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Letting Languages Live

Establishing a Basis for the Use of Drama in Education to Support and Implement a Communicative Approach to the Teaching and Learning of Modern Foreign Languages

By

Céline Healy

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A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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Dedication

To my parents Kate and Tom Healy, with thanks for their constant love, support and encouragement, and to my students past, present and future.

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There are many who enabled me to have the privilege of completing this research and I am very grateful to them.

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Abstract

Having for many years successfully used Drama in Education (DiE) in her classroom as a means of supporting and implementing a communicative approach (CLT) to the teaching and learning of modern foreign languages (MFL), the author undertook this study to understand more fully the relationship between the two approaches to teaching and learning. An extensive review of literature in the areas of second language acquisition (SLA), communicative language teaching and learning (CLT), and learner autonomy is undertaken to explore the foundations on which an active approach to the teaching and learning of languages might be based. To better contextualise the research, the aims and guiding principles of language teaching and learning in a European context and in the Irish second level school context, as well as initiatives and challenges to their attainment, are investigated. The focus then turns to Drama in Education, exploring what it is and what it is not, before establishing links between it and a communicative approach to language teaching and learning.

To test the use of DiE in other language classrooms besides her own, the author conducted a longitudinal research project (2001-2007) during which student language teachers were invited to participate in a series of workshops focusing on the use of DiE in the MFL classroom. Their opinions on the use of DiE in the language class were collected through questionnaires and interviews. A cross-section of language learners was also surveyed to determine their views on the use of DiE in the teaching and learning of languages.

To establish a background for the teaching and learning of MFL in second level schools in Ireland, practising teachers were surveyed to ascertain their opinions on the levels of support provided for them to implement a wider range of teaching methodologies, foster learner autonomy, facilitate greater oral participation and to encourage learners to use the target language independently. To determine language teachers' familiarity with DiE approaches and strategies, the extent to which they use them in general, and in particular in the teaching and learning of languages, a questionnaire was issued to practising language teachers. To form an impression of learner experiences in the MFL classroom, student teachers were surveyed on their experiences of learning MFL in second level schools. To complement this overview, student teachers completed a needs analysis on aspects of language teaching and learning that they considered important for their language methodology sessions.

The major findings reveal that DiE can support a communicative approach to the teaching and learning of languages. The student teachers who participated in the DiE training workshops almost unanimously appraised the approach as being highly effective in promoting the tenets of a CLT approach. It was also revealed that a majority are still using these approaches two or more years after completing their initial teacher education. In contrast, the data relating to the student teachers' experiences as language learners highlighted a significant reduction in the use of a communicative approach over the duration of the research period, revealing instead a strong emphasis on a structuralist approach, rote learning and reliance on text books. This trend contradicts the guidelines and initiatives developed by the Council of Europe and the Irish Department of Education and Science.

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List of Abreviations

ACT	Adaptive control of thought
BICS	Interpersonal communication skills
CALP	Cognitive academic proficiency
CC	Communicative competence
CEF	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CLIL	Content and language integrated learning
CLT	Communicative language teaching
DES	Department of Education and Science
DIE	Drama in Education
ELP	European Language Portfolio
L1	Mother tongue
L2	Second language
MFL	Modern foreign languages
NNS	Non native speaker
NS	Native speaker
PDP	Parallel distributed processing
SLA	Second language acquisition
SLL	Second language learning
STM	Short term memory
TL	Target language
UG	Universal grammar
ZPD	Zone of proximal development

Chapter One
Introduction

1.1. Aims of the study

This study aims to explore the position of communicative language teaching (CLT) and learning in modern foreign languages (MFL) in second level schools in Ireland. Against a background of recent European and subsequent Irish initiatives in the field of second language teaching and learning, the study aims to assess the extent to which Irish language teachers and student language teachers are engaging with and implementing a communicative approach (CA) in their classrooms. Specific attention will be paid to the use of Drama in Education (DiE) in language classrooms in order to ascertain Irish language teachers' and student language teachers' attitudes to and prior experiences of, the use of this active learning methodology.

An investigation into the relationship between DiE and communicative language teaching will be undertaken in order to determine the potential role, if any, of DiE in the communicative language classroom. The study ultimately aims to determine whether the adaption of a different teaching and learning methodology, as embodied in a DiE approach can positively impact upon learner engagement and achievement both cognitively and affectively in second language acquisition.

1.2 Background issues

The study of modern foreign languages has garnered much support nationally and internationally in recent decades, with substantial social, personal, economic and cultural benefits being attributed to the ability to be able to speak one or more additional languages to one's mother tongue. Not withstanding the problematic issue of the increasing dominance of English as a second language in many countries, the Council of Europe has established several policy initiatives in recent years in order to support and facilitate the learning of other modern foreign languages. The literature is replete with acknowledged references to the many advantages accruing as a result of greater diversity and mastery of other languages, with the social, cultural and economic benefits ranking highest in this regard. However, the literature in the field acknowledges the personal, affective and cognitive benefits resulting from the study of a second or third language, benefits which are deemed to enhance an individual learner's overall cognitive abilities and impact positively on their general educational development in other subject areas.

Despite a substantial level of agreement about the advantages of studying a second language, both for the individual concerned and for the wider economic and cultural development of ones country,

progress towards the Council of Europe's desired aim of mother tongue plus two additional languages, is a long way off, and the statistics reveal that Ireland among other countries, has substantial work to do in this regard. A number of reasons are cited for the delay in the achievement of this recommendation, and these will be explored in the thesis. The use of a communicative approach in language teaching and learning is deemed a necessary component towards supporting the realisation of increased capacity building in second language acquisition, and CLT has provided the foundation stones upon which the Irish MFL syllabi are based. However, the extent of implementation of a communicative approach in Irish second level schools is contested, and several recent Department of Education and Science (DES) Inspectorate reports convey that the situation is less than desirable with much room for improvement in the use of active learning approaches in language classrooms which the Inspectorate regards as fundamental to the achievement of communicative competence in the target language (TL).

1.3 Methodology

This study aims to provide a comprehensive review of the literature in the field of second language acquisition (SLA), focusing particularly on the theme of active learning and learner autonomy within that domain. In order to achieve this, an extensive literature search will be conducted in the fields of second language acquisition, communicative approach, learner autonomy, European and national policy initiatives, and Drama in Education as a potential mode of delivering communicative language teaching in classrooms. This will be complemented by a longitudinal study of teaching and learning practices in second level language classrooms in Ireland. The practitioner based research project will use a mixed methods approach to access and gather data from the following sources:

- practising language teachers
- student language teachers
- language learners in second level schools

The study is longitudinal in nature, gathering data from 2001 to 2007, owing to an important research objective of trying to achieve a valid and reliable picture of the status of active teaching learning methods in classrooms, and the efficacy of a DiE approach to communicative language teaching and learning. Surveys of practising language teachers representing a cross section of school types nationally will be undertaken at three different points during the research period in order to assess patterns and consistency of reporting and to identify any changes in teacher practices or opinions to communicative language teaching and active learning over the duration of the research period. Similarly, a cohort of student language teachers will be invited to participate in the project each year from 2001 to 2007, in order to identify any perceptible or noticeable differences in experiences of being a language learner themselves and of their reception to and use of a DiE approach to communicative language teaching in their classrooms. Follow up interviews will be conducted in

order to determine the extent to which these teachers continue to use DiE as a communicative approach in their classrooms after two or more years of completing their initial training as part of the project. Finally, the opinions of language learners in second level schools will be accessed in relation to determining their experiences of learning through a DiE approach to the communicative language teaching and learning. These second level learners are the pupils of the student teachers participating in the DiE training project.

1.4 Thesis layout

In summary, the thesis is laid out as follows. Chapter 2 will offer an examination of some of the main areas of research in second language learning, including the Universal Grammar approach, input, output and interaction, cognitive approaches such as interlanguage and learnability theory, learning strategies in SLA, and socio-cultural and socio-linguistic perspective. Chapter 3 aims to provide a detailed discussion on the development and significance of a communicative approach to language teaching and learning. It will outline its emergence from the structuralist approach and explain its relationship to language acquisition. Communicative competence will be defined from the literature, and the central tenets of a communicative approach will be presented and discussed.

The area of learner autonomy in language teaching and learning will be addressed in Chapter 4. Its background in socio-ideological changes in Europe in the 1960s will be explored, as will its psychological underpinnings and influences. The importance of learner autonomy in first and second language acquisition will be explorer and definitions of learner autonomy in language learning will be provided. Discussion will finally focus on identifying approaches to fostering learner autonomy in language classrooms. Having identified important theoretical considerations in the literature, Chapter 5 will present an overview of the status of SLA and MFL teaching and learning in Europe and Ireland. Recently developed policy initiatives and guidelines from the Council of Europe will be discussed, and these are considered against a background of the Irish education system and its syllabi and policy guidelines for second language learning at second level. A detailed exploration of the Junior and Leaving Certificate Syllabi will be undertaken in order to locate evidence of the European emphasis on communicative competence and active learning.

This emphasis on communicative approaches and the role of active learning therein is followed through into Chapter 6 which attempts to examine the fields of DiE and its relationship to communicative language teaching and learning. A distinction between what is commonly understood as drama in classroom teaching is drawn against proffered definitions of what a DiE approach to teaching and learning offers. Comparisons between simulation and amateur drama and theatre activities with a DiE approach are made and a critical, analytical assessment of the potential linkages between DiE and communicative approaches in language teaching and learning is undertaken.

Following consideration of the theoretical underpinnings as presented in the thesis, Chapters 7 and 8 undertake to describe and present the results of an extended, mixed methods research project which seeks to investigate the prevalency of active learning in second level schools in Ireland. Chapter 7 outlines the methodological decisions and choices made and presents an overview of the project undertaken. The results of the data collection exercise over a period of six years is summatively presented, discussed and analysed in Chapter 8 against a backdrop of the literature cited in earlier chapters of the thesis.

Chapter Two

Second Language Acquisition

2.1. Introduction

Every time teachers make decisions about the content of their language lessons or methodology used they are making suppositions about how learners learn languages. Unless they can be sure that these suppositions match the reality of learners' learning processes then they cannot be sure that the teaching-learning situations they set up will foster effective language learning.[1] Classroom language teaching is more likely to be successful if it takes into account what is known about the mechanisms involved in language acquisition.[2] Therefore, in order to understand learners' ways of learning languages, language teachers need to have an understanding of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). With this information they can then evaluate the ways in which they attempt to foster learning in their classrooms.

It is sometimes considered useful to distinguish between 'second' and 'foreign' languages as respectively those that are and are not spoken in the community of which the learner is a member, even if temporarily.[3] However, in this chapter second language (L2) refers to any language that is learned after the learning of one's mother tongue. It refers to the learning of a language naturally, through being surrounded by users of the language, as well as learning it in the classroom. A distinction is sometimes proposed between formal, conscious learning and informal, unconscious acquisition. This distinction has both active supporters[4] and critics[5]. In this work, unless indicated, both terms will be used interchangeably. Thus, L2 acquisition is defined as the way people learn languages other than their mother tongue and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is the study of this.[6] One of the objectives of SLA is to describe how learners acquire their L2.[7] It may, for example, describe how learners build up their grammar or how learners' accents change over time. Another objective of SLA is to examine the influence of external and internal factors to explain why learners acquire their L2 in the way they do.[8]

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[1] R. Ellis, *The Study of Second Language Acquisition.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 4.
[2] D. Little, S. Devitt and D. Singleton. *Learning Foreign Languages from Authentic Texts: Theory and Practice.* Third Printing (Dublin: Authentik, 1994), 1.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] H. Zobl. 'Converging evidence for the 'acquisition-learning' distinction' in *Applied Linguistics Vol. 16* (1995), 35-56.
[5] P. Robinson. 'Individual differences and the fundamental similarity of implicit and explicit adult second language learning' in *Language Learning Vol. 47* (1997), 45-99.
[6] R. Ellis, *Second Language Acquisition.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 3.
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] *Ibid.*

Ellis identifies two ways in which SLA research is useful to the language teacher:

A. To enable teachers to make explicit their assumptions about how languages are learned so they can critically examine these. In this way they can develop their own explicit ideas of how their learners acquire the target language.
B. To furnish teachers with information they can use when they are making pedagogic decisions.[9]

Mitchell and Myles argue that a better knowledge of the language learning process will lead to a better understanding of success and failure in L2 learning with a subsequent 'pay-off for the millions of teachers, and tens of millions of students and other learners, who are struggling with the task'.[10] However, cognisance must be taken of the fact that SLA research does not provide teachers with recipes for successful practice.[11] It does, however, provide insights for teachers by which they can build their own informed theory.[12] Knowledge of SLA enables teachers and educators to take learning and learner-centred viewpoints in their reflections on, and their evaluations of, the selection and organisation of the content and methodologies used in the language class. Long, however, cautions that while current theories of SLA are a potential source of insights into language learning they may be, at least in part, wrong and should therefore be treated with caution. Consequently, theories of language learning should be seen as current attempts to explain interim understandings of language learning but never as the truth about language learning.[13]

SLA research has, from its early days, been a field that has involved a variety of disciplinary perspectives. However, the main theoretical influences have been linguistic and psycholinguistic and this continues to be the case.[14] A second language learning theory aims to explain how the L2 is learned. Depending on what one counts, the literature contains as many as sixty hypotheses, theories, models and theoretical frameworks.[15] A theory may deal with a particular phase of learning or it may be more general in scope. Some theories emphasise the learner's innate characteristics, some give primary importance to the role of the environment in shaping language learning, others seek to integrate innate characteristics and environmental factors to explain how second language acquisition has taken place. No single theoretical position has gained dominance.[16] In this chapter a selection of

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[9] R. Ellis, *The Study of Second Language Acquisition.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 4.
[10] R. Mitchell and F. Myles. *Second Language Learning Theories.* (London: Arnold, 1998), 2.
[11] M. Long. 'Acquisition and Teaching' in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning,* Ed. M. Byram. (London: Routledge, 2000), 5.
[12] R. Ellis, *The Study of Second Language Acquisition.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 4.
[13] M. Long. 'Acquisition and Teaching'. in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning,* Ed. M. Byram. (London: Routledge, 2000), 4.
[14] M. Sharwood Smith. *Second Language Learning: Theoretical Foundations.* (Harlow: Longman, 1994).
[15] M. Long. 'Second language acquisition theories' in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning,* Ed. M. Byram. (London: Routledge, 2000), 528.
[16] R. Mitchell and F. Myles. *Second Language Learning Theories.* (London: Arnold, 1998), x.

approaches and theories that are active and significant in the new millennium are examined. The theories are considered separately under their general approach or family of related second language learning theories. Some of the theories are well established in SLA research yet continue to evolve, for example, Universal Grammar Theory, others are relatively new comers yet offer productive challenge to established thinking, for example, connectionism and socio-cultural theory.

In the following sections individual theoretical perspectives on second language learning are considered in some detail. Section 2 examines the Universal Grammar theory of language learning. Section 3 examines theories on the role of input, output and interaction in second language learning. Section 4 deals with cognitive approaches to second language learning theory and the final sections deal with socio-cultural and socio-linguistic perspectives.

The next section deals with the Universal Grammar approach. This is inspired by contemporary linguistic theory. Linguistic theory in SLA aims to describe the language produced by second language learners and to explain why the language they produce is the way it is. The Universal Grammar approach has been the strongest linguistic influence on second language acquisition research in recent years and has inspired a range of studies, books and articles on SLA.[17]

2.2 The Universal Grammar Theory

The Universal Grammar (UG) model of language acquisition is based on the argument that people demonstrably know aspects of language that they could not have learnt from the fragmentary input to which they have been exposed.[18] This is known as the poverty-of-stimulus argument, or 'Plato's problem'.[19] Chomsky proposed the concept of UG because he believed that children could not learn their first language so quickly, and with such little effort, unless they had an innate faculty to help them.[20] Universal Grammar is the distinct part of the mind common to all humans that enables them to know and acquire languages.[21] Universal Grammar, Chomsky proposes, guides them in their language learning by providing them with a clear set of expectations of the shape the language should take.[22] Language learning is thus highly constrained and this makes it much more manageable for the child: the child's mind turns the language input it encounters into a grammar using its innate capabilities. A grammar or system of language knowledge is created by the human mind and is also constrained by

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[17] R. Mitchell and F. Myles. *Second Language Learning Theories.* (London: Arnold, 1998), 42.
[18] L. White. *Universal Grammar and Second Language Acquisition.* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1989).
[19] V. Cook. *Linguistics and Second language Acquisition.* (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1993), 207.
[20] N. Chomsky. *Lectures on Government and Binding.* (Dordrecht: Foris, 1981).
[21] V. Cook. 'Universal grammar'. in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning,* Ed. M. Byram. (London: Routledge, 2000), 647.
[22] N. Chomsky. *Knowledge of Language: Its Nature, Origin and Use.* (New York: Praeger, 1986).

its structure.[23] Thus, according to Chomsky, 'a language is not, then, a system of rules, but a set of specifications for parameters in an invariant system of principles of Universal Grammar'.[24]

Universal Grammar theory holds that all human beings are born with a universal set of principles and variable settings for parameters that control the shape that human languages can take.[25] Chomsky proposes that the principles are unvarying and apply to all human languages. They are thus the 'universal design features of human language'.[26] The parameters, however, can have a number of open values and they account for differences between languages.[27] The principles are present as part of the UG in the mind and they become attached to the individual's knowledge of a particular language along with values for parameters.[28] Parameters are universal but the values they take vary from one language to the next.[29] A parameter is 'triggered' by something the child hears in the language input.[30] Thus the role of language input is to trigger the appropriate setting for each parameter.[31] All the evidence required to set the parameters must be available in the input to which children are exposed, in other words, in 'positive evidence' rather than through explanation or corrections, 'negative evidence', since this is the only type of input that children everywhere are known to receive.[32]

Although there is general agreement among linguists that children are born with some kind of innate language faculty the position for L2 acquisition is unclear.[33] Universal Grammar theory has not been specially constructed to explain second language acquisition. Nonetheless, L2 learners like mother tongue (L1) learners also have the task of constructing a grammar on the basis of fragmentary language input. However, their needs are different because they already have a mental representation of at least one language and are already successful communicators. In addition they are cognitively mature and therefore have better abilities to problem-solve and to deal with abstract concepts.

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[23] V. Cook. *Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition.* (London: Macmillan, 1993), 1.
[24] N. Chomsky. *The Minimalist Program.* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 388.
[25] N. Chomsky. *Knowledge of Language: Its Nature, Origin and Use.* (New York: Praeger, 1986).
[26] R. Towell and R. Hawkins. *Approaches to Second Language Acquisition.* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 1994), 61.
[27] N. Chomsky. 'Principles and Parameters in Syntactic Theory' in *Explanations in Linguistics, Eds.* N. Hornstein and D. Lightfoot . (London: Longman, 1981).
[28] A. Saleemi. *Universal Grammar and Language Learnability.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 58.
[29] V. Cook. *Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition.* (London: Macmillan, 1993), 201.
[30] *Ibid.:* 202.
[31] *Ibid.*
[32] V. Cook. 'Universal grammar' in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning,* Ed. M. Byram. (London: Routledge, 2000), 648.
[33] W. O'Grady. 'Language acquisition without Universal Grammar: a general nativist proposal for learning' in *Second Language Research Vol. 4* (1996), 374-97.

Mitchell and Myles[34] and Ellis[35] distinguish between a number of possibilities concerning the role of UG in L2 learning:

1. No access hypothesis (also referred to as 'the Fundamental Difference Hypothesis'): L2 learners acquire the L2 grammar without any reference to the UG which atrophies with age.[36] The L2 is therefore learnt through general problem-solving processes.
2. Full access hypothesis: L1 acquisition and L2 acquisition processes are similar with differences being due to cognitive maturity and the needs of the learner.[37]
3. Indirect access hypothesis: UG is indirectly accessed through what the learners know of the L1. The parameters are set for the L1; they are not in a neutral or default state.[38]
4. Partial access hypothesis: some aspects of UG may be available but others are not,[39] for example, the principles might be available but not the full range of the parameters.
5. Dual access hypothesis: adult learners have continued access to UG but also make use of a problem-solving module that competes with and interferes with the language specific module.[40]

If UG constrains L2 acquisition just as it does L1 acquisition, this does not mean that the L2 learner will develop his/her language in exactly the same way as an L1 learner. UG is necessary, but is not sufficient in itself for language acquisition to occur, for example, a deaf child will not develop linguistically in the same way as a hearing child even though both have access to UG.[41] 'Language acquisition, including L2 acquisition, thus depends on more than just UG.' [42] The hypothesis that UG constrains adult L2 acquisition does not mean that adult L2 acquisition will be developmentally identical in all ways to child L1 acquisition. The restriction to positive evidence in L1 learning may not apply to the L2 learner and L2 learners can benefit from forms of negative evidence such as

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[34] R. Mitchell and F. Myles. *Second language Learning Theories.* (London: Arnold, 1998), 61-2.
[35] R. Ellis. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 4th Impression, 1996), 453-5.
[36] J. Meisel. 'The acquisition of the syntax of negation in French and German: contrasting first and second language development' in *Second Language Research Vol. 13* (1997), 227-63.
[37] S. Flynn. 'A Parameter-Setting Approach to Second Language Acquisition' in *Handbook of Second Language Acquisition,* Eds W. Ritchie and T. Bhatia (San Diego: Academic Press, 1996), 121-58.
[38] R. Bley-Vroman. 'What is the Logical Problem of Foreign Language Learning?' in *Linguistic Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition,* Eds. S. Gass and J. Schachter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 41-68.
[39] R. Hawkins and Y. Chan. 'The partial availability of Universal Grammar in second language acquisition: the 'failed functional features hypothesis'' in *Second Language Research Vol. 13* (1997), 187-226.
[40] S. Felix. 'More evidence on competing cognitive systems' in *Second Language Research Vol. 1,* (1985), 47-72.
[41] S. Flynn and Barbara Lust. 'A Minimalist Approach to L2 Solves a Dilemma of UG' in *Portraits of the L2 User,* Ed. V. Cook (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2002), 117.
[42] *Ibid.*

correction.[43] Grammatical explanation may be necessary to help learners overcome barriers that L1 learners do not encounter.[44]

Nonetheless, UG has been useful in describing the language produced by learners, the L2 and the L1. UG has informed an understanding of the stages L2 learners go through and of the systematicity of L2 learners. It has also enabled L2 researchers to draw up a principled view of language transfer/cross-linguistic influence in terms of principles and parameters. However, the Universal Grammar approach studies language as a mental object rather than a social or psychological one. It concerns itself with the developmental route followed by learners when learning the L2 and not with social and psychological variables that affect the learning process. Therefore, it views the individual as an agent for the UG blueprint and not as a social being with varied characteristics. The next section reviews theories that centre on the learner as a social being and on the learner's need to communicate and interact.

2.3.1 Input, output and interaction theories

There is a consensus among theorists of language learning that language input is necessary for normal language learning to occur. It is believed that learners need to interpret and process the language data around them if they are to develop their language competence. In the late 1970s and early '80s Krashen proposed a theory that input, at an optimum level of difficulty, was all that was necessary for language acquisition to occur.[45] This theory became known as the Input Hypothesis.[46]

2.3.2 The Input Hypothesis

The Input Hypothesis states that 'humans acquire language in only one way – by understanding messages or by receiving 'comprehensible input'.[47] Comprehensible input is defined as input that is just beyond the learner's current L2 competence in terms of syntactic complexity. It can be represented by i + 1 where i represents the learner's current level and 1 represents the next step in the learner's developmental sequence.[48] For the learner to progress the input must always be slightly beyond the level at which the learner feels most comfortable. The gap between the i and the i + 1 is bridged by context, world knowledge and extra-linguistic competence.[49] The hypothesis holds that acquisition will occur provided the learner hears meaningful speech and tries to understand it. [50] The

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[43] V. Cook. 'Universal grammar' in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning,* Ed. M. Byram. (London: Routledge, 2000), 648.
[44] *Ibid.*
[45] S. Krashen. *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning.* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1981).
[46] S.D. Krashen and T.D. Terrell. *The Natural Approach.* (New York: Pergamon and Alemany, 1983).
[47] S. Krashen. *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications.* (London: Longman, 1985), 2.
[48] S.D. Krashen and T.D. Terrell. *The Natural Approach.* (New York: Pergamon and Alemany, 1983).
[49] S. Krashen. *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition.* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982), 21.
[50] S. Krashen. *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition.* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982).

Input Hypothesis is central to Krashen's model of L2 acquisition. He argues that learners acquire languages through trying to understand what other people are saying. Active knowledge of how to use the L2 does not come from production. Listening is the crucial activity. The theory claims that 'Speaking is as a result of acquisition and not its cause'.[51] It emerges as a result of a growing competence from comprehensible input.

However, the Input Hypothesis has been criticised for being vague and imprecise. Johnson argues that people rarely know or do not know things in black and white terms and that therefore it is difficult to establish what 'i' is and what '+1' might mean.[52] Mc Laughlin highlights the lack of definition of comprehensible input.[53] It is circular: whatever leads to acquisition must be comprehensible input and therefore comprehensible input is what leads to acquisition. He holds that the theory is impossible to validate since no independently testable definition of what comprehensible input consists of is given. It is therefore impossible to test how it may relate to acquisition.[54]

Comprehensible input is accepted by Swain as important but she argues that comprehensible input is not in itself enough: understanding is not the same as acquiring.[55] On this basis she formulated her Output Hypothesis.

