survey for you to fill in any extra comments or insights you may have.

During the research project I will be audio-recording and photographing activities from each of the lessons to allow me to observe what is happening and to assess the effectiveness of the drama. This will not be used to assess any of the participants in any way. If you do not wish to be recorded, your personal participation will not be included in the research. If you do not wish to be photographed, your image will not be included in the research. Any photographs which are used in the research can have the participants faces obscured upon request to protect their identity. I will also be inviting Dr Elif Kir from Medinyet University (Istanbul) PhD in Linguistics and expert in Creative Drama, to observe the drama lessons. She will be observing the drama and will not be assessing the participants in any way.

I can foresee no risks associated with your participation in this study beyond those of everyday life. Any information gathered will be treated with the appropriate privacy and anonymity. No information regarding any of the participants will be identified in the research. All information gathered will be stored securely with access granted only to the researcher and examiners. All data will be destroyed after a period of 10 years. The anonymised results will be included in a thesis and may be discussed at conferences or included in academic literature.

You don’t have to take part in this study if you don’t want to and you can withdraw from it at any time without having to explain why. If you have any questions or don’t understand something, please ask the researcher to explain it to you.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and for considering participation in the study.

Contact details: Miriam Stewart- Email: miriamstewart444@gmail.com Tel. no: 0860836281

Supervisor details: Erika Piazzoli - Email: Erika.piazzoli@tcd.ie
**Student Consent:**

Title of Project: How does an embodied approach to the curriculum impact upon the acquisition of grammar in an ESL classroom?

*You are under no obligation to participate in this study. If you agree to participate, but at a later stage feel the need to withdraw, you are free to do so.*

Please answer all of the following (tick the appropriate box):

I have read and understood the information sheet.  Yes □ No □

I understand what the project is about, and what the results will be used for.  Yes □ No □

I am fully aware of all of the procedures involved and of any risks or benefits associated with the study.  Yes □ No □

I know that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the project at any stage without giving any reason.  Yes □ No □

I consent to being photographed as part of the study  Yes □ No □

I am aware that my results will be kept anonymous.  Yes □ No □

I agree to participate in the above study.

Student signature: Date:  Researcher

signature: Date:
Appendix C

Student Photo Consent Form

Title of Project: How does an embodied approach to the curriculum impact upon the acquisition of grammar in an ESL classroom?

You are under no obligation to participate in this study. If you agree to participate, but at a later stage feel the need to withdraw, you are free to do so.

Please answer all of the following (tick the appropriate box):

I consent to my unaltered photograph being used in the study on the understanding that my face will be visible. Yes □ No □

I understand that my image will be used for the purposes of the research only and that my privacy will be respected and no name attached to the image, Yes □ No □

I understand that my image will not be uploaded to social media or reproduced without my consent. Yes □ No □

I know that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the project at any stage without giving any reason. Yes □ No □

Participant signature:
Date:

Researcher signature:
Date:
Appendix D

Grammar Survey

Please read the statements below and circle the number which best describes how you feel.

1-strongly disagree  2-disagree  3-neutral (don’t know)  4-agree  5-strongly agree

Please answer honestly- your answers will be used to help the researcher to understand how students experience grammar in the classroom and to examine different ways to teach it. This survey will NOT be used to assess you or your level of English.

Q1: I feel confident about my use of grammar when

a) Speaking  1  2  3  4  5
b) Writing  1  2  3  4  5

Q2: I feel confident about my comprehension of grammar when

a) Listening  1  2  3  4  5
b) Reading  1  2  3  4  5

Q3: I learn new grammar points best when I practise them through written exercises.

1  2  3  4  5

Q4: I learn new grammar points best when I practise them through conversation.

1  2  3  4  5

Q5: I find it easier to learn grammar when I am physically active (e.g. playing games, role playing.)

1  2  3  4  5

Q6: I am comfortable using first conditionals in my spoken and written English.

1  2  3  4  5
Q7: I understand what quantifiers are and when to use them. (E.g.; some, all, any, each, every)
1 2 3 4 5

Q8: I understand the difference between noun and verb forms. (E.g. achieve, achievement)
1 2 3 4 5

Q9: It is easier to learn grammar when reading, writing, listening and speaking are combined in one activity.
1 2 3 4 5

Q10: I enjoy learning grammar.
1 2 3 4 5

Please add any other comments you have about your experiences learning English grammar.

Thank you!
## Observation Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed activity</th>
<th>Completely absent</th>
<th>Infrequently observed</th>
<th>Frequently observed</th>
<th>Increased as class progressed</th>
<th>Continually present</th>
<th>Example of activity observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correct verbal use of quantifiers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to respond appropriately to use of quantifiers in conversation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to translate concept of quantifier into physical action</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to recognise quantifiers when represented physically</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence/comfortability in using quantifiers.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observed activity</td>
<td>Completely absent</td>
<td>Infrequently observed</td>
<td>Frequently observed</td>
<td>Increased as class progressed</td>
<td>Continually present</td>
<td>Example of activity observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct verbal use of adjective order</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to translate adjective order into physical action</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence/comfortability in using adjective order</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of quantifiers into process drama</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of correct adjective order into process drama</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement of students in embedded exercises</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for your time.
Appendix F

Scheme of Work

Subject: English language  No. of lessons: 5

Class: Intermediate Level B2 (adult)  No. of students: 15

Textbook: Outcomes Intermediate Unit 7-Education.

Class characteristics: Age range: 19-38.

Nationality: Brazilian, (11) Mexican, (3) Italian (1)

Proficiency: Mixed, 2 students high B2+, 3 students B1+

Overall Aims:

● To explore the unit Education through drama.
● To introduce new grammar points using an embodied approach.
● To integrate the various elements of the curriculum-vocabulary, listening, reading and writing activities and grammar- through process drama.