2.3.3 The Output Hypothesis

Swain's Output Hypothesis has as its foundation the idea that understanding language and producing language are different skills.[56] Comprehension of L2 input is often achievable by semantic/pragmatic means so the learner does not have to process the unfamiliar syntax. Production, on the other hand, forces learners to pay attention to the means of expression.[57] Swain holds that production skills can only be developed by pushing learners to produce language through oral work and written work.[58] It is the effort of composing new utterances that forces learners to form new hypotheses about the target

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[51] S. Krashen. *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition.* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982), 21.
[52] K. Johnson. *An Introduction to Foreign Language Learning and Teaching.* (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd., 2001), 94.
[53] B. Mc Laughlin. *Theories of Second-Language Learning.* (London: Edward Arnold, 1987).
[54] *Ibid.:* 36-51.
[55] M. Swain. 'Communicative competence: some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development' in *Input in Second Language Acquisition,* Eds S. Gass and C. Madden (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1985).
[56] *Ibid.*
[57] P. Allen, M. Swain, B. Harley and J. Cummins. 'Aspects of classroom treatment: towards a more comprehensive view of second language education' in *The Development of Bilingual Proficiency.* Cambridge Eds. B. Harley, P.Allen, J. Cummins and M. Swain (Cambridge University Press, 1990).
[58] M. Swain and S. Lapkin. 'Problems in output and the cognitive processes they generate: a step towards second language learning' in *Applied Linguistics Vol. 16 (*1995), 371-391.

grammar and then to try them out.[59] The production of language or output stimulates learners to use the complete grammatical processing needed for accurate language production.[60] In this way they test their ideas about how the target grammar works and are given opportunities to receive positive and negative feedback from their interlocutors. Production also facilitates greater automaticity as a certain amount of practice is required for language use to become routinised.[61] Therefore, new syntactic structures are more likely to result from learners' attempts at L2 production than from struggling to comprehend input.[62] However, production will aid acquisition only when the learners are pushed.[63]

Swain argues that pushed output has three learning functions.[64]

1. A noticing function: during output production learners may notice a gap between what they want to express and what they can express; this may help them to become aware of what they do not know at all and what they partially know.
2. A hypothesis-testing function: learners may use output to test a hypothesis and then following implicit or explicit feedback to alter or accept the hypothesis.
3. A meta-linguistic function: learners' language production helps them to consciously reflect on their target language use, in other words, their output serves a meta-linguistic function which helps them to control and internalise linguistic knowledge. The metatalk is a surfacing of the language used in problem-solving.[65]

Long accepts that output is important but focuses on how the learners' output can alter the input they receive to make it more comprehensible. Thus, Long proposes an extension of Krashen's Input Hypothesis and this has become known as the Interaction Hypothesis.[66]

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[59] B. Harley and M. Swain. 'The interlanguage of immersion students and its implications for second language teaching' in *Interlanguage,* Eds. A. Davies, C. Criper and A.P.R. Howatt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1984).
[60] M. Swain. 'Three functions of output in second language learning' In *Principle and Practice in Applied Linguistics: Studies in Honour of H.G. Widdowson,* Eds. G. Cook and B. Seidlhofer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 125-44.
[61] *Ibid.:* 126.
[62] M. Swain and S. Lapkin. 'Problems in output and the cognitive processes they generate: a step towards second language learning' in *Applied Linguistics Vol. 16* (1995), 371-391.
[63] P. Allen, M. Swain, B. Harley and J. Cummins. 'Aspects of classroom treatment: towards a more comprehensive view of second language education' in *The Development of Bilingual Proficiency,* Eds. B. Harley, P. Allen, J. Cummins and M. Swain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
[64] M. Swain. 'Three functions of output in second language learning' in *Principle and Practice in Applied Linguistics,* Eds. G. Cook and B. Seidlhofer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 126.
[65] M. Swain. 'Focus on form through conscious reflection' in *Focus on Form in Second Language Acquisition* Eds. C. Doughty and J. Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 69.
[66] M. H. Long. 'Native speaker / non-native speaker conversation and the negotiation of comprehensible input' in *Applied Linguistics Vol. 4* (1983), 126-41.

2.3.4 The Interaction Hypothesis

Long agrees that comprehensible input is necessary for language acquisition and he is concerned with how input is made comprehensible.[67] He sees modified interaction as the means by which this happens: input is made comprehensible and processible during negotiation.[68] Negotiation serves as a social process and assists comprehension. When learners attempt to interact their attempts may go wrong and misunderstandings may occur. Those involved in the interaction must then try to repair it by a process known as negotiation of meaning. In order to maximise comprehension and to negotiate communication difficulties, native speakers (NS), in partnership with non-native speakers (NNS), use modifications to input and interaction. These modifications include repetitions and paraphrase, comprehension checks, clarification requests and use of gestures. Long concludes that interaction modifications are particularly important in ensuring the learner receives comprehensible input.[69] Thus, this hypothesis incorporates both input and output.

Studies based on the Interaction Hypothesis have shown that negotiation of meaning takes place in NS – NNS pairings as well as between more and less fluent speakers given the right task conditions.[70] The prime trigger for interactional modification appears to be a perception that the interlocutor is experiencing ongoing comprehension problems.[71] Interactional modification makes input more comprehensible.[72] Comprehension promotes acquisition.[73] Long thus infers that interactional modification must be necessary for language acquisition to occur.[74]

To promote interactional modification learners need opportunities to interact with other speakers in ways that lead them to adapt and modify what they are saying until the learner shows signs of understanding.[75] Long argues that the nature of input can be qualitatively changed through negotiation of meaning between language learners and their interlocutors.[76] When input is negotiated to increase comprehensibility its potential usefulness as input is advanced as it becomes better suited to the

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[67] M.H. Long. 'Linguistic and conversational adjustments to non-native speakers' in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition Vol. 5* (1988), 177-194.
[68] M. H. Long. 'Native speaker / non-native speaker conversation and the negotiation of comprehensible input' in *Applied Linguistics Vol. 4* (1983), 126-41.
[69] *Ibid.*
[70] D. Larsen-Freeman and M.H. Long. *An Introduction to Second Language Acquisition Research.* (Harlow: Longman, 1991), 120-28.
[71] M. H. Long. 'Linguistic and conversational adjustments to non-native speakers' in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition Vol. 5* (1983), 177-93.
[72] T. Pica, R. Young and C. Doughty. 'The impact of interaction on comprehension' in *TESOL Quarterly Vol. 21* (1987), 737-758.
[73] S. Krashen. 'Newmark's ignorance hypothesis and current second language acquisition theory' in *Language Transfer in Language Learning, Eds.* S. Gass and L. Selinker (Rowley, M.A.: Newbury House, 1983), 135-56.
[74] M. H. Long. 'Linguistic and conversational adjustments to non-native speakers' in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition Vol. 5* (1983), 177-93.
[75] M. H. Long. 'Native speaker / non-native speaker conversation and the negotiation of comprehensible input' in *Applied Linguistics Vol. 4* (1983), 126-41.
[76] *Ibid.*

particular learner's developmental level and acquisitional needs.[77] Thus, through interactional modifications, there is a fine-tuning of the L2 input so it becomes better suited to the learner's current state of language development.[78] The input becomes more comprehensible to the learner, while still containing new linguistic elements, thus maximising potential for acquisition.[79] The process enables learners to notice the gap between their interlanguage production and the input received.[80] It also facilitates the learner's awareness of rule application and misapplication[81] and provides feedback to learners on contrasts between the L1 and L2.[82]

Long points out that most studies have taken place in western educational settings and there are few studies of negotiation involving L2 learners in other contexts.[83] Responding to the developing influence within SLA research of Universal Grammar and learnability theory[84] he has reformulated the Interaction Hypothesis placing more emphasis on linking features of input and the linguistic environment with 'learner-internal factors' and explaining how these links may help the L2 learners' subsequent language development.[85]

> 'Negotiation for meaning, and especially negotiation work that triggers interactional adjustments by the NS or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways.'[86]

The new version of the Interaction Hypothesis highlights that negative evidence obtained through negotiation for meaning and from environmental contributions may contribute to L2 learning. Learning may take place during the interaction, or the negotiation may be the initial step in the learning process, a sort of priming device.[87] The notion of selective attention as a means by which input becomes intake is also brought to attention.[88] Thus, language learning is stimulated through

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[77] T. Pica. 'Classroom interaction, participation and comprehension: Redefining relationships' *System Vol. 19* (1991), 437-452.
[78] T. Pica, R. Young and C. Doughty. 'The impact of interaction on comprehension' *TESOL Quarterly Vol. 21* (1987), 737-58.
[79] D. Larsen-Freeman, and M. H.Long. *An introduction to second language acquisition research.* (Harlow: Longman, 1991), 144.
[80] R. Schmidt and S. Frota. 'Developing basic conversational ability in a second language: A case study of an adult learner of Portugese' in *Talking to Learn,* Ed. R. Day (Rowley, M.A.: Newbury House, 1986), 237-326.
[81] M. Tomasello and C. Herron. 'Feedback for language transfer errors' in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition Vol. 11* (1989), 385-395.
[82] M. H. Long. 'The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition' in *Handbook of Language Acquisition (Vol. 2): Second Language Acquisition,* Eds W. C. Ritchie and T. K. Bhatia (New York: Academic Press, 1996), 413-68.
[83] *Ibid.*
[84] S. Pinker. *Learnability and Cognition.* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989).
[85] M. H. Long. 'The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition' in *Handbook of Second Language Acquisition,* Eds. W. C. Ritchie and T. K. Bhatia (San Diego: Academic Press, 1996), 454.
[86] *Ibid.:* 451-2.
[87] S. Gass. *Input, Interaction and the Second Language Learner* (Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997).
[88] *Ibid.:* 414.

communicative pressure by input and interaction.[89] Therefore the three requirements for L2 learning are: positive evidence (input), negative evidence (feedback) and output.[90] Negative evidence and selective attention or focus on form will be discussed in the following two sections.

2.3.5 Negative evidence

Negative evidence refers to the kind of input that enables a learner to realise that a particular form is not acceptable according to the target language norms. In L2 interaction this might be explicit in the form of a formal correction offered by the teacher or implicit in a more formal rephrasing of a learner's utterance offered by a native speaker interlocutor.[91] Theorists arguing for a strongly innatist model of language learning have argued that language is not learnable from an exclusive diet of positive evidence about the language.[92] Positive evidence provides the learner with information on what the target language system does permit but fails to rule out generalisations that can be made from the input received but which are actually incorrect. Studies have shown that active correction contributes to increased accuracy in learners' target language production (see review in Dekeyser, 1993)[93]. Saxton perceives negative evidence to be characterised by an immediate contrast between the error and the correct alternative to the error supplied by the interlocutor.[94] The adjacency of the correct and incorrect forms, she argues, creates a conflict for the learner which draws the learner's attention to the deviant form. Due to memory limitations negative evidence can most likely not apply to long stretches of discourse[95] but may be effective with pronunciation or basic meaning of lexical items.[96] Lyster and Ranta suggest that interactive negative feedback modes such as clarification requests and metalinguistic feedback are most effective in pushing learners to amend their hypotheses about the L2 structure.[97] Spada and Lightbown also hold that regular incidental, contextualised

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[89] S.M. Gass. 'Input and Interaction' in *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition,* Eds. C. Doughty and M. Long. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 224.
[90] *Ibid.:* 241.
[91] S. Gass. 'Input and Interaction' in *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition,* Eds. C. Doughty and M. Long (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003).
[92] S. Pinker. *Learnability and Cognition.* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989).
[93] R.M. Dekeyser. 'The effect of error correction on L2 grammar knowledge and oral proficiency' in *Modern Languages Journal Vol. 77* (1993), 501-14.
[94] M. Saxton. 'The contrast theory of negative input' in *Journal of Child language Vol. 24* (1997), 155.
[95] J. Philp. *Interaction, noticing and second language acquisition: an examination of learners' noticing of recasts in task-based interaction.* (Ph.D. dissertation. University of Tasmania, 1999). Cited in S.M. Gass. 'Input and Interaction' in *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition,* Eds. C. Doughty and M. Long. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 248.
[96] S. Gass. 'Input and Interaction' in *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition,* Eds. C. Doughty and M. Long (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 248.
[97] R. Lyster and E. Ranta. 'Corrective feedback and learner uptake: negotiation of form in communicative classrooms' in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition 19* (1997), 37-61.

negative feedback will enable learners to form correct utterances.[98] Supporting their findings Trahey argues that a mix of both positive and negative evidence may be required for acquisition to occur.[99]

2.3.6 Focus on form

Recent versions of the Interaction Hypothesis have tried to incorporate the notion that learners' processing capacities and their degree of attention to matters of form may influence the extent to which L2 input becomes incorporated into the learner's developing L2 system, i.e., becomes intake. In sharp contrast with Krashen's views[100], researchers such as Sharwood Smith[101] and Schmidt[102] have argued that the role of unconscious learning has been exaggerated and that if acquisition is to take place then learners need to pay some degree of attention to language forms. This is supported by examples of incomplete acquisition on Canadian Immersion Programmes despite being surrounded by seemingly rich input.[103] Swain shows that language learners who are focusing on meaning may not be able to attend to form at the same time.[104] Studies of these programmes conclude that analytic focus and experiential focus are complementary and may provide essential support for one another in second language teaching and learning.[105] If understanding meaning takes a lot of processing space then linguistic forms will not be attended to or noticed at the same time. Therefore, Lightbown argues that there is a need to introduce form-focused teaching as part of the programme.[106]

Schmidt argues that there are distinguishable types of attention learners might give to language forms. He uses the term 'noticing' to refer to the process of voluntary or involuntary registering the occurrence of a stimulus, for example, noticing the odd spelling of a new vocabulary word.[107] This involves something more than attention since it has to have a set of expectations against which to compare the feature that surprises us. It allows us to be aware of features we do or do not understand.

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[98] N. Spada and P. Lightbown. 'Instruction and the development of questions in L2 classrooms' in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition Vol. 15* (1993), 205-24.
[99] M. Trahey. 'Positive evidence in second language acquisition: some long-term effects' *Second Language Research Vol. 12* (1996), 111-39.
[100] S. Krashen. *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning.* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1981).
[101] M. Sharwood Smith. 'Input enhancement in instructed SLA: theoretical bases' in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition Vol. 15* (1993), 165-79.
[102] R. Schmidt. 'Deconstructing consciousness in search of useful definitions for applied linguistics' in *AILA Review Vol. 11* (1994), 11-26.
[103] M. Swain and S. Lapkin. *Evaluating Bilingual Education: A Canadian Case Study* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1982).
[104] M. Swain. 'Communicative competence: Some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development' in *Input in Second Language Acquisition,* Eds. S. Gass and C. Madden (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1985).
[105] P. Allen, M. Swain, B. Harley and J. Cummins. 'Aspects of classroom treatment: towards a more comprehensive view of second language education' in *The Development of Second Language Proficiency,* Eds. B. Harley, P. Allen, J. Cummins and M. Swain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 62.
[106] P. M. Lightbown. 'Process-product research on second language learning in classrooms' in *The Development of Second Language Proficiency,* Eds. B. Harley, P. Allen, J. Cummins and M. Swain. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
[107] R. Schmidt. 'Deconstructing consciousness in search of useful definitions for applied linguistics' in *AILA Review Vol. 11* (1994), 17.

He posits the view that the more one notices the more one learns.[108] Noticing accounts for the features of input that are attended to and so become intake. For noticed input to become intake learners must compare what they have observed in input with what they are producing based on their current interlanguage system, i.e. they must notice the gap.[109]

Schmidt uses the terms understanding and awareness for explicit knowledge: 'awareness of a rule or generalisation'.[110] It is through this aspect that learners develop systems of monitoring and controlling their own resources. He argues that consciousness raising and input enhancement through combinations of metalinguistic commentary, negative feedback and heightened saliency for L2 target items may be useful for effective classroom learning of at least some parts of the target language system.[111] Negotiation and modification of input, whether from positive or negative evidence, may help to make features of the target language more noticeable, thus heightening the learner's awareness of the relationships between form and meaning.[112]

Negotiation and modification of input provide feedback through target-like models, recasts and reduced repetitions of utterances. These target-like models facilitate the learner's production of modified output.[113] The recasts reformulate and expand the learner's incorrect utterances.[114] The reduced repetitions draw learner's attention to the error made. A context is provided for the learner's production of modified output especially when signals are clarification requests and open questions.[115] As learners attempt to modify their output to make it more comprehensible, their L2 coding becomes more elaborate.[116] Explicit knowledge allows learners to notice features in input that they would otherwise miss and to compare what they notice with what they produce.[117]

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[108] R. Schmidt. 'Deconstructing consciousness in search of useful definitions for applied linguistics' in *AILA Review Vol. 11* (1994), 17.
[109] R. Schmidt and S. Frota. 'Developing basic conversational ability in a second language: a case study of an adult learner' in *Talking to Learn: Conversation in Second Language Acquisition,* Ed. R. R. Day (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1986), 237-322.
[110] R. Schmidt. 'Deconstructing consciousness in search of useful definitions for applied linguistics', *AILA Review 11,* (1994): 18.
[111] *Ibid.:* 174-81.
[112] T. Pica. 'Research on negotiation: what does it reveal about second language learning conditions, processes and outcomes?', Language Learning 44, 1994: 493-527.
[113] T. Pica. 'Second language learning through interaction: Multiple perspectives' in *Contemporary Approaches to Second Language Acquisition in Social Contexts,* Ed. V. Regan. (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1998): 15.
[114] T. Pica. 'Do second language learners need negotiation?', *International Review of Applied Linguistics 34,* (1996): 1-21.
[115] T. Pica. 'Classroom interaction, participation and comprehension: Redefining relationships', *System 19,* (1991): 437-452.
[116] T. Pica. 'Second language learning through interaction: Multiple perspectives' in *Contemporary Approaches to Second Language Acquisition in Social Contexts,* Ed. V. Regan. (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1998): 13.
[117] R. Schmidt and S. Frota. 'Developing basic conversational ability in a second language: a case study of an adult learner' in *Talking to Learn: Conversation in Second Language Acquisition.* (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1986.)

Research in this area has thrown much light on the circumstances and the process by which interlocutors will negotiate meaning. It has examined and made explicit the types of modifications which take place and their effects on the language learning process. It has shown that L2 learners need positive and negative feedback as well as opportunities for pushed output. This next section examines some cognitive approaches to second language learning (SLL). Cognitive approaches to SLL are primarily interested in the learning component learning dimension of second language learning.

2.4.1 Cognitive approaches

Cognitive SLA researchers do not believe that language learning is separate from other aspects of cognition.[118] Thus, they propose that by better understanding how the brain processes and learns new information, the SLA process can be better understood.[119] Before dealing with cognitive approaches the related concept of interlanguage will first be examined.

2.4.2 Interlanguage

In the late 1960s and early 1970s Roger Browne studied the acquisition of grammatical morphemes in child first language development. He found that children acquired them in remarkably similar sequences.[120] A series of investigations in the 1970s set out to determine whether there is a 'natural sequence' in acquisition of second language grammar.[121] Dulay and Burt, studying learners in a non-instructional environment, found that learners from different first language backgrounds acquire a set of grammatical items in the same order.[122] Other investigations involving adults revealed the same conclusions: second language learners pass through stages of acquisition that are very similar to first language learners.[123] This means that certain features of language are manifested early in the learning process and others occur much later.[124] These developmental sequences are similar across a range of language learners regardless of their first language.[125] There are differences due to the learners' first language but the differences are less striking than the similarities.[126] Thus, researchers concluded that it was the nature of the language being learned that determined the order of acquisition.[127] Further

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[118] K. Johnson. *Language Teaching and Skill Learning.* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996:), 77.
[119] *Ibid.*
[120] R. Browne, *A First Language: The Early Stages*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973).
[121] R. Towell and R. Hawkins. *Approaches to Second language Acquisition.* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd. 1994), 23.
[122] H. Dulay and M. Burt. 'Should we teach children syntax?' *Language Learning 23,* (1973).
[123] N. Bailey, C. Madden and S. Krashen. 'Is there a "natural sequence" in adult second language learning?' *Language Learning 21*, (1974): 235-43.
[124] P.M. Lightbown and N. Spada. *How Languages are Learned.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 4th impression), 76.
[125] D. Larsen-Freeman and M. Long, *An Introduction to Second language Acquisition Research.* (London: Longman, 1991).
[126] J. Schuman, 'The acquisition of English negation by speakers of Spanish: a review of the literature', in *The Acquisitional Use of Spanish and English as First and Second Languages.* Ed. R.W. Anderson (Washington D.C.: TESOL, 1979).
[127] *Ibid.*

studies to see if this 'natural order' of acquisition could be changed by instruction showed that knowledge of grammatical rules did not guarantee that learners would be able to apply these rules in communication.[128]

'Mastery' of a language is gradable, there are degrees of knowing and a learner can partially know a linguistic rule. The name given to learners' developing second language knowledge is 'interlanguage'.[129] It refers to the internal grammatical system that a learner has constructed at any given time.[130] Each stage of progress constitutes an interlanguage. Cognitive theories of interlanguage hold that learners use learning strategies to build mental grammars of the target language.[131] Learners then draw on these mental grammars to comprehend and produce language. The series of interconnected stages that characterise the learner's progress over time are called the 'interlanguage continuum'.[132] The theory of interlanguage holds that learners are involved in a continual process of hypothesis formation and testing.[133] Each grammar contains competing or concurrent hypotheses and this accounts for variability in the learner's performance. These mental grammar systems are dynamic and constantly changing through continuous recreation and restructuring.[134] Thus the interconnected stages overlap because each interlanguage is subject to constant revision.[135] Although the rules may deviate from the target language rules they have a degree of internal consistency.

Interlanguages are systematic and rule governed.[136] They should be viewed as systems in their own right and not as incorrect versions of 'native' speaker language.[137] The rules in the learner's mental grammar represent the learner's hypotheses about the target language. Each grammar builds on the grammar that preceded it. Therefore the interlanguage is characterised by 'complexification' as each grammar is more complex than the one that preceded it.[138] The interlanguage is thus seen to consist of a series of overlapping grammars, where each shares elements of the previously constructed grammar but with new or revised rules. Learners draw on their L1 to help them hypothesise and gradually restructure it as they see how it differs from the target language (TL). They start with a simplified

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[128] S. Krashen, *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning.* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1981).
[129] L. Selinker, 'Interlanguage', *International Review of Applied Linguistics 10,* (1972): 209-31.
[130] R. Towell and R. Hawkins. *Approaches to Second language Acquisition.* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd. 1994), 23.
[131] R. Ellis. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 352.
[132] *Ibid.:* 350.
[133] R. Cherrington. 'Interlanguage', in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning.* Ed. M. Byram. (London: Routledge, 2000), 308.
[134] S.P. Corder 'Language-learner language' in *Understanding Second and Foreign Language Learning: Issues and Approaches.* Ed. J. Richards. (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1978).
[135] R. Ellis. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 352.
[136] R. Cherrington. 'Interlanguage', *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning.* Ed. M. Byram. (London: Routledge, 2000), 308.
[137] S. McDonough. *Applied Linguistics in Language Education.* (London: Arnold, 2002), 58.
[138] R. Ellis. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 352.

version of the L1 which is gradually complexified.[139] The interlanguage system is permeable in the sense that the rules that constitute the learner's knowledge at any given moment are subject to amendment.[140]

Errors are conclusive evidence that learners do not simply learn rules about the target language and then reproduce them in their language production.[141] They show that learners construct their own rules on the basis of the language input received and that sometimes these rules differ from target language rules. The errors are evidence of internal processing of the language.[142] Errors are variable but this does not reject the idea that they are rule-based. Learners are most likely to produce errors in one context but not in another. Ellis identifies two types of contextual variation[143]:

1. Learners use their knowledge of the L2 differently in different situations. When they are under pressure to communicate without time to maximise their existing knowledge of the L2 then they are more likely to produce errors than if they had time to monitor their production.
2. Learners will produce errors in one type of sentence but not in another.

Thus evaluating L2 performance in terms of target language grammar is unsatisfactory as the learner draws systematically on his/her own interlanguage grammar.[144]

L2 learners do not generally reach the same level of competence as the L1 learner.[145] They tend not to reach the end of their interlanguage continuum attaining a plateau in their language learning beyond which they do not progress. Selinker referred to the tendency of many learners to stop developing their interlanguage in the direction of the L2 as fossilisation.[146] They stop learning when their interlanguage contains some rules that are different to the target language system. Non target forms become fixed in the interlanguage with certain rules and items fossilised. Extended exposure to the target language will not necessarily alter fossilised items nor will extended teaching or learning.[147] Fossilised forms result from the learner's own cognitive processes in SLA and not from imitation.[148] It

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[139] S.P. Corder. ' "Simple codes" and the source of the learner's initial heuristic hypothesis', *Studies in Second Language Acquisition 1*: 1-10.
[140] P.M. Lightbown and N. Spada. *How Languages are Learned , 4th edition.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 74.
[141] R. Ellis. *Understanding Second language Acquisition.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 9.
[142] R. Ellis. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 352.
[143] R. Ellis. *Understanding Second language Acquisition.*(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 9.
[144] V. Cook. 'The analogy between first and second language learning' in *Toward a Cognitive Approach to Second Language Acquisition.* Ed. R. Langton. (Philidelphia, Penn.: Center for Curriculum Development, 1971).
[145] R. Ellis. *Understanding Second language Acquisition.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 48.
[146] L. Selinker, 'Interlanguage' in *International Review of Applied Linguistics 10,* (1972): 209-31.
[147] R. Cherrington. 'Interlanguage', in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning.* Ed. M. Byram. (London: Routledge, 2000), 308.
[148] *Ibid.*

is not the case that learners are incapable of producing the correct L2 form but their interlanguage form is the norm that they resort to especially when under pressure to communicate and when the desire to communicate is strong.[149]

The application of the interlanguage theory is based on the belief that language teaching must work with the natural learning processes that teaching and teaching materials must adapt to the learner rather than vice-versa.[150] The crucial insight contributed to SLA research by Selinker's interlanguage concept is that an explanation is sought in the processes and properties of the mind.[151] He assumes an independent grammar and also a psychological mechanism for creating and using it.[152] Interlanguage theory has promoted the development of SLA research by advancing the notion that learners have their own mental grammars that they draw on when producing in the target language.[153] The term interlanguage is now used by theorists from different backgrounds and is thus almost theory neutral.[154] The systematic, staged development proposed by interlanguage studies form the basis for Pienemann's Learnability/Teachability Theory.

2.4.3 Learnability/Teachability Theory

Learnability theory comes from the fact that regardless of the learning context learners follow a systematic, staged development in their acquisition of certain grammatical structures which is independent of the L1 and the type of input received.[155] Thus Pienemann holds that certain linguistic structures, for example, basic sentence word order, can only be learned when previous steps on the developmental route have been taken; instruction cannot change the 'natural' developmental course.[156] The underlying cause of the staged development may be based on learner's developing ability to unconsciously analyse and organise certain elements in the language input.[157]

Exploring the pedagogical implications of the learnability theory, Pienemann[158] concludes that by observing the L2 learners' productions and locating them on the developmental route for a given structure the teacher can then predict what the learner is ready to learn next. Thus in his teachability

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[149] R. Cherrington. 'Interlanguage', in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning*. Ed. M. Byram. (London: Routledge, 2000), 308.
[150] P. Corder, 'The study of interlanguage' in *Error Analysis and Interlanguage.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).
[151] V. Cook. *Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition.* (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1993), 19.
[152] *Ibid.*
[153] R. Ellis. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 354.
[154] *Ibid.*
[155] H. Dulay, M. Burt and S. Krashen. *Language Two.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 207-9.
[156] M. Pienemann. 'Determining the influence of instruction on L2 speech processing'. AILA Review 5, (No.1, 1988): 40-72.
[157] J. Meisel, H. Clahsen and M. Pienemann. 'On determining developmental stages in natural second language acquisition'. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition 3,* (1981): 109-35.
[158] M. Pienemann. 'Learnability and syllabus construction' in *Modelling and Assessing Second Language Acquisition*. Eds K. Hyltenstam and M. Pienemann. (Clevedon, Somerset: Muitilingual Matters, 1985), 23-75.

dimension of the hypothesis, Pieneman[159] proposes that explicit teaching of a particular structure can only be effective if the learners have climbed the necessary steps on the developmental route. Doughty has shown that when learners are seen to be at a particular developmental stage then teaching of certain linguistic structures can speed up the acquisition process.[160] However, it is believed that certain other aspects of language, for example, vocabulary, can be taught at any time. A learner's success in learning these will depend on factors such as motivation and the type of instruction received.[161] Pienemann's hypothesis is interesting because it is one of the few that attempts to assess the pedagogical implications of its research.

The next section examines the Connectionists who attribute greater importance to the role of the environment than to any innate knowledge in the learner.

2.4.4 Connectionism

Connectionists do not hypothesise the existence of a neurological module designed for language learning alone.[162] They argue that what is innate is simply the ability to learn. Connectionism is also known as Parallel Distributed Processing (PDP). It likens the brain to a computer that has neural networks or clusters of connections between information nodes. These connections can be improved or weakened through activation or non-activation respectively. Learning is believed to occur on the basis of associative processes rather than by the construction of abstract rules. Connectionism believes the human mind to be predisposed towards looking for associations between information nodes. As associations recur the connections become stronger, and as they become more numerous, they become part of a larger network of connections.

Connectionists see input as the principle source of linguistic knowledge with learners being sensitive to regularities in the language input.[163] While looking for the regular co-occurrence of particular language forms learners draw probabilistic patterns on the basis of these regularities. Through repeatedly hearing or seeing language features in specific situational or linguistic contexts, learners develop neurological connections between these elements.[164] As these patterns become strengthened

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[159] M. Pienemann. 'Is language teachable? Psycholinguistic experiments and hypotheses'. *Applied Linguistics 10*, (1989): 52-79.
[160] C. Doughty. 'Second language instruction does make a difference: Evidence from an empirical study of SL relativization'. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition 13/4*, 1991: 413-69.
[161] P. M. Lightbown and N. Spada. *How Languages are Learned.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999): 135.
[162] J. L. Elman, E.A. Bates, M.H. Johnson, A. Karmiloff-Smith, D. Parisi and K. Plunkett. *Rethinking Innateness: A Connectionist Perspective on Development*. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996).
[163] *Ibid.*
[164] M. Gasser. 'Connectionism and universals of second language acquisition'. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition 12*, (1990): 179-99.

by repeated activation, learning occurs.[165] Thus linguistic knowledge is developed through the construction of associative processes and not through the learning of rules.[166] The learner does not extract rules and then apply them. He/she registers associative patterns that become strengthened with use.[167] For example, learners might get the subject-verb agreement correct not because he/she knows the rule but because examples of 'I say' 'He says' have been heard so often that each subject pronoun causes the correct verb form to be activated.[168] Thus, connectionism holds that rule-like behaviour does not imply rule-governed behaviour.

The next section reviews an approach that has its origins in processing models from cognitive psychology.[169] The model examines how practice enables learners to process language input to lead to automatisation.

2.4.5 McLaughlin's information processing model

The underlying principle of this model is that complex behaviour builds on simple processes. These processes are modular and can be studied independently of one another.[170] The approach views L2 learning as the acquisition of a complex cognitive skill.[171] It is a skill because aspects of the task must be practised and then integrated into a fluent performance. This means that component subskills must be automatised. It is a cognitive process because it is believed to involve internal processes that regulate and guide. As performance improves there is a constant restructuring of internal representation as learners simplify, unify and gain increased control over them.[172]

Automatisation and restructuring are central to the information processing model. Automatisation is based on the notion that the way in which we process information may be either controlled or automatic.[173] Learning involves a shift from the controlled processing of information to automatic processing.[174] Language learners first engage in controlled processing of the L2: they have to pay attention to any aspect of the language that they are trying to understand or produce. Their efforts are

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[165] M. E. Sokolik and M. Smith. 'Assignment of gender to French nouns in primary and secondary language: a connectionist model'. *Second Language Research 8,* (1992): 39-58.
[166] N. Ellis. 'Sequencing in SLA: phonological memory, chunking and points of order'. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition 18*, (1996): 91-126.
[167] N. Ellis and R. Schmidt. 'Morphology and longer distance dependencies: laboratory research illuminating the A in SLA'. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition 19,* (1997): 145-171.
[168] P. M. Lightbown and N. Spada. *How Languages are Learned.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 42.
[169] R. Shiffrin and N. Schneider. 'Controlled and automatic human information processing: II. Perceptual learning, automatic attending and a general theory'. *Psychology Review 84,* (1977): 127-90.
[170] B. McLaughlin and J.L.C. Heredia. 'Information-processing approaches to research on second language acquisition and use'. In *Handbook of Second Language Acquisition.* Eds W.C. Ritchie and T.K. Bhatia, (San Diego: Academic Press, 1996): 213-28.
[171] B. McLaughlin. *Theories of Second Language Learning.* (London: Edward Arnold, 1987),133.
[172] *Ibid.:* 134.
[173] R. Shiffrin and N. Schneider. 'Controlled and automatic human information processing. II: perceptual learning, automatic, attending, and a general theory'. *Psychological Review 84*, (1977): 127-190.
[174] *Ibid.*

constrained by the limitations of the short-term memory (STM). To maximise their information processing ability learners routinise skills. This helps them to reduce the burden on their information processing capacity. Through experience and practice the sequences that were produced by controlled processing become automatic. They are then stored in the long-term memory to be available when required with minimal attentional control by the learner. This frees the learners to focus on what they are saying, not how they are saying it, as well as on other aspects of the target language that will, in turn, gradually become automatic.[175]

Information processing is also extended through restructuring. There is a continuing movement from controlled processing to automatic processing of the L2. This results in a constant restructuring of the L2 learner's linguistic system: quantitative changes in the interlanguage. The restructuring destabilises some structures in the interlanguage that previously seemed to have been acquired, leading to the temporary reappearance of L2 errors.[176]

The next section deals with another model that attributes a central role to practice leading to automatisation .

2.4.6 Anderson's ACT (adaptive control of thought) model

This is not unlike McLaughlin's model in that practice leading to automatisation plays a central role. It is a general cognitive model of skill acquisition and can therefore be applied to the aspects of L2 learning that need proceduralisation or automatisation.[177] It involves declarative knowledge ('knowledge that') becoming procedural knowledge ('knowledge how'). His model conceptualises automatisation, which he calls the knowledge compilation stage, as the process of converting declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge.[178] He argues that the move from declarative to procedural knowledge takes place in three stages.[179]

1. The Cognitive Stage: a description of the procedure is learned, for example, the teacher gives an explanation of how a particular tense is formed.
2. The Associative Stage: a way to perform the skill is worked out by the learner.
3. The Autonomous Stage: the skill becomes more automatic.

Thus, after language rules have been taught the learner is more aware of them. Their knowledge of them is declarative. They produce the L2 using the rules they have learned. With practice they may come to produce language without having to recourse to the rules they have learned. The class-taught

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[175] B. McLaughlin. *Theories of Second Language Learning.* (London: Edward Arnold, 1987).
[176] B. McLaughlin. 'Restructuring'. *Applied Linguistics 11*, (1990): 113-28.
[177] K. Johnson. *Language Teaching and Skill Learning.* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).
[178] J.R. Anderson. *The Architecture of Cognition.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983).
[179] J.R. Anderson. *Cognitive Psychology and its Implications, 2nd edn.* (New York: Freeman, 1985).

declarative knowledge thus becomes procedural in form.[180] The learner's speech becomes more fluent as more knowledge becomes proceduralised and is thus more easily and more rapidly accessed. The central tenet is that learners begin with declarative knowledge which slowly becomes proceduralised through practice. The problem with Anderson's model is the implied position[181] taken by him that all or most of the L2 grammar is initially learned through the explicit teaching of rules followed by the learner.[182]

The next section examines how the ACT Model has been applied to learning strategies.

2.4.7 Learning strategies

Learning strategies facilitate learning and may thus be seen as procedures that the learner employs to maximise the effectiveness of his/her language learning. Strategies are thus a proceduralising mechanism for the more efficient processing of comprehension.[183] Little defines them as being '... any action that language learners perform in order to increase their target language proficiency'.[184] Strategies, like any other complex cognitive skill, have to be learned. O'Malley and Chamot[185] consider that learning strategies can be represented as procedural knowledge that may be conscious in the early stages of learning and later performed without the learner's conscious awareness.[186] They see them as 'a set of productions that are compiled and fine-tuned until they become procedural knowledge'.[187] Thus learning strategies can be practised to become proceduralised more quickly, thereby freeing the working memory for other aspects of learning.

Learning strategies can be divided into three categories: metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies.[188] Metacognitive strategies are used to plan, organise, monitor and evaluate own's own learning and thus to understand one's own learning processes, for example, intermittently summarising what one has heard to ensure that the information has been retained. Cognitive strategies are used to create, strengthen and develop mental associations between the new and the known, for example, using text or discourse features to understand the meaning. Oxford distinguishes between 'direct strategies for dealing with new language', for example, cognitive strategies, and 'indirect

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[180] J.R. Anderson. *Cognitive Psychology and its Implications, 2nd edn.* (New York: Freeman, 1985).
[181] *Ibid.:* 224.
[182] D. Mohle and M. Raupach. Language Transfer of Procedural Knowwledge, in *Transfer in Language Productions.* Eds. H.W. Dechert and M. Raupach (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 1989): 195-216.
[183] R. Towell and R. Hawkins. *Approaches to Second Language Acquisition.* (Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters, 1994), 251.
[184] D. Little. 'Strategies of language learning', in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning.* Ed. M. Byram (London: Routledge, 2000), 579-81.
[185] J. O' Malley and A. Chamot. *Learning Strategies in Second language Acquisition.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 46.
[186] *Ibid.:* 52.
[187] *Ibid.:* 43.
[188] *Ibid.*

strategies for general management of learning', for example, metacognitive strategies.[189] Like O'Malley and Chamot, Oxford also has a category of affective strategies for controlling emotions and motivation as well as social strategies used for learning with other people.[190] Social and affective strategies concern the ways in which learners decide to interact with other learners and native speakers. They can be used to increase enjoyment in language learning. However, Little highlights that distinctions between strategy types, though seemingly clear-cut, can mislead as in practice they often overlap with communicative or language use strategies.[191] He further argues that since metacognition is part of cognition, it is difficult to draw a line between cognitive and metacognitive strategies.[192] Oxford acknowledges the overlap between learning and communicative strategies but argues that learning often results from communicative strategies even if learning is not the primary aim and that thus it is useful to maintain the theoretical distinction between the two.[193]

In addition to its application to learning strategies the ACT model has also been incorporated into Towell and Hawkins' model of learning to describe how fluency develops.[194]

2.4.8 Fluency development in second language acquisition

Towell and Hawkins endeavour to integrate how learners learn the L2 system with how they learn to use it. To explain why certain grammatical features occur before others and why learners go through rather rigid stages in their acquisition of the L2, their model starts from the basis of a Universal Grammar (UG).[195] The model attempts to reconcile UG derived hypotheses about the L2 structure with what happens to these hypotheses during the processes of language learning and use. Thus, their model makes links between linguistic and cognitive approaches to the study of L2 learning.

Learners' internally derived hypotheses about the L2 structure, shaped by the UG and their L1, are stored in the mind in different ways at different stages of the learning process.[196] They are first stored in the declarative long-term memory. This 'declarative' knowledge may be either implicit or explicit. When it is put to use, if hypotheses are confirmed by external data, then it becomes stored in the procedural long-term memory in associative form. It may then be revised causing some re-organisation of the declarative knowledge leading to other revised productions. After successive re-

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[189] R. Oxford. *Language Learning Strategies.* (New York: Newbury House, 1990), 14.
[190] R. Oxford Ed. *Language Learning Strategies Across the World: Cross Cultural Perspectives.* (Manoa: University of Hawaii Press, 1996).
[191] D. Little. 'Strategies of language learning', in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning.* Ed. M. Byram (London: Routledge, 2000), 579.
[192] *Ibid.*
[193] R. Oxford. 'Communicative Strategies' in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning.*(Ed. M. Byram. (London: Routledge, 2000), 130.
[194] R. Towell and R. Hawkins. *Approaches to Second Language Acquisition.* (Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters, 1994), 249.
[195] *Ibid.:* 246.
[196] *Ibid.:* 247.

organisations the productions become automatised and thus free from attentional control. They are then stored in the autonomous part of the procedural memory.[197]

A formula that has been learned as a routine, for example 'What's your name?' can be stored initially in declarative memory as an unanalysed whole. If it can be remembered for use in a given context it may be moved to the procedural memory at associative level. Later it may be sent to declarative memory to be analysed and re-analysed under controlled processes to see if it can be re-organised in accordance with what the learner now knows about the L2. It may then finally be stored as autonomous procedures or returned to procedural memory for continued availability as an unanalysed routine.[198]

Explicit rules, for example, verb conjugations are learned and stored in the procedural long-term memory but they will only be recalled in the form in which they were learned. The learner then has to extract the relevant information from them and this takes time. They can be sent back to the declarative memory to undergo a controlled process of analysis through interactions with internally derived hypotheses. Thus they may eventually be available for autonomous language productions.[199]

Learning strategies involve the use of proceduralising mechanisms for faster processing of linguistic input. These mechanisms do not appear to be dependent on or need to interact with internal hypotheses.[200]

Cognitive approaches to SLA have enriched our understanding of how learners use and process language and the development of fluency. They have highlighted the processes involved in speeding up the acquisition process. However, despite the efforts of connectionist models, these approaches do not explain adequately the route followed by L2 learners: what the mental grammars of learners consist of and what constrains learners' hypotheses about the language system.

The following two sections examine language learning in social terms. In contrast to those who value interaction through the target language as a source of 'input' for internal learning mechanisms,[201] the

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[197] R. Towell and R. Hawkins. *Approaches to Second Language Acquisition.* (Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters, 1994), 250.
[198] *Ibid.:* 251.
[199] *Ibid.*
[200] *Ibid.*
[201] T. Pica. 'Research on negotiation: What does it reveal about second language learning conditions, processes and outcomes?', *Language Learning 44*, (1994): 493-527.

theorists examined in these sections view interaction as constituting the learning process: they hold the language learning process to be essentially social in nature.[202]

2.5.1 Socio-cultural perspectives

Socio-culturists view dialogic communication or collaborative talk as being central to the joint construction of knowledge including knowledge of language forms.[203] The socio-cultural perspective sees knowledge as being initially developed inter-mentally after which it is appropriated and internalised by the individual. This view of language learning has been given new impetus by the work of Lev S. Vygotsky.[204]

2.5.2 Mediation

The most fundamental concept of sociocultural theory is that the human mind is mediated.[205] Vygotsky argued that just as humans do not act directly on the physical world but use tools to change it and the circumstances under which they live, symbolic tools are used to mediate and change the nature of our relationships with others and with ourselves.[206] Vygotsky held that all higher forms of mental activity in humans are mediated by symbolic means.[207] Symbolic tools enable humans to organise and control mental processes. Included in symbolic tools are numbers and arithmetic systems, music, art and language.[208] From a Vygotskian perspective, language is the prime symbolic tool available for the mediation of mental activity: language is a tool for thought.[209]

The skilled individual carries out tasks and activities autonomously by self-regulation. However, the unskilled individual learns by carrying out tasks and activities under the guidance of more skilled individuals through other-regulation.[210] Thus, successful learning involves a shift from inter-mental activity to intra-mental activity. This learning is typically mediated by language.[211] The learner is inducted into a shared consciousness through supportive dialogue until he/she appropriates the new skills or concepts to his/her consciousness.[212] Thus, the directive, communicative speech of the collaborating other becomes transformed into self-directive, inner speech. The learner should then be

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[202] E.M. Hatch. 'Discourse analysis and second language acquisistion' in *Second language Acquisition: A Book of Readings*. Ed. E.M. Hatch. (Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1978), 401-35.
[203] J. P. Lantolf and G. Appel. *Vygotskian Approaches to Second Language Research.* (Norwood, N. J.: Ablex, 1994).
[204] L.S. Vygotsky. *Thought and Language.* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1962.)
[205] J.P. Lantolf. 'Introducing sociocultural theory', in *Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning. Ed.* J.P. Lantolf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1.
[206] L.S. Vygotsky. *Thought and Language.* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1962).
[207] J. P. Lantolf. 'Introduction to the Special Issue'. *Modern Language Journal 78*, (1994): 418-20.
[208] J.P. Lantolf. 'Introducing sociocultural theory', in *Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning.* Ed. J.P. Lantolf . (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000): 1.
[209] L.S. Vygotsky. *Thought and Language.* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1962).
[210] *Ibid.*
[211] *Ibid.*
[212] *Ibid.*

more capable of regulating his/her own performance on another similar occasion. This process of collaborative talk which serves to lead the learner through successive steps in problem solving or internalisation of knowledge has become known as scaffolding.[213] For Vygotsky thought is essentially internalised language and language develops entirely from social interaction between individuals.[214]

Vygotsky assumed that learning begins from the starting point of the learner's existing knowledge and develops through social interaction. This was made explicit in his idea of the 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD).[215] The ZPD is the domain of knowledge where the learner cannot carry out tasks or activities independently but can do so successfully if given appropriate scaffolding. Vygotsky defined the ZPD as:

> '...the distance between the actual development 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 able peers.'[216]

Thus in a supportive, interactive environment the learner can advance to a higher level of knowledge and performance than he/she would be able to do if working alone.

2.5.3 Application of socio-cultural theory to second language learning

Vygotsky holds that all cognitive development, including language development, arises as a result of social interactions.[217] The same learning mechanisms apply to language learning as to learning other knowledge and skills: all learning is seen as being first social and then individual.[218] Learners are viewed as being actively involved in their own learning which they shape through their choice of goal and operations.

Sociocultural theorists[219] assume that language acquisition takes place during the interactions between learner and interlocutors. Peer scaffolding can lead to linguistic development in the individual.[220] Lantolf [221] claims second language learners advance to higher levels of linguistic knowledge when they collaborate and interact with speakers of the second language who are more knowledgeable than they are. The ZPD may be observed in the variety of speech strategies, for example, repetition,

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[213] D. Wood, J. Bruner and G. Ross. 'The role of tutoring in problem solving'. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 17, (1976): 89-100.
[214] L. S. Vygotsky. *Mind in Society*. (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978).
[215] *Ibid.*: 86.
[216] *Ibid.*
[217] L.S. Vygotsky. *Thought and Language*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1962).
[218] [218] J. P. Lantolf and G. Appel Eds. *Vygotskian Approaches to Second Language Research,* (Norwood, N. J.: Ablex, 1994).
[219] *Ibid.*
[220] R. Donato. 'Collective scaffolding in second language learning' In *Vygotskian Approaches to Second Language Research*. Eds J. P. Lantolf and G. Appel (Norwood, N. J.: Ablex, 1994), 44.
[221] J. P. Lantolf. 'Introduction to the Special Issue'. *Modern Language Journal 78*, (1994): 418-20.

simplification, modelling, used by more advanced speakers to create supportive conditions for the learner to understand and produce language. Collaboration can occur without the kinds of communication breakdowns and repairs associated with negotiation.[222] Thus it can provide a basis for scaffolding, completion and production of modified output especially in learner-to-learner interaction.[223]

This approach has a lot to offer in the form of a theory about the processes of learning. However, the definition of 'learning' in this tradition is not without controversy. Most of the Vygotskian studies on language development have worked within a context of form-focused instruction. In addition the Vygotskian tradition offers little insight into the rates and routes of learning.

The next section continues to examine the social perspective of language learning. Sociolinguists, like the socioculturalists, view learning as a collaborative affair with language knowledge being socially constructed through interaction, however, they have paid less attention to the detail of the expert/novice interaction.[224]

2.6.1 Sociolinguistic perspectives

Sociolinguistics involves an examination of the social influences on language and the role of language in society.[225] Mainstream sociolinguistics is primarily concerned with the study of language in use.[226] Correspondingly, in second language learning one main concern is with the description of L2 use. Sociolinguistic approaches to the nature of SLA have been concerned with the attitudes that L2 learners have towards the L2, the people who speak it, or the culture that is associated with the L2.[227] The nature of these attitudes, whether positive or negative, may influence a learner's motivation to learn the L2 and indirectly the nature of SLA itself.[228] Sociolinguistic approaches are also concerned with examining the effect that the context, and the learner's evolving engagement with it, may have on the rate of L2 learning.[229]

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[222] M. Swain. 'Three Functions of Output in Second language Learning', in For H. G. Widdowson: *Principles and Practice in the Study of Language.* A Festschrift on the Occasion of his 60th Birthday. Eds. G. Cook and B. Scidlhofer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 125-144.
[223] *Ibid.*
[224] R. Mitchell and F. Myles. *Second Language Learning Theories.* (London: Arnold, 1998), 190.
[225] M. Berns. 'Sociolinguistics' in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Languae teaching and Learning.* M. Byram (London: Routledge, 2000), 555.
[226] R. Mitchell and F. Myles. *Second Language Learning Theories.* (London: Arnold, 1998), 163.
[227] R. Towell and R. Hawkins. *Approaches to Second Language Acquisition.* (Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters, 1994), 4.
[228] *Ibid.*
[229] R. Mitchell and F. Myles. *Second Language Learning Theories.* (London: Arnold, 1998), 190.

2.6.2 Communicative competence

There is widespread acceptance of the sociolinguistic construct of 'communicative competence' as the goal of L2 teaching and learning.[230] It has its origins in the realisation of the need to emphasise the importance of knowing the socio-cultural appropriateness of an utterance in addition to knowing the correct grammar.[231] Thus it includes both linguistic and pragmatic knowledge, appropriateness of meaning and appropriateness of form.[232] Canale defines communicative competence as:

> '... the extent to which utterances are produced and understood appropriately in different sociolinguistic contexts'.[233]

The notion of communicative competence means the language is considered less as a system and more in terms of the uses made of it.[234] For the learner the emphasis is more on 'skill', on 'being able to do' than on knowledge. For the teacher the emphasis has changed from focusing on knowledge to fostering the ability to communicate in the language: form has been made subservient to meaning.[235]

Sociolinguistic competence refers to a language user's knowledge of what utterances are appropriate to specific social contexts. Canale and Swain[236] and Canale[237] divide sociolinguistic competence into two categories: knowledge about the appropriateness of form, and knowledge about the appropriateness of meaning. Appropriateness of form refers to the degree to which a given verbal or non-verbal form is appropriate in conveying meaning in a given context. Appropriateness of meaning depends on knowing and respecting the rights and obligations of one's social role in a given situation, for example, the role of customer or waiter.[238] It is widely accepted that sociolinguistic competence is a crucial component of communicative competence.[239]

Communicative competence may be the target but its attainment may be effected by the learner's thoughts, feelings and attitudes in connection with the target language community or culture or the

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[230] C.J. Brumfit and K. Johnson Eds. *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).
[231] D. Hymes. 'On communicative competence' in *Sociolinguistics*. Eds., J. Pride and J. Holmes (Harmondsworth: Penguin).
[232] M. Canale and M. Swain. 'Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing'. *Applied linguistics 1,* (1980): 1-47.
[233] M. Canale. 'From communicative competence to language pedagogy' in *Language and Communication*. Eds. J. Richards and J. Schmidt (London: Longman, 1983), 7.
[234] C.-L. Dautry. 'Objectives in Language Teaching and Learning' in Routledge *Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning*. Ed. M. Byram (London: Routledge, 2000): 454.
[235] *Ibid.*
[236] M. Canale and M. Swain. 'Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing'. *Applied Linguistics 1,* (1980): 1-47.
[237] M. Canale. 'From communicative competence to language pedagogy', in *Language and Communication*. Eds. J. Richards and J. Schmidt (London: Longman, 1983).
[238] C.S. Blyth. 'Sociolinguistic Competence', in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning*. Ed. M. Byram (London: Routledge, 2000): 554.
[239] *Ibid.*: 553.

learning environment in which the language is learned. The next section examines affect and emotion in L2 use.

2.6.3 The Affective Filter Hypothesis

Krashen's affective filter is arguably the best known hypothesis in L2 learning theory dealing with the impact of attitudes and emotion on the effectiveness of L2 learning. It proposes that learners' 'motives, needs, attitudes, and emotional states',[240] or what psychologists call 'affect', can subconsciously act as a 'mental block' to prevent learners from acquiring language from available input.[241] For acquisition to take place learners need to be able to absorb the appropriate parts from input. Thus, a learner who is, for example, unmotivated, lacking in self-confidence, or anxious may filter out input thus rendering it unavailable for acquisition.[242] If the learner is stressed or unmotivated the filter will be higher and therefore block input. If the learner is relaxed and motivated the filter will be lowered thereby enabling a greater proportion of L2 input to be converted into acquired knowledge.[243] Krashen postulates that the reason younger learners acquire the L2 more successfully over the long term is because 'the affective filter gains dramatically in strength at around puberty'.[244]

The affective filter can help account for individual differences between L2 learners in a classroom situation who receive identical input but show wide differences in their development of both acquired and learned knowledge. It could be suggested that the less successful learners have higher affective filters than the more successful ones.[245] A problem with the hypothesis is that it is difficult to be sure that affective factors cause the differences in acquisition. Success in acquisition may, in itself, contribute to a lowered affective filter.[246] In addition the affective filter has been criticised for being too vague and a-theoretical.[247] Mitchell and Myles point to the folly of any claims that those who are self-conscious with low self-esteem must have higher filters and therefore be bad language learners and that those who are confident and extrovert must be good language learners, as this is clearly not always the case.[248]

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[240] H. Dulay, M. Burt, and S. Krashen. *Language Two.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 46.
[241] S. Krashen. *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications.* (London; Longman, 1985), 3.
[242] *Ibid.*
[243] S. Krashen. *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications.* (London; Longman, 1985).
[244] *Ibid.:* 13.
[245] R. Towell and R. Hawkins. *Approaches to Second Language Acquisition.* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1994), 27.
[246] P.M. Lightbown and N. Spada. *How Languages are Learned. Revised Edition.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 41.
[247] R. Mitchell and F. Myles. *Second Language Learning Theories.* (London: Arnold, 1998), 39.
[248] *Ibid.*

The affective filter may account for individual differences between learners working in the same learning environment. However, an account also needs to be taken of variability in learner productions, which is considered next.