Overall objectives:

● Students will explore the following grammar points through embodied drama practises: future clauses, first conditionals, quantifiers (some, all, each, every) noun and verb forms, modal verbs (will and might).
● Students will complete the unit reading, writing and listening tasks as integrated elements of the process drama.
● Students will practise the vocabulary and grammar through the process of creating the drama.

Topic: Education Sub-topics:

● How’s your course going?-Levels of education, college life
● Pay attention-Teacher and student interaction, results and rules
● Making a difference-Challenges and changes in education
Teaching methods:
I will be taking an embodied approach to the curriculum and will introduce the unit through drama. This will involve integrating each separate activity-reading and listening comprehensions, writing tasks, vocabulary exercises etc. into the drama as a contextualised whole rather than disparate parts. It will also involve introducing new grammar points through embodied, physically active drama practises. I will introduce reflection periods at the end of each class and after challenging activities if needed in order to encourage peer discussion and to address any areas of the curriculum which may be challenging or confusing.

Learning methods:
Students will learn new grammar points through embodied drama practises which will engage them physically as well as intellectually. Students will be introduced to and practise new vocabulary through a variety of drama games and activities and will integrate this new grammar and vocabulary into their reading, writing and listening tasks which will be presented in the context of a process drama.

Materials/ equipment:
• Textbook-Outcomes Intermediate
• Art supplies-paper, pens, rulers, scissors, blu-tack etc.
• Audio cd of listening activities for textbook
• Interactive whiteboard
• Internet
• Physical space of classroom.

Student assessment:
I will be taking a dynamic assessment approach to ascertain the student’s integration of the new concepts in a manner which reflects the holistic nature of the lessons. I will observe each student’s progress and work with them to scaffold their learning. Assessment will be continuous throughout the lesson through observation of the student’s engagement in the drama and interspersed with opportunities for self-analysis and peer feedback through group reflection periods. Students will be encouraged to take part in self-assessment and to be aware of their own learning styles, progress and areas for improvement.
Appendix G

Lesson Plan 3

Date: 14.02.18          Topic: Education

Time: 1.45pm-5pm        Sub-topic: Pay attention: teacher/ student qualities

Student knowledge and experience of subject matter:
The students will have been introduced to the relevant vocabulary surrounding the topic of
education in the previous lesson and should feel comfortable using it. This lesson will
introduce new vocabulary to describe personal qualities, an area which not all students may
be familiar with. The class have previously worked with quantifiers but in grammar exercises
only and some students struggle with integrating them into natural conversation. None of the
students have previously been formally introduced to adjective order.

Aims:
To revise quantifiers and introduce adjective order through embodied activities.
To integrate photo discussion task from textbook into drama as freeze frame activity.
To integrate writing task from textbook into drama as email correspondence.
To create a dramatic environment together through which students can engage with and explore
the target language.

Objectives:
Students will explore quantifiers and adjective order through embodied activities.
Students will describe personal qualities of teachers and students and embody them in a freeze
frame activity.
Students will practise the target language in role as teachers and students through a process
drama.

Resources: Grammar in Motion video, verb and quantifier cards, adjective order cards,
physical space

Statement of content and skills:
This lesson will focus on revising quantifiers through Kinegrams and introducing adjective
order through originally designed embodied exercises. Students will then explore the target
vocabulary (personal qualities) through a freeze frame activity adapted from the photo
discussion task in the textbook. The grammar and vocabulary will then be will be integrated
into a process drama to be explored by the students in role.
Organisation of Lesson:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Lesson Stage</th>
<th>Student activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.45-1.55pm</td>
<td>Introduction to Kinegrams</td>
<td>Watch Grammar in Motion video of quantifiers. Observe and repeat actions for all, each, every.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.55-2.15pm</td>
<td>Embodiment of quantifiers</td>
<td>Perform quantifier Kinegrams and create sentences to match. Explore with peers to create new movements and sentences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.15-2.20pm</td>
<td>Introduction to adjective order</td>
<td>Describe objects in room using adjectives. Categorise adjectives as opinion, fact or noun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.20-2.40pm</td>
<td>Embodiment of adjective order</td>
<td>Discuss qualities of opinions, facts, nouns and embody each with action. Participate in sentence building game as embodied adjectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.40-2.45pm</td>
<td>Elicitation of personal qualities</td>
<td>Discuss best and worst teachers and qualities they have in common. Describe self as student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.45-3pm</td>
<td>Exploration of personal qualities through freeze frames</td>
<td>In pairs, create a freeze frame depicting a teacher and student embodying qualities previously elicited. Observe and discuss freeze frames to determine qualities being embodied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-3.15pm</td>
<td>Process drama: initiation phase</td>
<td>Recreate freeze frame with added 2 lines of dialogue depicting relationship between student and teacher. In pairs, create role as student or teacher and decide on problem to discuss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.15-4.50pm</td>
<td>Process drama: experiential phase</td>
<td>In role as students and teachers, participate in 'student-teacher' meetings to resolve problem. Following the meeting, 'students' write an email to 'teachers' outlining their feelings about the meeting and vice versa. Read partners email aloud, embodying reaction (anger, sympathy, relief). Present short scene to class depicting student and teacher encountering each other unexpectedly 10 years in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.50-5pm</td>
<td>Process drama: reflective phase</td>
<td>Reflect on drama as group and share feedback on experience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessment of student learning:

A dynamic assessment approach will be taken in order to continually assess the student with emphasis on skills and potential rather than on grading progress. Student's comprehension of the new grammar and vocabulary will be assessed through observation of the drama exercises. There will be group reflection periods both during and after the lesson in which students will be encouraged to reflect upon their comprehension and use of new content and to give and receive peer feedback.