2.6.4 Variation in L2 use

Sociolinguists view learner language systems as being unstable and characterised by high degrees of variability.[249] This means that they can show great variability in the intuitions made about the L2 and in L2 productions at various stages of development.[250] Thus, variability refers to the fact that L2 learners are seen to produce different versions of particular constructions within a short time span, maybe even in succeeding utterances.[251] In addition to their productions varying in the types of 'errors' made, learners are liable to switch between correct and incorrect forms over lengthy periods of time.[252]

Variability has been linked to a variety of factors and Tarone groups these under four categories:[253]

1. Variation according to linguistic context.
2. Variation according to psychological processing factors, for example, the degree of planning involved in learners' productions.
3. Variation according to features of the social context (interlocutor, task or topic, social norms).
4. Variation according to language function.

Ellis has proposed a categorisation of types of variability similar to Tarone's although he includes an additional category of 'non-systematic variation'.[254] He argues for non-systematic or free variation on the basis of introspection of his own language use.[255] A non-systematic variation, as its name suggests, shows no system or pattern in its occurrence. However, Preston argues that variation that appears to be unsystematic may just be variation for which the underlying system or stage of development has not yet been discovered.[256]

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[249] R. Ellis. *Second Language Acquisition and Language pedagogy*. (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1992).
[250] R. Towell and R. Hawkins. *Approaches to Second Language Acquisition.* (Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters, 1994), 5.
[251] R. Mitchell and F. Myles. *Second Language Learning Theories.* (London: Arnold, 1998), 172.
[252] R. Ellis. 'Sources of variability in interlanguage'. *Applied Linguistics 6,* (1985): 118-31.
[253] E. Tarone. *Variation in Interlanguage*. (London: Edward Arnold, 1988).
[254] R. Ellis. *The Study of Second language Acquisition.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 134.
[255] R. Ellis. *Understanding Second Language Acquisition.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 80.
[256] D. Preston. 'Variationist perspectives on second language acquisition' in *Second Language Acquisition and Linguistic Variation*. Eds. R. Bayley and D.R. Preston (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1996): 1-45.

Empirical studies such as those reported by Bayley and Preston[257] confirm the view of Tarone and Ellis that variability in learner productions are attributable to a wide variety of factors. The main groups of factors that correlate most strongly with variability in L2 productions seem to be linguistic rather than sociolinguistic in nature.[258] This may however be due to the fact that the variable features studied do not carry social prestige or stigma.[259]

2.6.5 Tarone's approach

Tarone's theory provides an explanation of how knowledge is acquired and how changes in the learner's interlanguage take place. She holds that L2 learners acquire a continuum of grammars for the L2.[260] She calls these grammars 'styles' and they range from vernacular style to careful style. Tarone refers to this as the capability continuum.[261]

←Vernacular style ←→ Style 2 ←→ Style 3 ←→ Style 4 ←→ Style n ←→careful style→
(more pidgin-like) (most tl-like)

The vernacular style is the least target-like but is the most internally consistent. It requires the least attention from the learner. The careful style is more target-like but has less internal consistency as it incorporates acquired knowledge, learned knowledge and some careful style norms transferred from the L1. The careful style requires the most attention from the learner. Variability in the productions of L2 learners is caused by 'style-shifting' along the variability continuum.[262] The choice of styles depends on the degree of attention paid by the learner to the language form in a particular instance.[263] Conditions of use will determine the amount of attention that the learner can give to a particular form and this will result in use of different styles. L2 learners' knowledge of the L2 is thus multiple. It posits that new forms may enter the interlanguage in two ways: new forms may be produced spontaneously in the vernacular style gradually spreading, over time, into increasingly careful styles. Alternatively, they may first appear in the most formal style when the learner is paying careful attention to productions before gradually spreading, over time, into the less formal styles.[264] New forms may enter any of the 'styles' or grammars and spread over time to the other styles.

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[257] R. Bayley and D.R. Preston Eds. *Second Language Acquisition and Linguistic Variation.* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1996).
[258] *Ibid.*
[259] R. Mitchell and F. Myles. *Second Language Learning Theories.* (London: Arnold, 1998) 177.
[260] E. Tarone. *Variation in Interlanguage.* (London: Edward Arnold, 1988), 41.
[261] *Ibid.*
[262] *Ibid.*
[263] E. Tarone. 'On the Variability of Interlanguage Systems', *Applied Linguistics 4,* (1983): 152.
[264] E. Tarone. *Variation in Interlanguage.* (London: Edward Arnold, 1988), 41.

2.6.6 Ellis' approach

Ellis suggests that learners have only one style or grammar but rules within this grammar may be variable.[265] Thus, he holds a view of L2 linguistic competence that allows variable rules where the target grammar does not. Variable rules, he argues, explain the observed variability of learners' productions and are also evidence of staged development in SLA.[266] In the early stages of learning, the L2 learner has non-variable rules: rules that have only one realisation. With further exposure to the L2, competing variants become associated with the same rule. As the learner notices target language manifestations of the rule these come to 'co-exist with previously acquired forms, at least initially.'[267] This may result in either free variation, with forms appearing in all contexts in an apparently random fashion, or systematic variation where one of the forms appears in one context (linguistic or social), the other in others. Free variation serves as a precursor for systematic variation.[268] Learners try to eliminate free variation and thus they associate each variant with specific contexts either linguistic or social.[269] Ellis views free and systematic variation as important elements in understanding staged development.

L2 ethnographers take a more rounded view of the learner than in other approaches examined. Self-esteem, motivation and so on are believed to be constructed and renewed during the course of L2 interaction and have a considerable effect on the rate of learning and the level of success attained. Current ethnographies of L2 communication and L2 socialisation provide useful insights about how the learning context and the learner's evolving fashion of dealing with it can affect the rate of L2 learning. The idea that the nature and quality of interactions in which the learner becomes engaged can influence the route of development of the L2 has not been fully investigated.

2.7 Concluding comments

> '... if all the facts were in and agreed upon, and if a process like SLA were fully understood, and agreed to be understood, there would be no need for a theory about it.'[270]

As has been demonstrated here, L2 acquisition is complex and does not lend itself to one particular explanation. The theories are developed in and for a particular context and this context shapes the content and the form of that particular theory.[271] Consequently, there is great diversity in the area of research on second language learning. The different research approaches focus on different parts of

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[265] R. Ellis. Second *Language Acquisition and Language Pedagogy.* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1992).
[266] *Ibid.:* 121.
[267] *Ibid.:* 121.
[268] *Ibid.:* 122.
[269] *Ibid.:* 122.
[270] M. Long. 'Second language acquisition theories' in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning.* Ed. M. Byram (London: Routledge, 2000), 532.
[271] R. Ellis. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 685.

the learning process. Some work from the basis of modelling learner grammars, others focus on language processing and others on interaction in L2 learning. Ellis identifies three views regarding the scope of a second language acquisition theory.[272] One is that SLA should move towards eliminating inferior theories and developing one single comprehensive theory. Another is that a modular approach informed by an over-arching framework that sets boundaries within which to theorise work best. The third view is that multiple, overlapping theories are inevitable and desirable. As has been shown, there is a great diversity of theories. However, those that are not found useful by researchers and practitioners tend to wane in influence or become incorporated into other models. Those that are found useful will continue to flourish.[273]

Mitchell and Myles predict that for the foreseeable future L2 learning will be treated in a modular way with different research programmes examining different aspects of the process.[274] However, Ellis warns that modularity can delimit the domain of investigation too much without theoretical justification. It can also lead to the investigation of a domain of investigation in total isolation from the study of other domains.[275] Attempts to cross-refer between different research strands and examine relations between them in a systematic way will develop understanding of the L2 learning process.[276] Links have been made between specific theories to account for different aspects of the L2 learning process, for example, Towell and Hawkins' model which links Universal Grammar theory with a theory of information processing.[277] Ellis has linked his input hypothesis with socio-cultural theory to argue the need to plan for learner control of classroom discourse to promote acquisition.[278]

Theorists remain divided on whether L2 learning theory has any practical applications in the L2 classroom. SLA theories may provide insights into universal methodological principles whilst saying little or nothing about the particularity of appropriate classroom pedagogical procedures.[279] Some theorists have argued for 'pure' theory building, without need to fulfil requirements for practical application.[280] Others have argued for a perspective where theoretical development has foundations in and responds to social practice, particularly language teaching and learning.[281] Others have argued

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[272] R. Ellis. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition.*(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 679.
[273] *Ibid.:* 686.
[274] R. Mitchell and F. Myles. *Second Language learning Theories.* (London: Arnold, 1998), 193.
[275] R. Ellis. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition.*(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 680.
[276] R. Mitchell and F. Myles. *Second Language learning Theories.* (London: Arnold, 1998), 193.
[277] R. Towell and R. Hawkins. *Approaches to Second language Acquisition.* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1994), 249.
[278] R. Ellis. 'Making the Classroom Acquisition Rich', in *Learning a Second Language Through Interaction.* Ed. R. Ellis (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co., 1999), 210-229.
[279] M. Long. 'Acquisition and Teaching' in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning.* Ed. M. Byram (London: Routledge, 2000): 5.
[280] A. Beretta 'Theory construction in SLA' in *Special issue of Applied Linguistics, Vol. 14* (1993): 221-4.
[281] L. van Lier. 'Forks and hope: pursuing understanding in different ways' in *Applied Linguistics Vol. 15* (1994): 328-46.

that L2 teaching should be guided systematically by research findings in the area of SLA.[282] Long argues that while SLA theories may be an important component of a theory of language teaching a consideration of other factors, such as situational variables, will always also be required.[283]

While the goal of most SLA theorists is to identify what is necessary and sufficient for language learning to occur, the language teacher is most interested in finding 'the combination of conditions and practices that will bring about language learning fastest' and with least effort, regardless of whether strictly necessary or sufficient or not.[284] SLA research contributes to technical knowledge while language pedagogy is concerned with practical knowledge.[285] Nonetheless, although they may have different end goals, given that SLA theorists and language teachers are both interested in L2 development it would be 'self-defeating' for either group not to consider the other's work.[286]

However, Long cautions against 'eclecticism' in language teaching where teachers select what they consider to be the best parts of several theories. He argues that since different theories reflect different understandings 'the resulting methodological mish-mash is guaranteed to be wrong'.[287] On the other hand, a method that is based, in part, on a single theory is more coherent, and, subject to caveats, has a chance of being right.[288] This writer accepts the need for cumulative programmes of research within the framework of a particular theory yet inclines towards a pluralist view of SLA theorising. Teachers need an understanding of the range of theoretical positions in order to help their learners learn in a way that best suits their needs and interests. Judgements that are formed based on some sort of theoretical foundations are better than those that are not.[289] In addition, familiarity with SLA research can help teachers to shape problems in a way that makes them researchable.[290]

There is a need for dialogue between the realities of the classroom context and the more decontextualised findings and interpretations from programmes of research. SLA research can enable teachers to interpret and make sense of their classroom experiences. Consequently, it can stimulate teacher reflection on the range of pedagogic choices available to them. Lightbown suggests that the

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[282] S. Krashen. *The Input Hypothesis: issues and implications.* (Harlow: Longman, 1985).
[283] M. Long. Acquisition and teaching. in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning.* Ed. M. Byram. (London: Routledge, 2000), 5.
[284] M. Long. Acquisition and teaching. in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning.* Ed. M. Byram. (London: Routledge, 2000), 4.
[285] R. Ellis. *SLA Research and Language Teaching.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 7.
[286] M. Long. 'Acquisition and teaching', in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learnin.g* Ed. M. Byram. (London: Routledge, 2000), 5.
[287] *Ibid.:* 4.
[288] M. Long. Acquisition and teaching in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning.* Ed. M. Byram. (London: Routledge, 2000), 4.
[289] H. Stern. *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983). cited in R. Ellis. *SLA Research and Language Teaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 22.
[290] R. Ellis. *SLA Research and Language Teaching.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 35.

findings of SLA research will lead teachers to have 'much more realistic expectations about what can be accomplished'.[291] Information about findings and theoretical views in SLA can help teachers evaluate claims made by textbook writers and proponents of various teaching methods.[292] The irony is that as SLA develops it becomes increasingly technical and consequently increasingly difficult to explain to lay readers.[293]

Although, different research areas examine different aspects of the second language learning process, a significant finding from the review of literature in this chapter is the degree of concurrence in relation to the importance of input, output and interaction or a mix of these in the learning process. For example, the Universal Grammar approach holds that language acquisition depends on more than the innate faculty can offer: it also needs positive and negative evidence or a combination of each.[294] This suggests that learners need active participation in their language learning. They need input but they also need opportunities to use the target language. Swain's Output Hypothesis[295] and Long's Interaction Hypothesis[296] also emphasise learners' need for active use of the target language. Cognitive language theories propose that learners follow a staged development in their language learning and that grammar can be taught explicitly at appropriate stages in learners' development.[297] It is recognised that giving learners opportunities to interact meaningfully through active and participatory modes of learning can enable teacher and learners to understand the stage at which the learners are in their language development. Thus, it could be argued that active pedagogies could have a diagnostic function. In addition, they may be able to provide motivating contexts to sustain learner interest while reinforcing new grammar items. Cognitivist approaches emphasise the need for practice to promote language items from controlled use to automatic use and to facilitate proceduralisation of language in order to develop fluency.[298] Similarly, socio-cultural[299] and socio-linguistic[300] perspectives on language learning advise that learners can advance to higher levels of language

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[291] P. Lightbown. 'Great expectations: second language acquisition research and classroom teaching'. Applied Linguistics 6, (1985): 182. Cited in R. Ellis. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 687.

[292] P.M. Lightbown and N. Spada. *How Languages are Learned. Second edition.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), xiii.

[293] P. Meara. 'Applied Linguistics', in Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning. Ed. M. Byram. (London: Routledge, 2000), 35.

[294] V. Cook. 'Universal grammar' in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Langauge Teaching and Learning.* Ed. M. Byram. (London: Routledge, 2000), 648.

[295] M. Swain. 'Three functions of output in second language learning', *in Principle and Practice in Applied Linguistics.* Eds. G. Cook and B. Seidlhofer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 126.

[296] M.H. Long. 'The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition' in *Handbook of Second Language Acquisition.* Eds. W.C. Ritchie and T.K. Bhatia (San Diego: Academic Press, 1996), 451-2.

[297] M. Pienemann. 'Determining the influence of instruction on L2 speech processing'. *AILA Review Vol 5* (Issue 1, 1988), 40-72.

[298] J.R. Anderson *Cognitive Psychology and its Implications*, 2nd edn. (New York: Freeman, 1985).

[299] J.P. Lantolf. 'Introducing sociocultural theory' in *Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning. Ed.* J.P. Lantolf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[300] M. Berns. 'Sociolinguistics' in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning.* Ed. M. Byram (London: Routledge, 2000), 555.

learning in supportive, interactive environments. Chapter 6 will explore whether the use of an active learning methodology, as embodied in a Drama in Education approach, can help establish a classroom environment that promotes and supports a practice based and socio-cultural approach to second language learning. It will be investigated whether an active teaching-learning approach can be a valuable tool for the second language classroom, regardless of the theoretical leanings to which a teacher adheres.

In the following chapter, the development and significance of a communicative approach to language teaching and learning is outlined, paying particular attention to the detail of how to theoretically implement a communicative approach in the classroom.

Chapter Three

A Communicative Approach to Language Teaching and Learning

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to explore the development of a communicative approach to teaching and learning in the language classroom. It will differentiate between a structuralist approach and the evolution of more communicative approaches where the emphasis shifted from the rules of grammar to the notion of supremacy of communication. A detailed discussion of communicative competence will be offered, with particular emphasis on elucidating from the literature how to develop such competence.

3.2 Structuralism

Prior to the development of a communicative approach to language learning and teaching structuralist approaches were popular. Structuralist approaches were based on behaviourist doctrines. It was believed that mastering a language was best achieved by learning a set of habits that are conditioned to occur in response to words or phrases that are presented in a syntactic frame.[301] Thus, language learning was regarded principally as a question of acquiring grammatical, phonological and vocabulary items that were graded according to difficulty. This structural grading aimed to lead learners step by step through the finite set of structures that represent the grammar of a language until each was mastered. The theory was that learning a language is easier if learners are exposed to the grammar system one part at a time.[302] The teacher isolated and ordered structural items. Each item was systematically presented, intensively drilled, and practised in context before the next structure was presented. In this way learners incrementally built up an inventory of language items. The aim was to develop a stock of grammatical items that would be converted into performance when the need arose.[303]

The level of proficiency that learners attained was described in terms of their mastery of structures and their ability to manipulate them. The emphasis was on structural correctness – inaccuracy was not tolerated. Language teaching did not ignore communication or conceptual and functional levels of

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[301] J.P.B. Allen, and H.G. Widdowson, 'Teaching the communicative use of English', in *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*. Eds. C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. 2nd edition, 1981), 123.

[302] D.A. Wilkins, 'Grammatical, situational and notional syllabuses' in *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*. Eds. C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. 2nd edition, 1981).

[303] Keith Johnson, 'Communicative approaches and communicative processes' in *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*. Eds. C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. 2nd edition, 1981), 193.

meaning but it gave precedence to form and structures.[304] Use of language was depreciated.[305] Little attention was given to the way that sentences are used in combination to form 'stretches of connected discourse'.[306] It was believed that the parts of the system assimilated in a step-by-step process would eventually become integrated with each other to allow the learner to produce spontaneous utterances.

The problem with the approach was that one knew about a language rather than knowing how to make use of it for real communication. Semantics were not sufficiently taken into account.[307] The language being learnt was unlike 'real' language. It illustrated sentences but neglected the verbal purposes of the sentences and the effects of speakers' roles. Learners were, thus, not generally successful in converting their knowledge of the language into use of the language.

As far back as the fifties Chomsky demonstrated that structural theories of language were incapable of accounting for the creativity and uniqueness of individual sentences.[308] Children routinely create new sentences they have never heard or learnt before. He argued that human language is not imitated but created new from an underlying knowledge of abstract rules. Sentences are not learned through imitation and repetition but are created anew each time, generated from the learners' competence. This, he argued, is only possible because learners internalise rules rather than strings of words. Furthermore, observing the complexity and abstractness of linguistic rules that learners acquire, he proposed that learners have an innate faculty which guides them in the learning of a language. Children learning their first language are programmed to discover its rules and have an innate knowledge of what the rules should look like. These findings obviously undermined the theoretical underpinnings of a structuralist approach, however it was some time before classroom practice changed.

3.3 A turning from structuralist to communicative approaches

In the seventies there was a growing awareness that the rules of grammar were useless without the rules of use.[309] There was a realisation that knowledge of how a language functions in communication

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[304] C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson, Eds. *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).
[305] D.H. Hymes, 'On communicative competence' in *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*. Eds. C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 8.
[306] H.G. Widdowson, 'Directions in the teaching of discourse' in *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*. Eds. C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 49.
[307] H.G.Widdowson, 'The deep structure of discourse and the use of translation' in *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*. Eds. C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 71.
[308] Noam Chomsky, Syn*tactic Structures*. (The Hague: Mouton, 1957).
[309] C.J. Brumfit and K. Johnson, Eds. *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 1.

does not automatically follow from knowledge of grammar and sentences.[310] Traditional approaches had often created language learners who were structurally competent but could not apply their grammatical knowledge to the purpose of communicating through the target language outside the class.[311] There was an emerging realisation that habit-forming techniques, on their own, are not sufficient to enable learners to develop the ability to communicate in the target language. A consciousness was developing that language cannot be thought of solely as a system of linguistic elements without diminishing its major function of communication[312]. It was generally agreed that learners must learn not only how to construct grammatically correct sentences but also how to use the target language to get things done.[313] It was established that language learning should deal with the grammaticality and the acceptability of sentences but also with pragmatics.[314] Learners needed to know how to use sentences and structures functionally, to exploit the functional possibilities of language. They needed opportunities to use language communicatively so that they could 'integrate separate structures into a creative system for expressing meanings'.[315]

It was increasingly recognised that the traditional approach was inefficient because it aimed to teach learners all parts of the grammar system despite the fact that not all parts are of equal potential use. Learning time was devoted to mastering the system with consequent neglect of providing learners with opportunities to practise communicating in the target language. The bringing together of grammatically identical sentences for the purposes of drilling was artificial since this does not happen in real communication.[316] Learners were thus inhibited from putting their language to immediate communicative use: they had neither the competence nor the opportunities. A constant focus on form and structure made it difficult to use the language communicatively. The approach could be demotivating for those who needed immediate applicability of the theory. In the seventies and early eighties British linguists began to question the effectiveness of the structuralist approaches and to seek alternatives.

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[310] H.G.Widdowson, 'Directions in the teaching of discourse' in *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*. Eds. C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 50.
[311] David Nunan, *The Learner-Centred Curriculum. A study in second language teaching.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. Ninth printing, 1997), 78.
[312] Keith Johnson, 'Communicative approaches and communicative processes', in. *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*. Eds. C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 201.
[313] David Nunan, *The Learner-Centred Curriculum. A study in second language teaching.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. Ninth printing, 1997), 25.
[314] Christopher N. Candlin, 'The status of pedagogical grammars' in *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*. Eds. C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 75.
[315] W.T. Littlewood, *Foreign and Second Learning: Acquisition research and its implications for the classroom.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 91.
[316] D.A. Wilkins, 'Notional syllabuses and the concept of a minimum adequate grammar' *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*. Eds. C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 95.

Widdowson distinguished between two types of meaning in language: signification and value.[317] Signification is the meaning that language items have as elements of the language system. Value is the meanings that the elements have when they are used for communicative purposes. He believed it a 'radical mistake' to suppose a knowledge of how to use language for communicative purposes would come automatically because one knows how sentences are composed and their signification as linguistic units. Thus he proposed that linguistic structures and situational settings be taken into account along with communicative acts.

Newmark, who claimed that the success of the language teacher could be measured by the ability of their students to choose to say what they want to say, supported this.[318] He argued that language is learned whole act at a time and not by assembling linguistic structures, items and skills. The learning of grammar, he held, was neither sufficient nor necessary for the learning of language. This view was supported by Allwright[319] who argued that teaching for linguistic or grammatical competence would not cater sufficiently for communicative competence. By contrast, he argued, teaching for communicative competence would cater for all but a small part of linguistic or grammatical competence. Thus, he advised a reorienting of teaching towards communication practice.

Brumfit argued that since traditional approaches do not start from what the student knows, they are thus deficit models. New learning must be closely assimilated with what is already known. Observing that all can learn a language but not without training describe it, he concluded that there was a mismatch between what teachers were offering learners and what learners could most easily do. All language users are able to improvise, to paraphrase, and to use communication strategies in their mother tongues. However, if they are not given opportunities to develop these skills in the target language then it is difficult for them to convert their linguistic knowledge into effective communication.[320] They must develop a capacity to use the target language with a flexibility which allows them to express themselves as much or as little as they wish '...and sufficiently firmly within an appropriate conventional model to be genuinely communicative.'[321] This capacity can only be satisfactorily developed through using the target language for real communication.

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[317] H.G. Widdowson, 'The teaching of English as communication' in *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*. Eds. C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 118-119.
[318] Leonard Newmark, 'How not to interfere with language learning' in *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*. Eds. C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. 2nd edition, 1981), 163.
[319] Richard Allwright, 'Language learning through communication practice' in *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*. Eds. C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. 2nd edition, 1981), 168.
[320] C.J. Brumfit, 'Communicative language teaching: an educational *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*. Eds. C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. 2nd edition, 1981), 186.
[321] Christopher Brumfit, *Communicative Methodology in Language Teaching: the roles of fluency and accuracy.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 27.

Like Brumfit, Breen and Candlin argue that we must not assume that learners' lack of knowledge of the target language implies that they are naïve communicators or that they have a superficial evaluation of communication.[322] They propose that we start from what the learner knows and can do in his/her first language. If the object of learning is communication then the learners' communicative knowledge and abilities are very relevant and should be involved from the outset. If language is presented as being separate from the learners' psychological and social experience then 'we are almost certainly postponing development of the learner's ability to communicate through the language'[323] as we are denying the essential interpersonal nature of language learning that the learners will have experienced in their first language. What the learner knows and can do, as a communicator, must be incorporated in the language learning process from the start.

Language acquisition is inextricably linked to the process of using language in a variety of contexts.[324] It is a direct consequence of the need to use language to communicate in various situations to various types of people. If language is being learnt for use then learning must also be directly associated with use.[325] Use implies more than just the practice of meaningful functions in the classroom. The language used should be of cognitive and affective significance for the language learners. It must allow learners to express meanings that are of significance for them and to get things done in the target language. The relationship between a speaker and a language is creative and the relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor is negotiated through this creative relationship.[326] Thus, Brumfit held that the goal is to enable learners to use the language they are using for their own purposes, to express their own meanings and intentions. This calls on a creative, not an imitative use of language. One cannot acquire competence in expressing oneself in a foreign language if one is not given time and opportunities to do just that.

On the grounds that learners need to know how to use sentences and structures in real communication, another British linguist, Keith Johnson, argued that learners need practice linking meaning and intentions. Learners cannot be expected to make an appropriate selection from a meaning potential if they are not given opportunities to express intentions.[327] Johnson criticised traditional approaches

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[322] Michael P. Breen and Christopher N. Candlin, 'The Essentials of a Communicative Curriculum in Language Teaching' in *Applied Linguistics Vol. 1*, (No. 2, Summer 1980): 93.
[323] *Ibid.*: 94.
[324] Christopher Brumfit, *Communicative Methodology in Language Teaching: the roles of fluency and accuracy,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 38.
[325] Christopher Brumfit, 'Communicative language teaching: an educational perspective' in *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching.* Eds. C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 189.
[326] Christopher Brumfit, *Communicative Methodology in Language Teaching: The roles of fluency and accuracy.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 110.
[327] Keith Johnson, 'Communicative approaches and communicative process' in *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching.* Eds. C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979. Second Edition, 1981), 200.

because they do not make use of an information gap. The repetition of the known, he argued, is boring and demotivating. He suggested creating classroom situations in which learners are free to choose what to say. This, he advised would create an information gap and thus lay the way for real communication.[328] He believed that fluency in communication would only develop within 'task-oriented teaching' that aims to give meaning to language practice by focusing learners on tasks mediated through the target language. Others supported this belief such as Nunan[329], and Rivers[330], who concluded that experience in expressing meanings requires interactive situations that stimulate the learners and motivate them to communicate personal messages.

Work in language acquisition was showing that learners do not follow a step-by-step progression through the separate parts of the language system. Regardless of what the teacher does the learner will follow a sequence of learning determined by his/her internal syllabus. In a natural learning environment, learning takes place without a teacher providing the surroundings, the necessary stimuli, and the experiences. Littlewood thus argued that the essential factor is that the learners use the target language for communicative purposes.[7] He believed that foreign language teaching must be concerned with reality. It must be concerned with the learners' reality both inside and outside the classroom, with their present and potential communicative needs. The reality of communication as it takes place outside the classroom must at all times be observed.[331] Language teaching and learning must be related to the social meaning that it carries as the social dimension affects the choice of language made.[332] The learner must learn to analyse the communicative situation and choose language that is appropriate based on this analysis. This is only possible if the learners are given practice in communicating their meanings through the target language.

An increasing interdependence of European countries brought the need to teach language for communication. The Council of Europe stated its aim: '...to facilitate communication and interaction among Europeans of different mother tongues in the service of European understanding and co-operation and the overcoming of prejudice and discrimination'.[333] To achieve this aim it

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[328] Keith Johnson, 'Communicative approaches and communicative process' in *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching.* Eds. C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979. Second Edition, 1981), 200.
[329] David Nunan, *The Learner-Centred Curriculum. A study in second language teaching.*
[330] Wilga M. Rivers, 'Opening Doors and Windows through Interactive Language Teaching' in *Babel 23* (1) 1988: 9.
[7] W.T. Littlewood, *Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981. 16th printing, 1995), 91.
[331] *Ibid.*: 95.
[332] W.T. Littlewood, *Foreign and Second Language Learning: Language acquisition research and its implications for the classroom,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 43.
[333] Council of Europe, Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe 'Evaluation and Recommendations' in *Modern Languages Programme 1971-1981,* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1981), 172.

recommended that all Europeans be given the means and opportunities to acquire language knowledge and skills that will help them:

> '- to deal with the business of everyday life in another country;
> - to exchange information and ideas with young people and adults who speak a different language and to communicate their thoughts and feelings to them;
> - to achieve a wider and deeper understanding of the way of life and the forms of thought of another people'.[334]

It suggested that these aims be achieved by 'basing language teaching and learning on the needs, motivation, characteristics and resources of individual learners'.[335] The aims necessitated the use of a teaching/learning approach which emphasised the use of language for communicative purposes.

In the belief that a language can only really be taught if it is presented and practised in relation to the communicative purposes to which it may be put, a communicative approach to language teaching evolved.[336] Wilkins made an analysis of the communicative meanings that a learner needs to understand and express.[337] Instead of describing language through the traditional concepts of grammar and vocabulary, he attempted to demonstrate the systems of meanings that lay behind the communicative uses of language. He described two types of meanings: notional categories and functional categories. Notional categories described concepts such as time, sequence, quantity, location, and frequency. They are the basic general meanings that learners should be able to express and understand. Functional categories described communicative functions such as greetings, requests, denials, offers and complaints. His work had a significant impact on the development of Communicative Language Teaching.[338] The communicative language course pays particular attention to the functions and notions that learners need to express now and in the future, the topics that they will most likely need to deal with and the situations in which they will need to operate. Topics are the more specific areas of meaning to which learners should have access, such as personal identification, house and home, school and work, and so on. Situations are the circumstances under which learners should be able to operate. They give a context to language use and encompass the physical context where relevant, and the social and psychological roles of the participants.[339]

Functions, notions, situations, and topics are useful in predicting the current and probable future needs of learners. They help to ensure that the learners learn to communicate in the target language through

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[334] Council of Europe, Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe 'Evaluation and Recommendations' in *Modern Languages Programme 1971-1981*, (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1981), 172.
[335] *Ibid.*
[336] C.J. Brumfit and K. Johnson, 'Editors' Note' in *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).
[337] D.A. Wilkins, *Notional Syllabuses*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).
[338] Jack C. Richards, and Theodore S. Rodgers. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching. A description and analysis.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1986. Tenth edition, 1994.)
[339] Joe Shiels, *Communication in the Modern Languages Classroom*. (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1988).

classroom communication and thus, to associate language learning with communication of meaning. Learners are, therefore, enabled to see the immediate applicability of their learning, to link classroom learning with the real world.

3.4 Language acquisition

Developments in the area of language acquisition in the seventies and early eighties changed the understanding of how languages are acquired and consequently sparked criticism of traditional approaches to language teaching. Language acquisition theories pointed towards communicative approaches as being the most effective ways of learning to communicate in the target language.

Krashen's acquisition-learning hypothesis has been highly influential on language teaching methodologies.[340] According to Krashen there are two discrete psycholinguistic processes operating in L2 development: conscious learning and subconscious acquisition.[341] Acquisition refers to the subconscious process of acquiring language and is identical in all important aspects to the process used by children when acquiring their mother tongue.[342] Learning refers to the conscious process of language learning that results in 'knowing about' language.[343] Long-term language development, he holds, occurs only through subconscious acquisition. Krashen has been criticised for his vague definition of what constitutes conscious and unconscious processes, as it is difficult to test whether learners' language output is due to conscious or unconscious processes. However, this contrast between conscious and subconscious processes has been very influential especially among teachers who believe it to explain the lack of correspondence between learners' conscious knowledge of rules and their inability to apply them spontaneously.[344] In Krashen's terms, learners would have learned the rule but not acquired it.

Acquisition occurs, through what Krashen terms 'comprehensible input', when learners understand language which is a little beyond their present level of language. Input is facilitated by concentrating on meaning rather than form and by ensuring that learners' affective filter is kept low, in other words that learners are relaxed and unafraid of taking risks with their language.

Swain emphasises the importance of 'comprehensible output' to facilitate acquisition.[345] This highlights the importance of giving learners opportunities to use the target language. Thus learners

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[340] Rosamond Mitchell and Florence Myles, Second *Language Learning Theories*, (London: Arnold, 1998), 35.
[341] S. Krashen, *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition.* (Oxford: Pergammon, 1982).
[342] S. Krashen, *The Input Hypothesis: issues and implications*. (Harlow: Longman, 1985), 1.
[343] *Ibid.*
[344] Rosamond Mitchell and Florence Myles, Second *Language Learning Theories*, (London: Arnold, 1998), 36.
[345] M. Swain. 'Communicative competence: some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development' in *Input in Second Language Acquisition.* Eds. S. Gass and C. Madden (Rowley: Newbury House, 1985).

need to be furnished with occasions to negotiate new input as well as occasion to experiment with new language acquired. By negotiating the new input learners ensure that the language to which they are exposed is modified to the level of comprehensibility that they can manage.

Acquisition and learning represent different ways of internalising language.[346] Krashen claims that learning cannot turn into acquisition, that language learned and language acquired cannot become an integrated whole.[347] However, other researchers disagree and the debate continues. Littlewood, for example, holds that the acquired and learnt systems do not remain separate but 'bleed' into one another so that consciously learnt structures pass into the acquired store.

> 'Between the most subconscious processes of 'acquisition' at one extreme and the most conscious forms of 'learning' at the other, it would be more realistic to think in terms of a continuum, in which subconscious and conscious processes are mingled to varying degrees'.[348]

Language acquisition is intimately related to using language in a variety of contexts. A heavy emphasis is placed on fluency on the grounds that this will facilitate the conversion of conscious knowledge into unconscious knowledge.[349] As a result of exposure to language in communication situations and due to natural processing strategies, the learner constructs a series of internal representations of the target language. These internal representations develop gradually in the direction of native speaker competence. Language practice with the risk of errors is not detrimental to progress in language acquisition.[350]

If acquisition plays a large role in developing language competence then teaching efforts should be directed towards creating contexts for language use in the classroom by means of listening and reading activities, discussion, role-playing, and communication tasks.[351] These contexts would help learners to create internal representations of the language system in the same way as they would in a natural learning situation. Since the learners' attention should be on using the language to express and receive meanings, then form-oriented procedures such as drilling and correction should be avoided.[352]

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[346] E.W. Stevick, *Teaching Languages : A Way and Ways.* (Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1980).
[347] S. Krashen and S. Scarcella, 'On routines and patterns in second language acquisition and performance' in *Language Learning 28,* 283-300.
[348] W.T. Littlewood , *Foreign and Second Language Learning: Language acquisition research and its implications for the classroom,* 80.
[349] Christopher Brumfit, *Communicative Methodology in Language Teaching: The roles of fluency and accuracy. (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 38.
[350] *Ibid.:* 50.
[351] *Ibid.:* 91.
[352] Christopher Brumfit, *Communicative Methodology in Language Teaching: The roles of fluency and accuracy.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

Acquisition does not involve a sudden move into full mastery; rather it is a process of gradually increasing accuracy. Natural learners do not follow a step-by-step approach to the structural elements of the system. In the words of Krashen:

> '... once we realise that we can do no more than guide and influence a process of growth which necessarily involves experimentation, trial and error, much unnecessary purism falls away....'[353]

A pre-condition for communication and thus for language acquisition is comprehension. Comprehension requires three types of knowledge:

- world knowledge which provides us with a plausibility filter so that the meanings we attach to utterances do not conflict with our knowledge of the world;
- discourse knowledge which tells us the type of communicative event in which we are involved and thus helps us create appropriate expectations of its structure and outcome;
- linguistic knowledge, which is our gradually unfolding knowledge of the grammar of the language.[354]

Naturalistic language acquisition takes place through interaction and communication. Many aspects of language learning can only operate when the learner is using the language for communication.[355] Learners acquire precision of expression through using language not through memorising or discussing rules. 'Knowledge of the structure of the language is acquired actively through use'.[356] Learning is not a passive process: incoming information is, to use Piaget's terms, assimilated and accommodated thereby transforming data into acquired knowledge.

The acquisition of a language does not occur in a linear, uniform way. Neither the pace nor the point at which information is assimilated can be determined in advance. During interaction with the learning process the learner's personal characteristics (previous knowledge, preferred style of learning, motivation, and so on come into play so that so that the learning of each individual exposed to the same learning will be different. Each learns at his/her own pace. Different learners learn differently. To enable each to reach communicative competence there must be a constant adjustment between objectives, content and materials according to the situation of each learner.

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[353] S. Krashen, 'Applications of psycholinguistic research in the classroom' in *Methodology in TESOL*. Eds. J.C. Richards and M.H. Long (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House,1987), 38.
[354] David Little, Sean Devitt and David Singleton. *Authentic Texts in Foreign Language Teaching: Theory and Practice.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1988).
[355] W.T. Littlewood, *Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981. 16th printing, 1995),18.
[356] Wilga M. Rivers, 'Opening Doors and Windows through Interactive Language Teaching', *Babel 23* (1, 1988).

3.5 The influence of changing definitions of communicative competence

As our awareness of how we learn languages has evolved so too has our idea of what constitutes competence in a language. This, obviously, has enormous consequences for the way languages are taught and learnt. Teaching methodologies have evolved in response to what is believed to constitute competence.

Linguistic theory for Chomsky involved the characterisation of the abstract abilities learners have that enable them to produce grammatically correct sentences in a language. His view of competence was thus primarily concerned with abstract grammatical knowledge. He recognised two categories of judgements made when people speak or write: grammaticality and acceptability to the native speaker. He held that

> 'linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitation, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance'.[357]

In the early seventies came a strong reaction to Chomsky's view of linguistic theory from Dell Hymes.[358] Hymes believed that linguistic theory needed to be seen as part of a more general theory incorporating communication and culture. Interested in language in use, he believed linguistic theory to be integrated with theories of communication and culture. He claimed that neither Chomsky's category of competence or performance allowed for characterising the appropriateness of what is said or written in a given social context. Thus, he held that Chomsky's category of performance ignored all aspects of social interaction since it included only psychological constraints on performance. He believed that Chomsky's work conjured up an image of 'an abstract, isolated individual ... not, except incidentally, a person in a social world'.[359] He thought that a different theory of language was needed to allow work on practical as well as theoretical problems. It would have to deal with a heterogeneous speech community, differential competence and the constitutive role of sociocultural features.[360] In this theory competence would be defined to include interactional competence and it would be called 'communicative competence'.

Whereas Chomsky's theory recognised only two kinds of judgements that people make when they speak or write, Hymes recognised four. These were whether something (be it linguistic or some other form of communication) is:

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[357] Noam Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax.* (Boston: MIT Press, 1965.)
[358] Dell Hymes, 'On Communicative Competence' in *Sociolinguistic.s* Eds. Pride and Holmes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), 272.
[359] *Ibid.*
[360] *Ibid.:* 275.

- possible, given the forms of expression available
- feasible, given the means of implementation
- appropriate, in relation to a given context
- actually performed (on what its performance entails).

Accordingly, Hymes believed that 'A model of language must design it with a face toward communicative conduct and social life'.[361] Thus the concept of competence was enlarged. Whereas Chomsky's view of competence was primarily concerned with abstract grammatical knowledge, Hymes suggested that grammaticality was only one of four sectors of communicative competence. His theory of communicative competence was a definition of what a speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community. This was in contrast to Chomsky who focussed on the abstract abilities that learners possess to enable them to form grammatically correct sentences.

Hymes believed that only by studying language in use can all the functions of language and components of meaning be brought into focus.[362] Language, in his view, was a system that is performed as well as known and communicative competence must include 'the rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless.'[363] Thus, it seemed evident that 'in the search for a conceptual framework, a Chomskyan orientation is not appropriate if communicative aspects of language are to be taught or learned.'[364]

Hymes's view of communicative competence was complemented by Halliday's functional account of language use. Halliday saw language acquisition as being the mastery of language functions, i.e., learning the uses of the language and the meaning associated with them.[365] He held that it is only when language is in use that all its functions and components of meaning are in use simultaneously. Meaning, he believed, is a form of social action dependent on context. Halliday argued that it is only through use that all functions of language are brought into focus. To give a basis for what learners may need and want to do in the target language, he described the seven basic functions that language performs for children learning their first language:

- the instrumental function: using language to get things;

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[361] Dell Hymes, 'On Communicative Competence' in *Sociolinguistic.s* Eds. Pride and Holmes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), 278.
[362] Jack C. Richards and Theodore Rodgers. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. (Cambridge University Press, 1986. Tenth edition, 1994).
[363] Dell Hymes, 'On Communicative Competence' in *Sociolinguistics*. Eds. Pride and Holmes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), 15.
[364] Janice Yalden, *Principles of Course Design for Language Teaching*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 19.
[365] M.A.K. Halliday, *Learning How to Mean: Explorations in the Development of Language*. (London: Edward Arnold, 1975).

- the regulatory function: using language to control the behaviour of others;
- the interactional function: using language to create interaction with others;
- the personal function: using language to express personal feelings and meanings;
- the heuristic function: using language to learn and discover;
- the imaginative function; using language to create a world of the imagination;
- the representational function: using language to communicate information.[366]

This description of the functions of language complements Hyme's view of communicative competence. Learning a language came to be viewed as acquiring the linguistic means to perform different kinds of functions.

Canale and Swain established a conceptual scheme in which to examine the relationship between theory and practice.[367] They pointed out that communicative competence is understood as the underlying systems of knowledge and skill required for communication. They outlined three areas of skill and knowledge that comprise competence. In later writings Canale expanded the outline to four. These were:

- grammatical competence (mastery of the language code);
- sociolinguistic competence (appropriateness of utterances with respect to meaning and form);
- discourse competence (mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve unity of a spoken or written text);
- strategic competence (mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies used to compensate for breakdowns in communication and to make communication more effective).[368]

Canale does not give a description of how these factors interact with one another. However, Sandra Savignon proposes a possible relationship between the four factors.[369] She believes they interact constantly. She suggests that a certain sociolinguistic capacity and strategic capacity allow learners a degree of communicative ability even before they gain grammatical competence. She also suggests that strategic competence is always present since one never knows all of a language, even one's own. She defines communicative competence as

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[366] M.A.K. Halliday, *Learning How to Mean: Explorations in the Development of Language.* (London: Edward Arnold, 1975), 11-17.
[367] M. Canale, and M. Swain, 'Theoretical basis of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing' *Applied Linguistics 1,* (1980): 1-47.
[368] M. Canale, 'From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy' in *Language and Communication*, Eds. J.C. Richards and R.W. Schmidt (London: Longman, 1983).
[369] Sandra Savignon, *Communicative Competence Theory and Classroom Practice.* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1983).

> 'Functional language proficiency; the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning involving interaction between two or more persons belonging to the same speech community (communities), or between one person and a written or oral text'.[370]

The adoption of this definition implies a commitment to the provision of a learning environment that will provide the opportunities for the negotiation of meaning rather than the testing and practice of structures.[371]

Van Ek[372] later expanded the areas of skill and knowledge to include six sub-competencies:

- Linguistic competence: knowledge of vocabulary items and the mastery of certain structural rules that allow them to be processed into meaningful utterances.
- Socio-linguistic competence: the ability to use and interpret language forms with due consideration of the context.
- Discourse competence: the ability to distinguish separate utterances and to realise coherence of separate utterances in meaningful communication patterns.
- Strategic competence: the ability to use strategies, both verbal and non-verbal, to compensate for gaps in one's knowledge of the linguistic code.
- Socio-cultural competence: having some knowledge of the socio-cultural context in which language is used.
- Social competence: having the desire and self-confidence to interact with others and the empathy and ability to cope with social situations.

Thus, it became clear that the learner needed more than a fixed repertoire of linguistic forms to correspond with any linguistic function. Communication is a process, and knowledge of the forms of language is insufficient, learners need to be able to use them competently. The sub-competencies, that comprise communicative competence, can be developed only by using language in real communicative situations to express meanings and/or fulfil a function. This could not be achieved using structuralist approaches to language teaching and learning. Thus, to enable the effective development of communicative competence, communicative approaches evolved.

3.6 Towards a definition of a communicative approach

For centuries language curricula were grammatically sequenced but communicative language teaching (CLT) puts the functional nature of language and communication above the structural or grammatical

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[370] Sandra Savignon, *Communicative Competence Theory and Classroom Practice.* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1983).
[371] Janice Yalden, *Principles of Course Design for Language Teaching.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 35.
[372] J.A. Van Ek, 'Objectives for foreign language learning' in *Scope, Volume 1.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1986).

nature.[373] A communicative approach to language learning and teaching starts from a theory of language as a system for the expression of meaning whose primary function is for interaction and communication.[374] Of course, communication must have a purpose and meaning is paramount: expressing meaning, negotiating meaning, understanding meaning. Thus, a communicative approach embraces the belief that learners will learn the target language best through the process of using it to communicate their own meanings.[375] To this end, a communicative approach holds that a language should be presented and practised in relation to the uses it can be put.[376] Thus, systematic attention is paid to the functional as well as structural aspects of language.[377] This is achieved by linking linguistic forms to their communicative functions and contextualising the language by relating it to the social contexts within which it is used. The aim is to make learners conscious of the communicative value of what they are learning and to enable them to see language learning as a means of meeting communicative needs.[378] In this way, learners may be brought to awareness that vocabulary and structures learnt can be used for expressing and receiving meaning through the target language.[379] They are, therefore, enabled to see the immediate applicability of their learning, to link classroom learning with the real world.

CLT intertwines the organisational (grammatical, discourse) aspects of language with the pragmatic (functional, sociolinguistic, strategic) aspects.[380] A basic assumption of the approach is that learners will be able to transfer skills and knowledge developed in the classroom to appropriate use in the outside world.[381] It involves a movement from the teaching about the target language through the teaching of rules, definitions and patterns to enabling learners to communicate through the target language. The emphasis is not on how much grammar the learners know but on what they can do with what they know.[382] Language items are selected on the basis of what the learner needs to know to get things done. Genuine everyday language is emphasised. Language learning objectives are thus defined in terms of communicative behaviour to be achieved. The approach is organised according to

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[373] M. Halliday. *Learning how to mean: explorations in the development of language*. (London: Edward Arnold, 1975).
[374] R. Mitchell, 'The communicative approach to language teaching: An introduction' in *Teaching Modern Languages*. Ed. A. Swarbrick (London: Routledge/Open University, 1994).
[375] Joe Shiels. *Communication in the Modern Languages Class*. (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1988).
[376] C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson. *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching,* 44.
[377] W.T. Littlewood, *Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 1.
[378] W.T. Littlewood. *Foreign and Second Language Learning: Acquisition Research and its implications for the classroom*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 97.
[379] N. Pachler. 'Re-examining communicative language teaching' in Issues in moderm foreign language teaching. Ed. K. Field (London: Routledge, 2000).
[380] *Ibid.*
[381] David Nunan. *The Learner-Centred Curriculum* Cambridge. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 78.
[382] H. Douglas Brown. *Teaching by Principles, An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. Third Edition. (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007), 46.

the communicative functions that the learner or learners need to know to achieve their communicative goals and grammatical forms are learned to express these functions appropriately.[383]

3.7 Developing communicative competence

A communicative approach aims to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching.[384] In a bid to find how best to teach communication, communicative competence (CC) has been defined and redefined.[385] As discussed in Chapter 2, communicative competence involves having both linguistic and pragmatic knowledge. This means that the emphasis for the learner is more on 'being able to do' in the target language rather than on just 'knowing about' the target language. Socio-linguistic competence is a crucial component of communicative competence and involves knowing about the appropriateness of form and the appropriateness of meaning.[386] Learners will not develop this knowledge without practice of using the target language in context. The emphasis for the teacher is on making form subservient to meaning and prioritising approaches to teaching and learning that enable the learner to develop the confidence and ability to communicate through the target language.[387] To this end motivating, supportive contexts for the production of the target language must be created to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes.[388]

Brumfit argues that in communicative language teaching the classroom methodology may be considered part of the content. It is through what the learners are being asked to do with the target language that they are exposed to a model of the possible uses of the language.[389] Therefore, a communicative approach hinges on tasks and activities that provide learners with a communicative challenge. Direct rather than delayed practice of communicative acts is essential to the approach.[390] Through appropriate, meaningful activities, learners are motivated and scaffolded into communication. The object is to enable them to relate language to the social meanings it carries and

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[383] Michael Canale and Merrill Swain, 'Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing' in *Applied Llinguistics, Vol. 1*, (No. 1, Spring 1980): 1.
[384] R. Mitchell, 'The communicative approach to language teaching: An introduction' in *Teaching modern languages*. Ed. A. Swarbrick (London: Routledge/Open University, 1994).
[385] S. Savignon, 'Communicative language teaching: Strategies and goals' in *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning.* Ed. E. Hinkel (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005), 635-651.
[386] C.-L. Dautry, 'Objectives in Language Teaching and Learning' in Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning. Ed. M. Byram (London: Routledge, 2000), 454.
[387] *Ibid.*
[388] H. Douglas Brown. *Teaching by Principles, An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. Third Edition. (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007), 46.
[389] C.J. Brumfit. *Communicative Methodology in Language Teaching: The roles of fluency and accuracy,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 88.
[390] Jack C. Richards and Theodore Rodgers. *Approaches and Methods in Language Learning.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Tenth Edition, 1994).

to see it as a vehicle for social interaction.[391] Thus, classroom language learning is linked with language use outside the classroom. This, as will be further discussed in Chapter 4, helps to sustain learners' intrinsic motivation as they see the relevance of their work in the language class.

A communicative approach holds that form is best learnt when learners' attention is on meaning.[392] As argued in Chapter 2 the sub-conscious element of language acquisition demands that learners' attention be focussed not on the language itself but on the communication of meanings.[393] Participants are trying to get something done and language is a by-product of this. The purpose is to extend the number of situations in which the learner can communicate his/her message without being hindered by the need to focus on form.[394] Learners are forced to stretch their linguistic abilities to meet the challenge. Where they do not meet the challenge then teaching can be given. This helps learners can thus see the connection between what they are learning and its communicative potential.[395] Realism and relevance sustain learners' motivation and make the activity more appropriate to their probable and present communicative needs.[396]

The aim is to enable individuals to create and construct utterances, both written and spoken, which have the desired purpose and social value.[397] Since the capacity of learners to perform creatively must be developed; there should not be a limitation of creativity by prior specification of message and form.[398] Therefore, it is important that learners gain an understanding and mastery of the social significance of language forms. To do this they must, as argued in Chapter 2, be enabled to process the whole situation between themselves and their interlocutors. They need to realise the importance of choosing their language based on an evaluation of their interlocutor's linguistic and communicative competence as well as their situational and social knowledge. Thus, they need to be exposed to situations where they must communicate their meaning as efficiently and economically as possible.[399]

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[391] W.T. Littlewood. *Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 12.
[392] Prabhu, *The Bangalore Project,* 1982: 2.
[393] W.T. Littlewood. Foreign and Second Language Learning: Acquisition research and its implications for the classroom. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 91.
[394] *Ibid.:* 89.
[395] C.J. Brumfit, 'Communicative Language Teaching: an educational perspective' in *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching* Eds. C.J. Brumfit and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 18.
[396] W.T. Littlewood. *Communicative Language Teaching: An introduction.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 5.
[397] D.A. Wilkins, 'Some issues in communicative language teaching and their relevance to the teaching of languages in secondary schools' in. *Perspectives in Communicative Language Teaching.* Eds. K. Johnson and D. Porter (London: Academic Press, 1983), 34.
[398] Christopher Brumfit. *Communicative Methodology in Language Teaching: The roles of fluency and accuracy.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 91.
[399] C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson. *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*, Eds. C.J. Brumfit and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 44.

Taking Long's Interaction Hypothesis, as discussed in Chapter 2, into account, a communicative approach holds that learners should be enabled to develop skills to judge the success of the communication according to feedback received. They should also be enabled to remedy any failure in communication through a different choice of language. This can only be achieved by practice of using language for communicative purposes, to convey and receive messages. In real communication situations, the speaker, in response to some external stimulus or while initiating communication, creates a message and the receiver of the message is able to understand messages that could not have been predicted in advance. The learners must develop the ability to carry out this process under pressure to communicate one's message in real time and the need to focus on content rather than form.[400] The use of the target language for classroom management and communication is an essential to achieving this aim. The classroom is a social context in its own right where learners and teachers are in real social relationships with one another. It could be claimed that classroom discourse is the only real communication that takes place in the classroom setting.[401] As far as possible the teacher should address the learners in the target language. The context will help learners to understand the teacher's meaning. Similarly, learners should be encouraged to use the target language when speaking to one another and to the teacher. Early in the learning process learners should be provided with the vocabulary and phrases necessary to enable them to communicate effectively within the classroom situation.[402] Once they have been mastered they can be used creatively, transferred to other contexts from the ones in which they were acquired.[403] In the communicative classroom, students ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts. Much more spontaneous use of the tl is encouraged in CLT than was traditionally practised. Thus, classroom tasks must furnish learners with the skills necessary for communication in unrehearsed contexts outside the classroom.[404]

Widdowson argues that the purpose of CLT is to enable learners 'to develop the ability to cope with naturally occurring language in context'.[405] It follows, he argues, that the content be drawn from natural, authentic contexts with a devolvement of responsibility to learners working collaboratively. Widdowson holds that language classroom activities have to satisfy two crucial pedagogic

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[400] D.A. Wilkins, 'Some issues in communicative language teaching and their relevance to the teaching of languages in secondary schools' in *Perspectives in Communicative Language Teaching*. Eds. K. Johnson and D. Porter (London: Academic Press, 1983), 34.
[401] R. Mitchell. 'The communicative approach to language teaching: An introduction', in *Teaching modern languages*. Ed. A. Swarbrick (London: Routledge/The Open University).
[402] Joe Shiels, *Communication in the Modern languages Classroom.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1988),
[403] W.T. Littlewood, *Foreign and Second Language Acquisition Research and its Implications for the Classroom*, 43.
[404] H. Douglas Brown. *Teaching by Principles, An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. Third Edition. (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007), 46.
[405] H.G. Widdowson. *Defining Issues in English Language Teaching.* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), 23.

conditions.[406] First, the problem that is set has to engage learners in what they perceive to be purposeful activity. In other words the problem has to be appropriate to their reality. Secondly, it has to activate their learning, to use learners' prior knowledge and experience as 'a semantic resource for making meaning'.[407] With practice, and given enough opportunities to use known language in different contexts, learners develop skills for manipulating language for effective communication. Recycling is an important part of a communicative approach. This means that language functions reoccur throughout a language course. On their first occurrence they are realised with simple linguistic means. As the learners progresses the linguistic means by which they are carried out become increasingly more complex.[408]

The advantage of communicative language teaching over other approaches is that the learner is able to communicate in the target language at whatever level he/she stopped learning. To this end classroom activities should provide a maximum of opportunities for learners to use the tl meaningfully allowing them to focus on communicating their meanings or messages and the task they are completing rather than on the correctness of the language or language form.[409] They should feel comfortable taking risks with language and not be inhibited by the fear of making mistakes or errors.[410] As argued in Chapter 2, it is accepted that making errors while trying to use language creatively and unpredictably is a normal part of language learning. In the communicative language class learners' errors will be tolerated as they try to communicate. Constant correction is deemed unnecessary and even counterproductive.[411] Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques. At times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use. On other occasions the learner will be required to focus on accuracy. Authentic, meaningful interaction is to the fore in CLT in an attempt to build fluency.[412] Fluency is encouraged in tandem with clear, unambiguous, direct communication. Enabling learners to communicate successfully from the outset, in ways of their own choosing, helps to sustain their confidence and motivation. If learners can make immediate and practical use of what is learned, if the meaning can be integrated into real life contexts, then the learners will be more intrinsically motivated to learn.[413] They realise that they can, from the beginning of the language

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[406] H.G. Widdowson. *Defining Issues in English Language Teaching*. (Oxford: OUP, 2003), 124.
[407] *Ibid.*
[408] J.A.Van Ek. 'Specification of communicative objectives' in Modern Languages Programme 1971-1981. (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1981) 21.
[409] R. Mitchell. 'The communicative approach to language teaching. An introduction'. In *Teaching modern languages*. Ed. A. Swarbrick (London: Routledge, 1994), 33-42.
[410] P. Lightbown and N. Spada. 'Focus on form and corrective feedback in communicative language teaching: Effects on second language learning' in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition 12,* (1990), 429-48.
[411] R. Mitchell. 'The communicative approach to language teaching. An introduction' in *Teaching modern languages*. Ed. A. Swarbrick (London: Routledge, 1994), 33-42.
[412] F. Chambers. 'What do we mean by fluency?' *System, 25,* (1997): 535-544.
[413] M. Finocchario and C. Brumfit. The Functional-Notional Approach. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 91-93.

course, do something that they recognise as part of their ultimate objective.[414] This, as will be further discussed in Chapter 4, will help to support and sustain learners' intrinsic motivation to learn the target language.

However, while communication of meaning is central to a communicative approach this does not mean that grammar is unimportant. As posited in Chapter 2, Canale and Swain did not suggest that grammar was unimportant but sought to locate grammatical competence within a broader definition of communicative competence.[415] Similarly, the findings of Savignon did not suggest that grammar be abandoned but that structure drills be replaced by meaning-focused classroom activity to increase communicative ability with no loss of grammatical accuracy.[416] Indeed, as discussed in Chapter 2, analytic focus and experiential focus are complementary and may provide essential support for one another in second language teaching and learning. Involvement in communicative events necessarily requires attention to form as effective communication in the target language cannot take place in the absence of structure. For the development of communicative competence, as argued in Chapter 2, research findings support the integration of form-focused and meaning-focused activity.[417] Learners focus best on grammar when they can see how it relates better communication in the target language.[418]

3.8 Planning to use a communicative approach

It is generally accepted that there is a strong and a weak version of communicative language teaching.[419] The strong version holds that class time should be spent on activities that require learners to do in class what they have to do outside. Time is not given to language drills or controlled practice. This version corresponds closely with a task-based instruction approach which is described later. The weak version recommends that learners be provided with opportunities for using their language for communicative purposes through activities that are integrated into the wider teaching programme. Learners are generally led through pre-communicative or controlled language practice before moving on to communicative activities. The weak version has gained sway.[420] Nunan believes that this weak

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[414] J.A.Van Ek. 'Specification of communicative objectives' in Modern Languages Programme 1971-1981. (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1981) 21.
[415] M. Canale and M. Swain. 'Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing' in *Applied Linguistics, 1,* (1980), 1-47.
[416] S.J. Sauvignon. *Communicative competence: an experiment in foreign language teaching.* (Philidelphia: Center for Curriculum Development, 1972).
[417] P. Lightbown and N. Spada. *How Languages are Learned.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
[418] N. Spada. Form-focused instruction and second language acquisition: A review of classroom and laboratory research. *Language Teaching, 30,* (1997), 73-87.
[419] A. Howatt. *A History of English Language Teaching.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).
[420] David Nunan, *The Learner-Centred Curriculum*: A study in second language teaching (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 26.

version has so successfully synthesised traditional and communicative principles that it is debatable whether it is still useful to use the term 'communicative' to describe this approach.[421]

Nonetheless, the wide acceptance of a communicative approach could be attributed to the fact that it can be interpreted and applied in many different ways so practitioners can use it in ways best suited to their circumstances.[422] Indeed, Nunan claims that there is a cluster of approaches that characterise language learning as the development of communicative skills.[423] Yalden, for example, lists five different varieties of communicative language teaching:[424]

- A functional syllabus starts with needs analysis from which a description of desired outcomes of instruction is prepared. These are listed in terms of language functions; general and specific notions; rhetorical skills and linguistic forms. The teacher then uses appropriate communicative methodologies to meet the learning goals.
- A negotiated syllabus is a variant of the functional syllabus. The teacher takes the role of a resource and the content of the syllabus is negotiated between the learners and the teacher. This is the approach that underlies self-directed or autonomous learning.
- A natural syllabus is based on second language acquisition theory. Acquisition activities are provided in class. These activities are based on providing comprehensible input and are arranged to reflect the projected stages of second language acquisition.
- A subject-matter syllabus where a subject matter is taught through the target language is known in Canada as immersion teaching and in Europe as CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning).
- A task-based syllabus holds, as its central thesis, that structure is best learned when the learners' attention is focussed on meaning. The chief focus is on the performance of tasks rather than on the language needed to perform them.

As posited in section 3.7, communicative language teaching aims to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching by acknowledging the interdependence of language and communication. How the communicative approach is applied will depend on how the tenets are interpreted, the needs of the learners and the teaching/learning context. Communicative language teaching is learner-centred so its application will, by necessity, differ in each teaching context. Berns stresses that the selection of an approach appropriate to the attainment of communicative competence

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[421] David Nunan, *The Learner-Centred Curriculum*: A study in second language teaching (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 26.
[422] Jack C. Richards and Theodore Rodgers. *Approaches and Methods in Language Learning* (Cambridge University Press, 1994).
[423] David Nunan. *The learner-Centred Curriculum, A study in second language teaching* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 78.
[424] Janice Yalden. *Principles of Course Design for Language Teaching.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 62-66.

requires different styles of learning and thus the development of materials best suited to the particular learning context.[425] As Brown argues, the language teaching profession is at the point of maturity where it recognises that the complexity of language learners, in multiple worldwide contexts, demands an eclectic blend of tasks tailored to the needs and expectations of a particular group of learners in a particular place, studying for particular purposes in a given amount of time.[426]

Richterich identifies three dimensions to a language learner's learning:

- as a communicating individual (development of his/her communicative competence)
- as a learner (development of his/her own learning strategies; learning how to learn a language)
- as a person (development and affirmation of personality)[427].

Thus, he argues, a language course should consider how best to develop the learners' communicative competence, their autonomy as learners, and the affective dimension of their personalities.[428] These dimensions offer a summary of the behavioural and cognitive objectives of the Junior and Leaving Certificate syllabuses as will be seen in Chapter 5.

CLT places the learners firmly at the centre of the language learning process.[429] To identify the learning objectives for a group of learners, the probable situations in which they will use the target language will first have to be defined. This will help to specify the roles the learners will have to play, the settings in which the roles will be played and the topics with which they will have to deal.[430] Trim believes that identifying learner needs will cover the way in which the learner will need to use the target language but also social and personal development needs, such as, the improvement of study skills and the fostering of learner independence.[431] He proposes that planning take account of individual learners' needs but also the requirements of the social groups to which the learners belong: fellow learners, the school, the family, and so on. The relevant characteristics of all parties to the learning process have to be established and their effect on the learners assessed. These factors should

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[425] M. Berns. *Contexts of competence: English language teaching in non-native contexts.*(New York: Plenum, 1990).
[426] H. Douglas Brown. *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy.* (Eaglewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall Regents, 1994), 74.
[427] Rene Richterich, 'Identification and assessment of needs, motivations, characteristics and resources of learners, teaching institutions and society' in *Modern Languages programme 1971-1981,* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1981).
[428] *Ibid.*
[429] R. Mitchell. 'The communicative approach to language teaching. An introduction' in *Teaching modern languages.* Ed. A. Swarbrick (London: Routledge, 1994), 33-42.
[430] J.A. Van Ek, 'The Threshold Level' in *The Communicative Approach to Language Learning, Eds.* C.J. Brumfit and K. Johnson,102.
[431] J.L.M. Trim, 'Resume' in *Modern Languages Programme 1971-1981,* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1981), xii.

be continuously monitored and the programme flexible enough to respond to the changes in learners, their teachers, and the circumstances under which they are working.[432] Richterich supports this view stating that learner needs must be identified so they can be involved in decisions on the language teaching and language learning process.[433] To ensure that the learners' needs are met the objectives of the course must be negotiated with the learners. They must be seen to be clear, worthwhile and attainable. This, as will be argued in Chapter 4, supports the fostering of learner autonomy and a collaborative approach to the language learning process. When learners are asked to practise that which they recognise as leading to their learning goals then it makes more sense to them than when they are required to engage in activities which they must accept on the teacher's authority as leading to their desired objective.[434] Objectives will give meaningful direction to the selection of learning experiences most likely to meet the desired outcome. However they must be seen as guidelines and not as straight jackets.[435] They should be adapted and modified as the course progresses to meet learners' changing needs and to allow for individual needs.

Piepho proposes the following general objectives applicable to any teaching situation in a communicative approach:

- an integrative and content level (language as a means of expression);
- a linguistic and instrumental level (language as a semiotic system and an object of learning);
- an affective level of interpersonal relationships and conduct (language as a means of expressing values and judgements about oneself and others);
- a level of individual learning needs (remedial learning based on error analysis);
- a general educational level of extra-linguistic goals (language learning within the school curriculum).[436]

He argues that since the approach assumes that language teaching will reflect the needs of the learners then objectives cannot be made any more specific than this. The needs may be in the domain of any of the four skills each of which can be approached from a communicative perspective.

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[432] J.L.M. Trim, 'Resume' in *Modern Languages Programme 1971-1981*, (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1981), xiii.
[433] Rene Richterich, 'Identification and assessment of needs, motivations, characteristics and resources of learners, teaching institutions and society', in *Modern Languages programme 1971-1981,* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1981). 12.
[434] J.A. Van Ek, 'Specification of communicative objectives' in *Modern languages Programme 1971-1981,*(Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1981), 21.
[435] *Ibid.:* 15.
[436] H.E. Piepho, 'Establishing objectives in the teaching of English' in C. Candlin (Ed.), *The Communicative Teaching of English: Principles and an Exercise Typology. (London*: Longman, 1981), 8.

Breen and Candlin propose that since all learners have special purposes for learning a language then their interests, motivations and expectations of the language learning experience must be taken into account.[437] Since there will be many different expectations and since learner expectations will change over time a heterogeneity of learner expectations needs to be accommodated. However, they argue, expectations can be educated.[438] Thus, learners need to express their expectations before exploring them and the sources from which they have derived. They must know the learning goals, as they will not learn unless they know what they are trying to achieve. Thus, there must be a process of negotiation between learner goals and expectations, the goals of the syllabus, and the means by which they are brought together.[439] This, as will be seen in Chapter 4, will increase learner autonomy in their use and learning of the target language.

3.9 Communicative tasks and activities

A communicative approach seeks to promote the natural learning process by engaging learners in tasks and activities that are transparently related to their communicative objectives.[440] The types of activities and tasks will depend on the age, interests, needs, experiences, goals, and preferred learning styles of the learners. Any task or activity that develops learners' ability and willingness to use the target language appropriately and accurately for the purpose of effective communication is accepted.[441] The aim is to engage learners in meaningful activities such as problem solving, discussions, and narratives to stretch and develop learners' inter-language systems.[442] Differentiation can be applied to learner contributions prior to and throughout the learning process, the choice of activities offered, learners' means of achieving goals, and the ways learners choose to use their abilities.[443]

Nunan holds that the content of communicative tasks and activities should focus on knowledge that is both cognitively and affectively significant for the learner.[444] It needs to reflect and support the integration of language with the experience, interest and interpersonal concerns of the group.[445] Sequencing is cyclic with learners acquiring related frameworks of knowledge and skills rather than

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[437] Michael P. Breen and Christopher Candlin, 'The Essentials of a Communicative Curriculum in Language Teaching', *Applied Linguistics, Vol.1*, (No. 2, Summer 1980): 94.
[438] *Ibid.*
[439] *Ibid.*: 95.
[440] R. Mitchell. 'The communicative approach to language teaching. An introduction' in *Teaching modern languages.* Ed. A. Swarbrick (London: Routledge, 1994), 33-42.
[441] Jack C. Richards and Theodore Rodgers. *Approaches and Methods in Language Learning* (Cambridge University Press, 1994).
[442] Pauline Foster, 'Task based learning and pedagogy' in *ELT Journal Volume 53 (1,* January 1999).
[443] Michael P Breen and Christopher N.Candlin, 'The Essentials of a Communicative Curriculum in Language Teaching' *Applied Linguistics, Vol.1*, (No. 2, Summer 1980): 96.
[444] D. Nunan. *Task-based language teaching.* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
[445] D. Nunan. *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom.* (Cambidge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

separable blocks of sequenced structures or functions.[446] At the same time activities and tasks should enable learners to see that learning the target language is not only learning to communicate but is also itself a mode of communication.[447] Tasks and activities should allow the learner to see how their learning relates to real world use of the target language. The focus is firmly on learning the target language through communication and for communication and to this end there should be an information gap to be filled through the task or activity.[448] An information gap means that at least one party in a communicative situation does not have a piece of information that he/she requires. It thus reflects real life communicative situations and can motivate learners to use the target language as a means of communication.[449] The activity should, as far as possible, allow for freedom for the speaker or writer in terms of the language used and the meanings expressed.[450] This authentic use of language motivates the speaker or writer to find the language that best expresses his/her meaning and ensures the production of a good deal of unpredictable language for the receiver.[451] It motivates the receiver to give the text or utterance attention since he/she cannot fully predict what the content will be. Learners may be further motivated to improve their language in order to more fully express their opinions and to better understand the ideas and opinions of their classmates.[452] Thus, learner response is authentic since it has its roots in his/her personality and develops out of the interaction between participants in a meaningful social context.[453] The competence that is developed through these interactions can be deployed later in other communicative situations. Of course, there must also be a variety of contexts in order to prepare the learners for the array of frameworks in which items might reoccur.[454]

Learners' language needs should be met through tasks and activities but these should also appeal to learners' interests, their need for information and their imagination.[455] The aim should be to personally interest, involve and challenge the learner. In order to allow for differences in personal interest learners should be involved in the choosing of activities and tasks.[456] This, as seen in Chapter 4, will enable learners to become more involved in the learning process and to learn to take more

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[446] H.G. Widdowson. *Defining Issues in English Language Teaching*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
[447] Michael P. Breen and Christopher N. Candlin, 'The Essentials of a Communicative Curriculum in Language Teaching', *Applied Linguistics, Vol.1*, (No. 2, Summer 1980): 103.
[448] N. Pachler. 'Re-examining communicative language teaching' in Issues in Modern foreign language teaching Ed. K. Field (London: Routledge, 2000), 26-41; 22-37.
[449] R. Mitchell. 'The communicative approach to language teaching: An introduction' in *Teaching modern languages*. Ed. A. Swarbrick (London: Routledge/The Open University, 1994).
[450] *Ibid.*
[451] G. Jacobs and T. Farrell. 'Understanding and implementing the communicative language paradigm', *RELC Journal, 34*, (2003): 5-30.
[452] *Ibid.*
[453] William Littlewood. *Teaching Oral Communication: A Methodological Framework.* (Cambridge, Ma.: Blackwell, 1992), 102.
[454] Rivers, Wilga. 'Opening Doors and Windows through Interactive Language Teaching' in *Babel 23* (1, 1988): 10.
[455] S. Savignon. 'Communicative language teaching: Strategies and goals' in *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning.* Ed. E. Hinkel (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaun Associates, 2005), 635-651.
[456] D. Nunan. *Task-based language teaching*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

responsibility for their learning with advantageous motivational affects. The content of the tasks and activities should build on and extend learner experiences and interests.[457] In this way learning the target language can be seen by learners to be meaningful, connected to the real world, and a means of learning more about topics of interest to them. To ensure that classroom communication reflects real life communication it is essential that learners be given choice in what they communicate and how they communicate it. Choice and an information gap will allow tasks and activities to be more realistic, meaningful, and intrinsically motivating. They will support learners to experiment with the target language, to choose language that they think appropriate to a situation and to see the consequences of their choices.[458] In order to enable learners to have choice in how to express their meaning they should be sufficiently exposed to a variety of linguistic forms.[459] Thus, they may come to know that many different linguistic forms can be used to perform a function and that often a single form can serve a variety of functions. Through practice and interactive use of the target language they will learn to choose the form most appropriate to the social context, the situation, their roles and the roles of their interlocutors.

A communicative approach centres on a learner centred, involved learning approach which engages learners in meaningful tasks and activities. The types of activity and tasks used will depend on learner interests and needs but all aim to develop learners' communicative competence. Traditionally, tasks are generally divided into activities that prepare learners for communication, activities that focus learners' attention on communicating through the target language, and activities that build on what has been learnt through the previous activities or that work on gaps in learning diagnosed through previous activity. The stages of this three part framework phases are pre-communicative activities, communicative activities, and post-communicative activities.[460] These phases are discussed below:

Pre-communicative activities aim to enable learners to gain linguistic ability. They are usually teacher directed. The emphasis is on accuracy in order to help learners to produce language forms correctly as a preparation for more communicative activities.[461] Discrete items may be isolated for practice but always ensuring the learners understand how they are to be used for communicative purposes. This

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[457] H.G. Widdowson, 'The deep structure of discourse and the use of translation' in The *Communicative Approach to Language Teaching.* Eds. C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979. 2nd edition, 1981), 71.
[458] J. Lee and B. Van Patten. *Making communicative language teaching happen.* 2nd edition. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003).
[459] Diane Larsen-Freeman, *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching,* 128.
[460] W.T. Littlewood, *Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction,* (Cambridge: Cambridge Universtiy Press, 1981), 89.
[461] W.T. Littlewood, *Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction,* (Cambridge: Cambridge Universtiy Press, 1981), 89.

phase may be seen as the presentation and practice stage. Littlewood[462] subdivides pre-communicative activities into structural activities and quasi-communicative activities. Structural activities focus on learning, revising or consolidating the structures and linguistic items learners need to successfully communicate their message. Quasi-communicative activities offer opportunities to practise language learnt or revised in a way that prepares them for more spontaneous communication. Thus, pre-communicative activities scaffold learners into communicative activities through preparation and practice for communication. Widdowson[463] highlights that learners' ability to do this depends on their having learnt the meaning and communication potential of the code/items and that therefore this must be developed through the presentation and practice stages of the pre-communicative activities. If presentation and practice stages of pre-communicative activities fail to engage learners then the production stage can often be reduced to an extension of the practice stage.

Communicative activities are learner centred. They are based on the premise that target language use is positively reinforced if learners see how they can successfully use it to give and receive messages.[464] Learners are given opportunities to use language for communicative purposes. The concern is with process rather than product with an emphasis on communication of meaning rather than form.[465] According to Morrow,[466] activities and tasks that are truly communicative must have three elements: an information gap, choice and feedback. An information gap occurs where one person in the exchange knows something that the other does not. It may also occur where a task has to be completed in order to find information needed. Choice is an integral part of real communication as speaker or writer decides what he/she will say and how he/she will express it. Communicative activities allow learners this freedom. Face to face and telephone interactions depend on feedback so that it can be known and made known whether the message has been successfully communicated. In communicative activities others in the exchange will provide feedback through their responses and reactions. This, as discussed in Chapter 2, will enable the learner to evaluate his/her success in communicating through the target language.

Littlewood distinguishes between functional communication activities and social interaction activities.[467] Functional communication activities, he argues, have a well-defined communicative

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[462] W.T. Littlewood, *Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Universtiy Press, 1981).
[463] H.G. Widdowson. *Defining Issues in English Language Teaching.* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), 119.
[464] N. Pachler and K. Field. *Learning to Teach Modern Foreign languages in the Secondary school. A companion to school experience.* 2nd Edition. (London: Routledge Falmer, 2001), 45.
[465] Michael P Breen and Christopher N. Candlin, 'The Essentials of a Communicative Curriculum in Language Teaching', *Applied Linguistics, Vol. 1,* (No. 2, Summer 1980): 103.
[466] K. Morrow, in K. Johnson and K. Morrow, Eds. *Communication in the Classroom*, (Harlow: Longman, 1981).
[467] W.T. Littlewood, *Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Universtiy Press, 1981), 21.

purpose. Learners must exchange information or solve a problem with whatever language they have at their disposal. In this way these activities simulate real life situations. Success is measured by how learners are able to cope with the communicative demands of the situation. Feedback is inbuilt as learners assess the adequacy of their performance by measuring their success or failure to communicate their meanings. Social interaction activities approximate more closely to the type of interaction found outside the classroom. Language is being used for functional purposes but also as a form of social behaviour. Success will be measured in terms of the social acceptability of the language produced as well as its functional effectiveness. The social acceptability will depend on the criteria used for measurement. For a beginner a satisfactory level of grammatical accuracy may apply. For a more advanced learner it may be the production of language that is situationally and socially appropriate as well as grammatical accuracy.

Post-communicative activities involve advice and correction. The teacher addresses mistakes noted during the communication activities. Post-communicative activities may also build on the knowledge and experiences gained in communicative activities.

The communicative classroom aims to enable learners to use the target language receptively and productively in unrehearsed contexts.[468] To this end, Littlewood advises that tasks and activities should strike a balance between usage and use, between formal practice of structures and their use in contexts requiring interpretation and expression of meaning.[469] While pre-communicative activities enable learners to practise language before dealing with use, communicative activities provide whole task practice with integration of the four skills. It is desirable that learners see the value of one as a preparation for the other. Language practice usually comes before communication but sometimes an activity is started and, as it progresses learners and teachers realise what language is needed thus moving from a communicative activity to a practice activity. Littlewood suggests that activities should be seen as a sort of continuum: some closer to a pre-communicative end and others to a communicative end.[470]

More recent writings on CLT focus on the task as essential to the development of communicative competence.[471] The task is put at the centre of the methodological focus with the learning process being seen as a set of communicative tasks that are directly linked to the curricular aims and objectives. Skehan describes a task as being an activity, which has relationship to real-world

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[468] S. Savignon. 'Communicative language teaching: Strategies and goals' in *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning.* Ed. E. Hinkel (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaun Associates, 2005), 635-651.
[469] W.T. Littlewood, *Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction,* (Cambridge: Cambridge Universtiy Press, 1981), 89.
[470] *Ibid.*
[471] See Willis and Willis, 2007; Nunan, 2004; Skehan, 2003; Bygate, Skehan and Swain, 2001; Willis, 1996.

activities, in which meaning is to the fore, where there is a problem to solve and an objective that can be assessed as an outcome of the task being achieved.[472] A simpler definition may be 'a task is an activity which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to obtain an objective'.[473]

Tasks have well specified objectives and they specifically contribute to communicative goals. A distinction is made between target tasks (uses of language or task learners must accomplish in the world beyond the classroom) and pedagogical tasks (tasks that occur in the classroom and form the hub of classroom activity).[474] Brown[475] argues that in some cases task and technique may be synonymous, for example, a problem solving task/technique or a role play task/technique while at other times a task may comprise several techniques, for example brainstorming, followed by grammatical explanation, followed by matching task. Tasks enable learners to see the communicative potential of the semantic encoding or grammar.[476]

Willis and Willis argue that a task-based approach to teaching and learning puts the focus more firmly on meaning than traditional communicative approaches.[477] They argue that more traditional approaches, such as Littlewood's pre-communicative, communicative, and post-communicative activities, put the focus on form before meaning with teachers presenting the forms followed by learners practising them. A task-based approach, they hold, focuses on meaning first and then on form.[478] Learners are encouraged to engage in meaning with the language resources they already have. This makes learners aware of what they need to learn. Then, at some stage during a meaning-focused cycle, learners and teacher will focus on language as learners pause to consider how better to express themselves.

Not all are convinced about the merits of a task-based approach, Widdowson, for example, argues that the defining features of tasks are so hedged in their wording as to allow any interpretation that is convenient for the teacher.[479] He argues that the criteria which define task-based teaching and learning are 'in practice more honoured in the breach than the observance'.[480] This researcher has used the three part framework described above approach and a task based instruction approach which also has

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[472] P. Skehan. *A cognitive approach to language learning.* (Oxford: OUP, 1998), 95.
[473] M. Bygate, P. Skehan and M. Swain Eds. *Researching pedagogic tasks: Second language learning, teaching and testing* (London: Longman, 2001), 11. Cited in H. Douglas Brown. *Teaching by Principles, An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy.* Third Edition. (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007), 50.
[474] D. Nunan. *Task-based language teaching.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). J. Willis A framework for task-based learning. (Essex: Longman, 1996).
[475] H. Douglas Brown. *Teaching by Principles, An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy.* Third Edition. (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007), 50.
[476] H.G. Widdowson. *Defining Issues in English Language Teaching.* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), 125.
[477] D. Willis and J. Willis. *Doing Task-based Teaching.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 4.
[478] *Ibid.:* 5.
[479] H.G. Widdowson. *Defining Issues in English Language Teaching.* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), 126.
[480] *Ibid.:* 127.

a three part framework (pre-task, task cycle and language focus) and found both had their uses in promoting a communicative approach. CLT is best understood as an approach than a method[481] and, as discussed above they may be seen to represent weak and strong versions of a communicative approach. The important focus is that the learner is at the centre of the approach. Therefore, how CLT is implemented will depend on the teaching and learning context, the needs, interests and expectations of the learners. The teacher is a co-participant in the learning process. He/She puts the necessary supports and structures in place to ensure that learners are provided with adequate exposure to the language as well as adequate confidence and motivation to use it to communicate meanings.[482] In some activities he/she will take the role of instructor: presenting new material before enabling learners to practise and use the material for communication. In others the teacher will act as an initiator: setting up the activity then withdrawing to allow learning to take place through the activity. In others he/she will act as co-communicator: stimulating and presenting new material without taking the initiative away from the learners, without becoming too dominant.[483]

A communicative approach aims to give learners the confidence to use language spontaneously in real, unpredictable situations.[484] To this end activities and tasks should be success oriented, guiding learners on what to look for, and having an outcome that provides the learners with feedback on their performance.[485] Tasks and activities should be seen by learners to be relevant and challenging, but also attainable. To ensure that themes, materials and activities are relevant, choice should be offered. This, as discussed above, allows learners to share in the responsibility for their learning and thus to develop greater autonomy.

Brown argues that a focus on learners' comprehension and production of the target language along with a focus on formal accuracy are complementary principles underlying a communicative approach.[486] Accuracy is judged in context.[487] At times, for example, if the purpose is to convey or comprehend meanings, in order to keep learners' attention on communication, fluency may be given more attention than accuracy. At other times, where practice of language structures or items is the focus and the purpose is to produce pre-determined linguistic structures then accuracy will take

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[481] J. Richards and T. Rodgers. *Approaches and methods in language teaching.* [10th] edition. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
[482] W.T. Littlewood. *Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 92.
[483] *Ibid.*
[484] R. Mitchell. 'The communicative approach to language teaching: An introduction' in *Teaching modern languages*. Ed. A. Swarbrick (London: Routledge/The Open University, 1994).
[485] Joe Shiels. Comm*unication in the Modern Languages Classroom,* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1988), 21.
[486] H. Douglas Brown. *Teaching by Principles. An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy.* Third Edition (White Plains NY: Pearson Education Inc., 2007), 46.
[487] M. Finocchiaro and C. Brumfit. *The Functional-Notional Approach: From Theory to Practice.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 91-93.

precedence over fluency.[488] Of course an activity may combine both criteria in which case it will be measured by both structural and communicative criteria. The teacher will offer appropriate feedback at an appropriate time on errors, perhaps, as discussed above, during the post-communicative or the language focus phase. In addition to this type of feedback learners will receive immediate feedback during their exchanges and communication through the target language speakers on whether or not he/she has successfully communicated.

Littlewood advises that it is important to monitor the type of feedback given so that it supports the methodological purpose of the activity.[489] The nature of the feedback tells the learner what his/her focus should be. In some activities feedback may be intrinsic to the task. In others the reaction of one's interlocutors gives feedback. In pre-communicative activities the feedback will need to relate to linguistic form. In communicative activities the focus will be on communicative feedback. An over-emphasis on structure here will encourage learners to shift their focus from meaning to form. Thus it may be advisable to withhold structural correction until after the activity. As posited in Chapter 2, errors are an inevitable part of the process of second language development. They are not detrimental to progress in language acquisition.[490] Particular errors belong to certain stages in a learner's language development and they drop away as another stage is entered.[491] Thus, errors should be seen as a natural part of the development of communication skills. This is an important tenet of a communicative approach to language teaching and learning.

3.10 The affective dimension in the communicative classroom

The interpersonal nature of communication means that it is permeated by values, emotions and attitudes – both socio-cultural and personal. These affects determine what we choose to communicate about and how we communicate. Communication cannot be affectively neutral. Learning to communicate means that the learners will come to terms with the learning to the extent that their own affects are engaged.[492] Therefore, affective involvement is the stimulus behind much everyday communication and the motivation for learning to communicate in the target language. The learners' previous experience of communication will highlight it as a means by which human activity and consciousness is shared and reflected on socially. Thus, the teacher should see the purpose of

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[488] H. Douglas Brown. *Teaching by Principles. An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. Third Edition (White Plains NY: Pearson Education Inc., 2007), 46.
[489] W.T. Littlewood, *Communicative Language Teaching: An introduction*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 91.
[490] C.J. Brumfit, Communica*tive Methodology in Language Teaching:* the roles of fluency and accuracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 5.
[491] Arthur Hughes, 'Second language learning and communicative language teaching' in *Perspectives in Communicative Language Teaching*. Eds. K. Johnson and D. Porter (London: Academic Press, 1983), 5
[492] Michael P. Breen and Christopher N. Candlin, 'The Essentials of a Communicative Curriculum in Language Teaching', Vol 1 (2, 1980): 91.

language teaching to be 'the development of the learners' communicative knowledge in the context of personal and social development'.[493]

The development of communicative skills can only take place if learners are provided with motivating opportunities to relate with the people around them through expressing their own messages, identities and personalities. Using the target language to communicate one's own meanings intrinsically motivates learners as they can see the purpose of their language learning efforts.[494] However, speaking and writing what one feels in a new language can be difficult. In the early stages a simplified version of the language is used and, therefore, it can be difficult to express oneself with adequate nuance and subtlety. Thus, one runs the risk of giving the wrong impression of who one is or who one would like to be. This can be threatening and inhibiting and learners often seek to avoid it. If learners are to feel comfortable about expressing their identities through a foreign language then it is essential that the learning atmosphere give them a sense of security and value as an individual.

Enabling learners to express their individuality through the target language helps them to integrate it with their personalities thus enabling them to feel more secure with it. A supportive atmosphere should be established which allows learners to express their feelings, ideas and opinions, even if unconventional, in the classroom. Learners should learn to listen to one another and tolerate one another's ideas. They should help one another to express themselves in the target language.[495] This can only happen if interpersonal relationships are accepting and not inhibiting. These types of relations are essential to a communicative approach. However, an atmosphere that leads to the creation of good interpersonal relationships cannot be achieved through methodology alone.

Littlewood suggests that engaging in communicative interaction will provide opportunities for co-operative relationships to emerge between learners and between learners and their teacher.[496] When working in interactive activities the teacher takes on the role of co-communicator. This places the teacher and learners on an equal basis and helps to break down tensions and barriers that might otherwise exist. While engaging in communication activities learners' errors are to be regarded as a normal aspect of developing communication skills, they are not to be constantly corrected. Teachers and learners must be willing to take risks and laugh at themselves when things go wrong.[497]

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[493] Michael P. Breen and Christopher N. Candlin, 'The Essentials of a Communicative Curriculum in Language Teaching', Vol 1 (2, 1980): 91.
[494] H. Douglas Brown. *Teaching by Principles. An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy.* Third Edition (White Plains NY: Pearson Education Inc., 2007), 46.
[495] H.G. Krumm, 'Effecting Change in Teacher/Student Interaction' in *Report on Council of Europe's Workshop 3, Ed.* S. Tellan (Hameelinna, Finland).
[496] W.T. Littlewood, *Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
[497] Wilga Rivers, 'Opening Doors and Windows through Interactive Language Teaching' in *Babel 23* (1, 1988).

Working in small groups opens possibilities of interaction not normally available in a whole class approach. Brumfit recommends it as the most integrated and non-threatening mode of classroom organisation.[498] It will increase commitment to learning, increase awareness of possible solutions to problems, and reduce anxiety. It helps to simulate natural conversation conditions and reduces stress by allowing learners to negotiate meaning. Learners are more willing to take risks with their language; there is less fear, as one is not obliged to express oneself in front of the whole class. Learner contributions are encouraged thus establishing a less dominant role for the teacher and laying foundations for increased learner independence. Teacher talk is reduced and learner talking and listening times are increased and improved in intensity.[499] The teacher takes the role of monitor and facilitator and at times, co-communicator. He/She may guide and stimulate but should not take away learners' responsibility as equal participants in the interaction.[500]

Group-work allows greater potential for the individualisation of instruction.[501] Each group determines its own appropriate level because it is limited by its own capacities. The group works at a level determined by its own members. Co-operative learning is facilitated thus fostering a mutual dependence among learners and an independence from the teacher.[502] A relaxed, supportive working environment is created in which learners collaborate rather than compete. Communication skills are developed as learners involve in two-way tasks, sharing information to complete a task or solve a problem. Learners mobilise all linguistic resources and push their inter-language to the limit to convey their meanings. In response to language input they engage in creative construction actively creating language from their existing language resources.

Communicative interaction encourages co-operative relationships between learners. Small groups provide greater opportunities for peer feedback and self-evaluation. Through back channelling, through the response of other learners', there is reassurance that the message is getting through. Where the message is not being effectively communicated learners are forced to modify their language, to search for alternative routes to convey their meanings. Learners in small groups may encourage participants to negotiate meaning, as they prompt and help one another to successfully express their messages.

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[498] C.J. Brumfit, *Communicative Methodology in Language Teaching: the roles of fluency and accuracy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 75.
[499] David Nunan, *The Learner Centred Curriculum.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 83.
[500] Joe Shiels, *Communication in the Modern Languages Classroom.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1988).
[501] David Nunan, *The Learner Centred Curriculum: A study in second language teaching* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 83.
[502] Richard Allwright, 'Language learning through communication practice' in *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching.* Eds. C.J. Brumfit, and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979. 2nd Edition, 1981), 172.

3.11 Authenticity in the communicative language class

Authenticity is one of the key concepts of communicative language teaching and learning. Every aspect of the course should be appropriate to the learners' needs, expectations, and experience, and to the realities of communication within the target language community.[503] A strong line of continuity is needed between what goes on in the classroom and the modes of communication within the target language community. In authentic communication there is unpredictability – neither the speaker nor interlocutor can be absolutely sure what will be said or how. Choice is an essential component of authentic communication. According to the situation, the speaker chooses what to say and how to say it. The socially competent speaker will decide what needs to be communicated and then choose the mode of expression that will best suit his/her communicative intent and the social situation. According to the roles of the interlocutors the speakers will choose their message and their words. Each exchange will involve the interlocutors in further choices as they choose how best to respond to the meaning received. The exchange is propelled by an information gap, information which one communicator needs or wants, and by human needs for interaction and bonding.

However, it must be borne in mind that the classroom situation is a rich source of authentic communicative potential. Through the use of a communicative approach to language learning the classroom can enable communication as learning, communication about learning and meta-communication. The classroom is a resource in itself and a meeting point for all other resources – the learners, the teacher, the texts, the tasks and activities. The heterogeneous characteristics of these resources necessitate classroom negotiation and communication.[504] Thus, the interdependent character of the communicative classroom encourages and enables authentic communication based on the here and now of the participants.

Learners of a second language bring to the task world knowledge, discourse knowledge and linguistic knowledge. From their first language, they have a knowledge and understanding of the structure of discourse and, as experienced users of a language it is likely that they have a wide range of potential discourse topics. To restrict these learners to dealing with the here and now like infants learning their first language would be unnatural, as though they had regressed to an earlier stage of cognitive development. The use of authentic texts can help learners to bring previous knowledge and

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[503] David Little, Sean Devitt and David Singleton. *Authentic Texts in Foreign Language Teaching: Theory and Practice.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1988).

[504] Michael P Breen and Christopher N.Candlin, 'The Essentials of a Communicative Curriculum in Language Teaching' *Applied Linguistics, Vol 1*, (No. 2, Summer 1980): 99.

experiences as scaffolding to the learning process.[505] An authentic text is one that was created to fulfil some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced.[506]

To increase intrinsic motivation, the language classroom should build on the interests and experiences of the learners. Authentic texts, both written and aural, in the target language can help to further learners' knowledge in their area of interest. Whilst reading and/or listening to these texts the learners' attention is focussed on content and meaning rather than form, and they are thus more likely to promote acquisition. The learner should be encouraged to make an authentic response to authentic texts, responding to them as communicative events and not just as examples of the target language. There must be a variety of authentic texts to create as many opportunities as possible for acquisition to take place. Since authentic texts have been produced for a communicative purpose they are usually more interesting and therefore more motivating than texts created to show the usage of a particular language item. They take the place of a community of native speakers exposing learners to authentic language in context, thus facilitating 'naturalistic' acquisition.

Of course, learners can also create their own authentic texts by writing letters, e-mails, and so on, to real rather than contrived readers. They can, for example, write to newspapers and magazines for information, to letter pages, to internet chat rooms, to pen pals, and so on. Authentic texts promote acquisition by challenging learners to activate their relevant world knowledge, their relevant knowledge of discourse as well as their knowledge of the language system, thereby developing conditions for fostering further language development.[507] They promote learner interest and motivation by enabling them to increase their knowledge and understanding of areas of interest and by showing them that knowing another language can be useful and relevant to their lives.

As discussed in section 3.10, the communicative language classroom aims to create an affective atmosphere that will empower learners to take risks with their use of the target language. In this accepting climate learners should be encouraged to express their opinions and feelings through the target language. On an affective level this affirms learner identities, and values their culture and their interests. When opportunities for communication of one's own personal messages and meanings are created then learners can see the purpose of their language learning; they can see the links between classroom activities and the world outside. They can see the target language as being relevant to their lives.

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[505] David Little, Sean Devitt and David Singleton. *Authentic Texts in Foreign Language Teaching: Theory and Practice*, (Dublin: Authentik, 1988), 8.
[506] *Ibid.*: 21.
[507] *Ibid.*

Differentiation within a communicative methodology demands and authenticates communication in the classroom.[508] The different perspectives offered by different authentic media, the achievement of shared objectives by different paths, the use of different learning strategies all provide the conditions for the promotion of authentic communication among learners and teacher. Differentiation allows the learner to become more involved in his/her learning and to become more involved in genuine communication as a means of achieving learning goals. Enabling learners to work with different authentic texts allows for different interpretations and differences in how learners will negotiate with texts. Thus, the search for authenticity and the need for differentiation are complimentary.[509]

3.12 The role of the teacher in the communicative language class

The communicative language teacher is a facilitator of learning and of the communication process. He/She facilitates the communication process between all participants and between the participants and the activities and texts. He/she is a needs analyst who determines and responds to learners' language needs. The teacher is an organiser of resources as well as a resource him/herself. He/She observes and monitors, offering feedback on learners' attempts at communication, as well as being a co-communicator and co-participant in the communication process.[510]

The communicative teacher strives continuously to improve and learn. Thus, he/she must be open, willing to take risks, and flexible. Teachers' own learning must be geared towards the principle of autonomous learning. The teacher must be willing and capable of communicating in the target language. The teacher must, therefore, develop the confidence to use the target language in class to take risks and to tolerate his/her own mistakes. Through his/her example the teacher will show learners that the emphasis is firmly on communication, and as far as possible all classroom management should be through the target language. Like his/her learners the communicative language teacher should avail of all opportunities to improve his/her proficiency in the target language.[511]

One of the teacher's main responsibilities is to establish situations likely to promote communication.[512] The teacher must put the necessary supports and structures in place to provide learners with adequate exposure to the target language and adequate motivation to use it as a means of communication.[513] It is important that the teacher helps to create a secure classroom environment to

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[508] Michael P Breen and Christopher N.Candlin, 'The Essentials of a Communicative Curriculum in Language Teaching', *Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 1, (No. 2, Summer 1980): 97.
[509] *Ibid.*
[510] Joe Shiels, *Communication in the Modern Languages Classroom.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1988).
[511] *Ibid.*: 2-4.
[512] Diane Larsen-Freeman, *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 127.
[513] W.T. Littlewood, *Communicative Language Teaching: An introduction.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 92.

help learners to accept the frustrations of not being able to communicate initially in the target language in the ways they might wish.[514] The teacher's role, while learners engage in communicative activities, is as a guide, a helper and a monitor, and to discourage learners from using the mother tongue. Learners should not feel threatened by a negatively disposed audience, they should sense that their individuality and social identity is respected and accepted. The teacher should support the learners in expressing their own ideas and tolerate them.

The teacher is a manager of classroom activities and a negotiator who involves learners in the planning and execution of tasks and materials. When learners make a choice in activities they are indirectly expressing their own identities.[515] The teacher should ensure that the choices available suit the capability of the learners and the nature of the activity. If learners indicate a need for guidance then the teacher must endeavour to show them what they need to do to achieve a task.[516] He/She should develop the habit of searching for ideas to develop their own resource kits or bundles of activities in order to have variety of task and level to best meet the needs of their learners.[517] Alternatives presented to the learners must be of sorts familiar to them. Where learners are unused to taking responsibility then the teacher should ask learners to make small choices within an otherwise controlled framework. Learner confidence to work independently should be nurtured by gradually increasing the level of choices they have to make.[518] Learners should be encouraged to become actively involved, to progress towards independence and management of their own learning, and to be collaborative and co-operative in the classroom.

If learners are to be led to help, support and encourage one another then the teacher's attitude should signal to them that everyone's contribution is important. This will depend on the teacher's conduct but also on the types of activities in which learners are involved. Pair work and group work activities give learners opportunities for interaction and co-operation. They enable learners to get to know one another as individuals, to work with their own preferred style of interaction, to share with and to help one another. Thus, a supportive classroom environment is created in which learners can feel accepted and therefore empowered to take risks with the target language without fear of ridicule or censure.
The communicative language teacher needs to actively share responsibility for the teaching and learning of learners.[519] This can provide the basis for joint negotiation, with the teacher as a co-

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[514] William Littlewood. *Teaching Oral Communication: A Methodological Framework*. (Cambridge, Ma.: Blackwell, 1992), 98.
[515] *Ibid.*: 100.
[516] Michael P Breen and Christopher N.Candlin, 'The Essentials of a Communicative Curriculum in Language Teaching', *Applied Linguistics, Vol. 1,* (No. 2, Summer 1980): 99.
[517] Janice Yalden, *Principles of Course Design for Language Teaching,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987),152.
[518] *Ibid.*: 108.
[519] Michael P Breen and Christopher N.Candlin, 'The Essentials of a Communicative Curriculum in Language Teaching', *Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 1, (No. 2, Summer 1980): 99.

participant, thus exploiting the communicative potential that the classroom situation offers. The teacher must recognise that learners learn different things, at different times, in different ways and are thus capable of arriving at common goals through diverse paths. This necessitates the provision of choice for learners and independence in their learning. Learners should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and to share that responsibility with the teacher and the other learners. Differential learning will encourage learners to be independent in their learning and to depend on others when the need arises. Learners and teacher are thus interdependent participants in the communicative language class.

Competence in the target language is very important and in order to share meanings, opinions, and experiences communication skills must take priority over knowledge of the formal system. Teachers must view language first and foremost as a means of communication. They must put meaning and social acceptability before formal correctness. The teacher should not correct the learners when they are attempting to communicate but should note mistakes and give feedback afterwards. There should be a focus on what learners can achieve rather than on their communication deficits. This has beneficial effects for learners' self esteem as well as for classroom atmosphere.

> 'The teacher should be enabled to regard communication as the means of sharing and as a relationship between grammar, phonology, vocabulary, functions and notions as well as social behaviour. These elements should not be regarded as discrete nor should one of them be considered to be of 'more importance' than any other.'[520]

The language teacher should know about the nature of learning, know the learners and their culture, the learners' mother tongue and the target language. Teachers must be open-minded. They must regard language learning as everybody's right and understand that it is not just the privilege of an elite. They must be ready to accept that communication is free interaction between all types of people and that foreign language communication is there for international understanding, human rights, self-enrichment and democratic development.[521] There must be an attitude of respect for learners and their needs and a readiness to view teaching as a way of enabling learners 'to develop their talents in self-directed ways, both as members of groups and as individuals'.[522] The teacher must be aware that his role in foreign language communication differs only in degree from learners' efforts to communicate through the target language. Thus the teacher must view learning as a continuous process of endeavour and enrichment.[523]

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[520] Christoph Edelhoff, 'Teacher training as the framework of the Modern Languages Project' in *Modern Languages Programme 1971-1981,* 78.
[521] *Ibid.:* 76.
[522] *Ibid.:* 78.
[523] *Ibid.:* 76.

3.13 Concluding comments

This chapter highlighted the development and significance of a communicative approach to language teaching and learning, and identified its main tenets in some detail. In keeping with some of the main conclusions from the previous chapter on SLA, this chapter also revealed the importance of active and participatory modes of learning as highlighted in the literature. The creation of authentic contexts for language practice and use is strongly emphasised in an attempt to maximise learning potential and motivate learners. The role of the teacher is stressed as facilitator and collaborator in a meaningful language context where there are no right or wrong answers, and learners are encouraged to experiment with the language they are acquiring. A balance between content, context and form is advised in the creation of a communicative approach each dependent on the particular learning objectives in focus at any given time.

However, it was recognised that learners must be intrinsically motivated to learn the target language, and the development of autonomous learning was signalled as a key factor in this development. In the following chapter it will be argued that learners bring prior knowledge of language and language use to the classroom which they must link for themselves to the new material being presented, in order to maximise learning potential in the language class. The development of learner autonomy will be explored in the following chapter, where it will be suggested that this concept is a key principle in language pedagogy, motivation and education.

Chapter Four

Learner autonomy in language learning

4.1 Introduction

In continuing the exploration of the development of a sound theoretical basis underpinning the teaching and learning practices in education, this chapter explores the contested concept of learner autonomy, with particular focus on its role in language acquisition and learning. The origins and psychological backgrounds of this concept are explored, and an attempt to offer some working definitions of learner autonomy and its particular significance in the language class is made. Against the theoretical frameworks offered, a number of approaches to fostering learner autonomy are explored.

4.2 Learner autonomy

Much information being offered to learners in schools has little with which they can identify themselves and their experience.[524] Barnes defines the problem in terms of 'school knowledge' and 'action knowledge'.[525] School knowledge is formal learning and is 'the knowledge which someone else presents to us'.[526] It is dependent on a tradition in education which Barnes names the 'Transmission Model'.[527] It assumes that the teacher's function is to transmit knowledge and then to test the extent to which learners have received it. Learners retain enough of it to answer examination and teacher questions and to do exercises. However, school knowledge tends towards abstraction, thus, if it is never used it will be forgotten. Barnes contrasts this 'transmission' view of education with an 'interpretation' view of education. The interpretation view recognises that new learning can only be understood and assimilated in terms of what learners already know. Learning is possible only to the extent that the learner can integrate the new information offered with the sum of his experience at that point in time.[528] The learners' ability to re-interpret the knowledge is seen as being crucial to the learning process.[529] Thus the interpretation model depends on turning school knowledge into action knowledge. It builds bridges, makes connections between school and action knowledge. Action knowledge is that which we acquire through living.[530] It is context bound and is acquired by implicit procedures. School knowledge can be turned into action knowledge when it is used for learners' own

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[524] D. Little. 'Learner autonomy: A fundamental principle in pedagogy and education.' **Tea**magazine. 2001.
[525] D. Barnes. *From Communication to Curriculum.* (London: Penguin, 1976), 81.
[526] *Ibid.*
[527] *Ibid.:* 142.
[528] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 13.
[529] D. Barnes. *From Communication to Curriculum.* (London: Penguin, 1976), 142.
[530] *Ibid.:* 81.

purposes. It becomes action knowledge when it is incorporated into learners' view of the world and used for practical purpose. As Barnes put it:

> 'Once the knowledge becomes incorporated into that view of the world on which our actions are based, I would say that it has become "action knowledge"'.[531]

It follows, therefore, that the success of school knowledge depends on the degree to which it extends action knowledge and offers it a critical perspective.[532] Only if school knowledge is integrated with action knowledge can it provide the critical perspective that will make this knowledge the learners' own.[533] Therefore, success in formal education contexts depends on a sustained, meaningful interaction between school and action knowledge. It is difficult for learners to make sense of their learning unless they can associate it with their daily experience. Through learners' active involvement in the learning process both school and action knowledge can be integrated. Learners can be helped to come to terms with new knowledge and to relate it to what they already know.[534] They can transcend the limitations of the learning situation and apply what they have learned to 'the day to day business of living'.[535] Foreign language learners make best progress when their learning is embedded in their everyday experience, culture and prior knowledge. In this way the target language can enhance learners' sense of personal identity, extend their action knowledge and gradually become an integral part of what the learner is.[536]

Our informal learning is driven by autonomy: we learn according to our individual needs and interests often without being consciously aware that we are learning.[537] Such learning is powered by our intrinsic motivation. This helps to explain how we develop skills and gain knowledge in day to day living. We are intrinsically motivated to learn that which we believe to be personally meaningful, personally useful. Autonomy is fundamental to this type of learning, we make our own decisions, albeit unconsciously, about what to learn, when to learn it, and how to learn it. The efficiency of experiential learning, autonomy and intrinsic motivation are closely linked which supports the claim that all truly successful learning must be autonomous learning.[538]

Like developmental learning, formal learning is considered successful to the extent that it improves the learner's capacity for independent behaviour.[539] There is, however, a fundamental difference

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[531] D. Barnes. *From Communication to Curriculum.* (London: Penguin, 1976), 81.
[532] *Ibid.*
[533] D. Little. Learner autonomy: A fundamental principle in pedagogy and education. ***Tea****magazine*, 2001, 28.
[534] D. Barnes. *From Communication to Curriculum.* (London: Penguin, 1976), 81.
[535] D. Little. 'Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact: promoting learner autonomy through the use of information systems and information technologies'. In *Taking Control. Autonomy in Language Learning.* Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 204.
[536] *Ibid.*
[537] D. Little. *New perspectives in language learning.* 2000, 31.
[538] *Ibid.:* 32.
[539] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991).

between learning in an informal context and learning in a classroom environment and this has to do with unconscious autonomy and conscious autonomy. The extent to which individuals are aware of their behavioural autonomy in developmental and experiential learning varies and depends on genetic and environmental factors. Some are born with more facility for self-awareness than others; likewise some environments encourage the reflective capacity that underlies self-awareness more than others. The capacities that lead to behavioural autonomy are procedural; they are acquired through practice and we may attain high levels of behavioural autonomy without conscious intention, without being consciously aware that we are doing so.[540]

On the other hand, in formal learning situations, an awareness of autonomy is necessary as formal learning is based on 'conscious decisions and explicit procedures'.[541] It is always a matter of conscious intention and its presence is partly recognisable in behaviours that are shaped by reflection.[542] Our innate disposition towards autonomy must be supplemented in the classroom by deliberate reflection and analysis. The development of learner autonomy in the school context is a conscious and intentional phenomenon.[543] Of course learners will differ in the degree to which they develop this reflective capacity that is central to learner autonomy. This, as stated above, is dependent on genetic and environmental factors. However, to acknowledge that the degree of autonomy attained will differ is just to acknowledge that some learners are more successful than others are.[544]

One of the basic principles and the starting point of the autonomous class is that learners bring knowledge of language and language use to the classroom. This knowledge is disregarded in many language-learning classrooms.[545] If learners are to integrate what they learn at school with the rest of their knowledge, then classroom discourse must give value to the learners' meanings which are reflections of the current state of their knowledge.[546] An ongoing process of negotiation between learners' existing knowledge and the new knowledge needed and/or presented lies at the core of the learning process. To learn the learner must make links between what he/she already knows and the

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[540] D. Little. In *Learner Autonomy, Teacher Autonomy: Future Directions*. Eds. B. Sinclair, I. McGrath and T. Lamb (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 15.
[541] D. Little. 'Learner autonomy: A fundamental principle in pedagogy and education.' (***tea**magazine,* 2001), 27.
[542] D. Little. *Learner Autonomy, Teacher Autonomy: Future Directions*. Eds. B. Sinclair, I. McGrath and T. Lamb (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 15.
[543] D. Little. 'Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact: promoting learner autonomy through the use of information systems and information technologies' *in Taking control: Autonomy in Language Learning*. Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 208.
[544] D. Little and L. Dam. Learner Autonomy: what and why? Language Teacher Online 22/10. Accessed February 4th 2007 from http://langue.hyper.chubu.ac.jp/jalt/pub/tlt/98/littledam.html
[545] L. Dam and L. Legenhausen. 'The acquisition of vocabulary in an autonomous learning environment – the first few months of beginning English' in *Taking control: Autonomy in Language Learning*. Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 267.
[546] D. Little.' Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact: promoting learner autonomy through the use of information systems and information technologies' in *Taking control: Autonomy in Language Learning.* Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 207.

new material presented, and nobody can do that for the learner but the learner him/herself.[547] It follows that teachers must establish situations where learners can activate and develop their existing knowledge.[548] Thus Dam argues that teachers are under an obligation to focus on learning rather than teaching.[549] As Barnes puts it:

> 'Getting the knowledge from 'out there' to 'in here' is something for the child himself to do: the art of teaching is knowing how to help him to do it'.[550]

A sense of responsibility in learners must be developed so they will understand why and how they learn and be willing to play an active role in their learning.[551] However, learner autonomy cannot be developed from one day to the next and its development demands constant effort on the part of the teacher and the learners not just as individuals but in collaboration with one another.[552] Kohonen argues that both learners and teachers 'need time to work on their deep-rooted beliefs, expectations, attitudes and working habits'.[553] Learners will need a lot of assistance along the way especially if their previous experience has been very teacher-directed.[554] The development of autonomy is a gradual process - it will not happen over night. Similarly the development of learner autonomy in language learning has taken some time to evolve into the concept as understood today. The following section will give an overview of how learner autonomy as an aim in language teaching and learning has evolved since its first inception.

4.3 Background to the development of learner autonomy in language learning

A move towards autonomy in language learning developed in the late 1960s. The movement had its origins in the socio-ideological changes that were nascent in the European political turmoil of this time.[555] In all, so called, industrially advanced Western countries ideology was shifting away from an emphasis on consumerism and materialism towards an emphasis on the meaning and value of

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[547] D. Barnes. *From Communication to Curriculum.* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976), 83.
[548] L. Dam and L. Legenhausen. ' The acquisition of vocabulary in an autonomous learning environment – the first few months of beginning English' in *Taking control: Autonomy in Language Learning*. Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 267.
[549] L. Dam. 'Why focus on learning rather than teaching? From theory to practice?', *In Focus on learning rather than teaching: why and how? Papers from the IATEFL conference on learner independence, Kraków, 14-16 May, 1998*. Eds. D. Little, L. Dam and J. Timmer. (Dublin: CLCS, Trinity College, Dublin, 2000), 18.
[550] D. Barnes. *From Communication to Curriculum.* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976), 79.
[551] A. Scharle and A. Szabo, *Learner Autonomy: A guide to developing learner responsibility*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1.
[552] L. Dam. *Learner Autonomy 3: From Theory to Classroom Practice.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1995), 6.
[553] V. Kohonen. 'Towards experiential foreign language education.' *In Experiential Learning in Foreign Langauge Education*. Eds. V. Kohonen, R. Jaatinen, P. Kaikkonen and J. Lehtovaara. (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd., 2001), 41.
[554] C.K. Thomson 'Self-assessment in self-directed learning: issues of learner diversity'. In *Taking Control. Autonomy in Language Learning*. Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson. Hong Kong; Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 76-91.
[555] M.J. Gremmo and P. Riley. 'Autonomy, self-direction and self-access in language teaching and learning: the history of an idea.' *System 23* (2, 1995): 151-64.

personal experience, minority rights, the quality of life and the value of personal freedom.[556] 'Student power' was being highlighted in third level sectors and student centred reforms in the educational system were being mooted by Rogers,[557] Freire[558] and Illich.[559] Social progress was being defined in terms of an improvement of the 'quality of life' based on the development of a respect for the individual in society.[560]

In 1971 the Council of Europe, whose aim was to provide adults with opportunities for life-long learning, introduced the concept of autonomy in language learning. One of its developments was the establishment of CRAPEL (Centre de Recherches et d'Applications en Langues) at the University of Nancy. At CRAPEL research and practice in the area of learner autonomy in language learning was advanced. The approach developed at CRAPEL was influenced by developments in the field of adult education. These emphasised the need to increase the freedom of individuals by enabling them to develop their abilities to take more responsibility in the society in which they live. Autonomy, or the capacity to take charge of one's own learning, was believed to arise from self-directed learning. Major innovations in the CRAPEL approach included the use of self-access resource centres and learner training to provide support and opportunities for self-directed language learning.

Learner training also became widely used in the 1980s and 1990s. Drawing on the insights from research on learning strategies, learner training was designed to support self-directed learning.[561] It aimed to identify the learning strategies and behaviours used by successful learners and to train other learners to experiment with and foster these strategies and behaviours where appropriate.[562] At CRAPEL it was argued that learners needed to develop skills for self-management, self-monitoring and self-assessment if they were to engage in effective self-directed learning. Initially, training was used to support learners to become more self-directed.[563] Learner training is now seen to lead to greater autonomy enabling learners to engage more actively in classroom learning.[564]

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[556] P. Benson. *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning.* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), 16.
[557] C.R. Rogers. *Freedom to Learn.* (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1969).
[558] P. Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970).
[559] I. Illich. *Deschooling Society.* (London: Calder & Boyars, 1971).
[560] H. Holec. *Autonomy in Foreign Language Learning.* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1981), 1. (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1979).
[561] H. Holec. 'Learner training: meeting needs in self-directed learning' *in Foreign Language Learning: Meeting Individual Needs.* Eds. H.B. Altman and C.V. James. (Oxford: Pergamon, 1980) (First Published Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1979).
[562] A. Wenden. *Learner Strategies for Learner Autonomy.* (London: Prentice Hall International, 1991).
[563] L. Dickenson and D. Carver. 'Learning how to learn: steps towards self-direction in foreign language learning', *ELT Journal, 35* (1, 1980): 1-7.
[564] L. Dickenson. *Learner Autonomy 2: Learner Training for Language Learning.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1992).

Throughout the 1970s and the 1980s developments in learner autonomy became closely associated with the concept of individualisation as they overlapped in their concern with meeting the needs of individual learners.[565] Self directed learning as practised at CRAPEL was a form of individualisation in which learners determined their own needs and acted upon them.[566] Individualisation also took the form of programmed learning involving learners working in their own way, at their own pace, through a programme of work designed by teachers. Thus, in individualism most of the important decisions about the learning process are made by the teacher rather than by the learners.[567] CRAPEL distinguished self-directed learning from individualisation on the grounds that the latter left all the important decisions about learning to the teacher. Holec argued that the extent to which the learner was taken into consideration was not a criterion for judging the degree to which learning is self-directed.[568] Individualisation takes the learners' needs, interests, and favourite methods of learning into account but leaves the learner in a traditional position of dependency on the teacher.[569] This view is supported by Riley who argues that individualisation as it is generally practised offers the learner very little freedom of choice.[570] The majority of choices are made for the learner. Individualisation, he argues, is in fact individualised teaching which aims at the most efficient use of the teacher and the most effective result but in terms of what the teacher wants the learner to achieve.[571]

The early association of autonomy with individualisation may have been responsible for the criticism that learner autonomy involves learners working in isolation. This has been difficult to refute since a lot of the early work in autonomy focussed on the learner as an individual with distinct characteristics and needs.[572] Other difficulties with the concept of autonomy had their bases in the use of the term autonomy to refer to situations in which the learners worked on their own outside the conventional classroom.[573] The use of autonomy to describe the learning situations led to conceptual confusion in the field.[574] This was in contrast to Holec's description of autonomy as being a 'capacity' of the learner.[575] It was understood by researchers that learners need freedom to take responsibility if they

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[565] A. Brookes and P. Grundy Eds. *Individualization and Autonomy in Language Learning.* ELT Documents 131. (London: Modern English Publications/British Council, 1988), 1.
[566] P. Benson. *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning.* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), 11.
[567] *Ibid.*
[568] H. Holec. *Autonomy in Foreign Language Learning.* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1981), 6. (First Published Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1979).
[569] *Ibid.*
[570] P. Riley. *'Who's who in self-access.'* TESOL France News, 6 (2), 1986: 23-35.
[571] *Ibid.*
[572] P. Benson. *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning.* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), 12.
[573] L. Dickenson. *Self-instruction in Language Learning.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 11.
[574] P. Benson. *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning.* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), 13.
[575] H. Holec. *Autonomy in Foreign Language Learning.* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1981), 6. (First Published Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1979).

are to develop autonomy.[576] However, researchers are also aware that learners working in isolation would not necessarily develop autonomy.[577] The argument that allowing learners the opportunity to exercise autonomy through self-directed learning as a precondition for developing autonomy, was interpreted by critics of learner autonomy as insufficient condition. Moreover, the theory of autonomy had become associated with individualised, self-directed learning and this was seen by many as irrelevant to classroom learning.[578]

The theory and practice of autonomy escaped its crisis of identity through the work of practitioners such as Dam who experimented with it in classroom settings.[579] Their work was influenced by developing views of the classroom as a 'social context' for learning and communication and through the view that autonomy could be developed by a shift in relationship of power and control in the classroom.[580] This has initiated a shift in the focus of research on autonomy towards issues of collaboration and negotiation. Autonomy in language learning has regained its perceived relevance to the classroom learning context through the emphasis on the social nature of learning leading to a focus on issues of collaboration, negotiation, and interdependence in the fostering of learner autonomy.[581] In addition, the shift away from behaviourist ideas underlying audio-lingualism and a move towards communicative approaches have brought language teaching theory in line with the basic ideas of autonomy with the emphasis on the learner at the centre of the teaching learning process.[582] The argument for fostering learner autonomy is strengthened by research in the area of educational psychology and language acquisition. The relevant findings of this research will be discussed in the next two sections.

4.4 Psychological underpinnings of learner autonomy

The promotion of learner autonomy in the language classroom is supported by research in the area of educational psychology. Research within the field of learner autonomy in language learning has drawn on research on learning in the constructivist tradition.[583] Candy describes constructivism as a cluster of approaches underpinned by the belief that 'knowledge cannot be taught but must be constructed by the learner'.[584] The main idea that research in autonomy in language learning has

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[576] P. Benson. *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning*. (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), 13.
[577] *Ibid.*
[578] *Ibid.*
[579] L. Dam. *Learner Autonomy 3. From theory to Classroom Practice.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1995).
[580] M.P. Breen and C.N. Candlin. 'The essentials of a communicative curriculum in language teaching', *Applied Linguistics, 1* (2, 1980): 89-112.
[581] L. Dam. *Learner Autonomy 3. From Theory to Classroom Practice.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1995).
[582] D. Nunan. *The Learner-Centred Curriculum: a Study in Second Language Teaching. (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
[583] P. Benson. *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning.* (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd., 2001), 35.
[584] P.C. Candy. *Self-direction for Lifelong Learning* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991), 252.

ascertained from constructivism is that in order to be effective learning must be active.[585] Learning must be constructed by the learner, it is not something that can be transferred successfully from 'one who knows' to 'one who doesn't know'.[586] If learning is the construction of knowledge then it follows that effective learning involves learners being cognitively capable of carrying out actions that enable them to take control of their learning. Wang and Peverly argue that:

> 'Effective learners are characterised in the research literature as being cognitively and affectively active in the learning process. They are seen as being capable of learning independently and deliberately through identification, formulation and restructuring of goals; use of strategy planning; development and execution of plans; and engagement of self-monitoring.'[587]

Learners need to be active and involved in their learning. To this end they need to become more autonomous in their learning. Indeed Little argues that 'all genuinely successful learning is in the end autonomous'.[588]

Kelly's psychology of personal constructs[589] is used to support the argument for the promotion of learner autonomy.[590] He views human beings as being scientists armed with hypotheses and an insatiable urge to ask questions.[591] According to Kelly each of us has a view of the world by which we hypothesise about what will happen in a given set of circumstances. The meanings we attach to events and phenomena that we experience are called our 'constructs'.[592] We constantly revise our constructs in the light of new experience. Thus, there is a steady process of hypothesis testing and theory revision as we learn more about our worlds.[593] Through our construct system we create our own reality.[594] Individual experience will ensure that no two persons have the same personal constructs.

Each learner brings his/her own personal construct system to the learning process. New information that the learner encounters is assimilated into his/her current system of personal constructs.[595] When the new information is additional to a subject with which the learner is already familiar then the learning proceeds without a problem. On the other hand, where new information contradicts part of a learner's current construct system or requires him/her to think about something in a different way then

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[585] L. Dam. *Learner Autonomy 3. From Theory to Classroom Practice.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1995).
[586] D. Barnes. *From Communication to Curriculum.* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976).
[587] M.C. Wang and S.T. Peverly. 'The self-instructive process in classroom learning contexts', *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 11,* (1986): 370-404, 353.
[588] D. Little. 'Learner autonomy: a theoretical construct and its practical application', *Die Neuren Sprachen, 93* (5, 1994): 430-42, 431.
[589] G. Kelly. *A Theory of Personality.* (New York: Norton, 1963).
[590] D. Little. *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 18-22.
[591] G. Kelly. *A Theory of Personality.* (New York: Norton, 1963).
[592] D. Bannister and F. Fransella. *Inquiring Man. The Psychology of Personal Constructs.* (London: Routledge, 1989, Third Edition).
[593] *Ibid.*
[594] G. Kelly. *A Theory of Personality.* (New York: Norton, 1963), 43.
[595] *Ibid.*

learning can be difficult and even painful.[596] At the heart of personal construct psychology is the claim that each of us has knowledge about ourselves that when identified can bring about change.[597] Applied to the learning process it follows that bringing learners to an awareness and an understanding of their personal assumptions about learning can help them to take control of their own learning processes.[598] Little argues that personal construct theory supports the promotion of autonomous learning.[599] It also, he highlights, underlines the difficulties involved in fostering learner autonomy.[600] He stresses:

> 'Again, it is important to emphasise that there is no assumption that this will always be easy to achieve or that successful learning will inevitably follow. Indeed, it is a common experience that attempts to make learners conscious of the demands of a learning task and the techniques with which they might approach it, lead in the first instance to disorientation and a sense that learning has become less rather than more purposeful and efficient. However, when the process is successful, it brings rich rewards.'[601]

Vygotsky differs from others within the constructivist tradition by his emphasis on the importance of social interaction in the learning process.[602] He holds that learning begins from learners' existing knowledge and experience and develops through social interaction.[603] Learning is an assisted performance, a spiral process by which we move to new levels of independence only by first being interdependent.[604] The Zone of Proximal Development is:

> '...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'.[605]

Through group work learners can help one another through their respective zones of proximal development. They constantly swap roles between tutor and learner as they work collaboratively. Thus, the growth of learner independence is supported by learner dependence. 'What a child can do in co-operation today he can do alone tomorrow'.[606] Cognition and learning are socially situated.[607] Child development in general is stimulated by social interaction. We are social beings and therefore much of our thinking is not only directed towards an aspect of our social situation but is prompted by

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[596] G. Kelly. *A Theory of Personality.* (New York: Norton, 1963).
[597] D. Bannister and F. Fransella. *Inquiring Man. The Psychology of Personal Constructs.* (London: Routledge, 1989 Third Edition).
[598] D. Little. *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 21.
[599] *Ibid.*
[600] *Ibid.*
[601] *Ibid.*
[602] P. Benson. *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning.* (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd., 2001), 39.
[603] L.S. Vygotsky. *Mind in Society: the Development of Higher Psychological Processes.* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1978).
[604] *Ibid.*
[605] *Ibid.*: 86.
[606] L.S. Vygotsky. *Thought and Language* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), 104.
[607] J. Lave and E. Wenger, *Situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

that situation in the first place.[608] Thus context and interaction play vital roles in stimulating and shaping the cognitive processes that underlie developmental processes and L1 acquisition. This is the insight that Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory offers: higher cognitive functions are internalised through social interaction.[609] Learning is essentially reliant on supported performance leading eventually to independent performance.[610] Our behavioural development is successful to the extent that it promotes an individual's capacity for independent behaviour. Yet, since we are social beings our autonomy is always constrained by our interdependence.[611]

Building on Vygotsky's emphasis on social interaction Little argues that learner autonomy is underpinned by a dialogic view of learning and language.[612] A dialogic perspective highlights the importance of the 'other' in learning and the interdependence of social interaction and individual cognition in learning.[613] Human beings are social creatures and thus it is our condition that we learn from one another.

On the interdependence of the social-interactive and the individual-cognitive dimensions of cognition and learning, Ackerman holds that people cannot grow without interaction yet without separation they cannot relate.[614] She uses the metaphor of a dance to describe the interdependence between social interaction and individual cognitive growth and learning. She describes it as 'a dance between diving in and stepping out'.[615] This holds true also for first language acquisition. Children who do not experience regular social interaction do not become socialised and those who are denied opportunities to interact in the mother tongue do not acquire it.[616] Social interaction is essential to the process but so too is the time spent alone, talking to oneself, playing with and experimenting with and rehearsing the language.[617] We acquire language in order to be able to express our meanings and communicate spontaneously, efficiently and independently, in other words, autonomously. Yet children are autonomous within the acquisition process also. They decide from the earliest stages with whom they

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[608] J. Lave and E. Wenger, *Situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
[609] L.S. Vygotsky. *Mind in Society: the Development of Higher Psychological Processes.* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1978).
[610] *Ibid.*
[611] D. Little, *'Developing learner autonomy in the language classroom: theory, practice and the European Language Portfolio'.* Lecture delivered to Higher Diploma in Education students at Trinity College Dublin, May 9th 2001.
[612] *Ibid.*
[613] *Ibid.*
[614] E. Ackermann. 'Perspective-taking and object construction: two keys to learning', *Constructionism in practice. Designing, thinking, and learning in a digital world.* Eds. Y. Kafai and M. Resnick. (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1996,), 32.
[615] *Ibid.:* 28.
[616] D. Little. 'Learner autonomy: A fundamental principle in pedagogy and education'. ***Tea****magazine,* (2000), 29.
[617] D. Crystal. *Language Play.* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1998).

want to communicate with and about what.[618] Thus, they are autonomous to begin with but their increasing proficiency in language enables them to become increasingly more autonomous.[619]

Effective learners are cognitively and affectively active in their learning,[620] this enables them to achieve awareness and understanding of the learning task as well as of their personal assumptions about the learning task and help them to take control of the learning process.[621] Learning is reliant on supported performance leading eventually to independent performance. Thus, learner autonomy in language learning is dependent on learners being enabled to become actively involved in the learning process and interacting with others to support them in their learning.[622] This supports language learners' natural inclination towards autonomy as discussed in the next section.

4.5 Autonomy as a natural inclination in language acquisition

The acquisition of a first language forms an integral part of the development of every normally endowed child. Little[623] suggests that language development operates in parallel with the process of cognitive development as understood by Piaget[624] and Bruner[625], that autonomy is intrinsic to normal development in a child. It is a feature of behavioural, cognitive, and linguistic development. There are two particular characteristics to the role of autonomy in language acquisition.[626] First it proceeds by an unconscious agenda, the child acquires language to suit his/her needs and interests. Second, the child enjoys social freedom to interact with others around him/her. In the pre-school years it is usually the child who decides when he/she will talk and about what he/she will talk. Children do not acquire language in order to become autonomous language users. They are autonomous communicators from the earliest stages of the acquisition process and their increased proficiency in the language enables them to increase the extent of their capacity for autonomy.[627]

Naturalistic language acquisition, learning of a second language without explicit instruction, develops in the same way as L1 acquisition.[628] Through social interaction the learner is provided with language

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[618] C. Trevarthen, 'An infant's motives for speaking and thinking in the culture', in *The dialogical alternative: towards a theory of language and mind.* Ed. A.H. Wold, (Oslo: Scandanavian University Press, 1992), 99-137.
[619] D. Little, J. Ridley & E. Ushioda. *Towards greater autonomy in the foreign language classroom.* (Dublin: Authentik, 2002).
[620] M.C. Wang and S.T. Peverly. 'The self-instructive process in classroom learning contexts', in *Contemporary Educational Psychology,* 11, (1986), 370-404, 353.
[621] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991).
[622] D. Little, J. Ridley, & E. Ushioda. *Towards greater learner autonomy in the foreign language classroom.* (Dublin: Authentik, 2002).
[623] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 23-24.
[624] M. Boden. *Piaget.* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1979).
[625] J.S. Bruner. *The Process of Education* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, second edition 1977).
[626] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 24.
[627] D. Little, J. Ridley & E. Ushioda. *Towards greater autonomy in the foreign language classroom.* (Dublin: Authentik, 2002).
[628] S.D. Krashen and T.D. Terrell. *The Natural Approach.* (New York: Pergamon and Alemany, 1983).

input and communicative needs are generated. The learner's efforts to meet his/her communication needs produce more learning.[629] Thus, acquisition proceeds as a result of communication and vice versa. Of course, in second language acquisition there is a great diversity of possible outcomes ranging from the most limited communicative repertoire to native speaker proficiency. This range of outcomes depends largely on social and attitudinal conditions that are linked to social and psychological autonomy.[630] Those who have a strong personal interest in acquiring the target language are most likely to be successful.[631] Their chances are further increased if they are in a friendly, encouraging environment with lots of opportunities for different types of interaction through the target language.[632] This kind of environment allows the learner the type of social and psychological autonomy that a child has when acquiring his/her mother tongue.[633]

The promotion of learner autonomy is supported by research in the areas of psychology and language acquisition. However, before it can be fostered in language classrooms its role in this specific context must be elaborated on and understood. The next section examines current definitions of learner autonomy in language learning.

4.6 Definitions of learner autonomy in language learning

Implicit in the concept of learner autonomy is the idea that the learner enjoys a high degree of freedom.[634] Because the term autonomy focuses attention on individuality and independence there is a mistaken view that autonomy means working alone. However, as argued previously, the freedom the autonomous learner enjoys is never absolute, it is constrained by our dependence on others. Readings on learner autonomy in language learning are complicated by the use of different terms to describe the same or similar concepts, and it is acknowledged that terms can have different meanings in different contexts.[635] Benson and Voller identify five different ways in which 'autonomy' has been used in language education:

1. 'for situations in which learners study entirely on their own;
2. for a set of skills which can be learned and applied in self-directed learning;
3. for an inborn capacity which is suppressed by institutional education;
4. for the exercise of learners' responsibility for their own learning;

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[629] M. Swain. 'Three functions of output in second language learning' in *Principle and Practice in Applied Linguistics: Studies in Honour of H.G. Widdowson*. Eds. G. Cook and B. Seidlhofer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 125-44.
[630] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 26.
[631] E. Ushioda. *Learner Autonomy 5. The Role of Motivation.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1996).
[632] *Ibid.*
[633] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems*. (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 26.
[634] *Ibid.*: 4.
[635] R.L. Oxford. 'Toward a More Systematic Model of L2 Learner Autonomy', in *Learner Autonomy across Cultures: Language Education Perspectives*. Eds. D. Palfreyman and R.C. Smith. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 76.

5. for the right of learners to determine the direction of their own learning.'[636]

Thus learner autonomy may be identified in a variety of forms and is not an easily identified specific type of behaviour.[637] However, as Benson[638] argues, it is important to attempt to describe it in terms of observable behaviours if it is to be researchable and also to make possible programmes for the fostering of learner autonomy. To clear misapprehensions about what learner autonomy entails, and in order to arrive at a definition of the concept, Little lists what learner autonomy is not. These may be summarised as follows:

- Learner autonomy is not a matter of how learning is organised.
- It is not synonymous with self-instruction. Of course some learners may achieve a high level of autonomy without the help of a teacher but many do not.
- It is not about the teacher relinquishing all control and initiative in the classroom. Autonomous learners do not make teachers redundant and their autonomy will not be destroyed by teacher intervention.
- Learner autonomy is not something teachers do to their learners; it is not a teaching methodology.
- It does not consist of one easily described learner behaviour.
- Autonomy is not a steady state achieved by learners.[639]

Little rejects the common misapprehension that learner autonomy is about teachers handing over control and learners teaching themselves. On the other hand he highlights the fact that learner autonomy is not something teachers can foster in their learners without learner involvement. Learner autonomy is a capacity that learners have which can be developed. Although there is not a single methodology which will encourage the development of learner autonomy it will be supported by certain approaches to teaching and learning.[640]

To this effect Little suggests that the foundation document for any discussion on autonomy in language learning is the 1981 report prepared by Holec for the Council of Europe.[641] In this document Holec defines autonomy as 'the ability to take charge of one's learning'.[642] He further defines this as meaning:

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[636] P. Benson and P. Voller. 'Introduction: autonomy and independence in language learning'. In *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning.* Eds. P. Benson and P. Voller. (Harlow: Addison, Wesley, Longman Ltd., 1997), 1.
[637] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 4.
[638] P. Benson, *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning.* (Harlow: Longman, 2001). 47.
[639] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 3-4.
[640] D. Little, L. Dam & J.Timmer. *Focus on learning rather than teaching: Why and how*? (Dublin: CLCS, 2000).
[641] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 6.
[642] H. Holec, *Autonomy in Foreign Language Learning.* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1981), 3.

'... to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning, i.e.:

- determining the objectives;
- defining the contents and progressions;
- selecting methods and techniques to be used;
- monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly speaking (rhythm, time, place, etc.;
- evaluating what has been acquired'.[643]

This definition equates learner autonomy with having the opportunity to take responsibility for all decisions associated with the learning process. It places reflection and decision-making at the core both of fostering and maintaining learner autonomy. Highlighting the importance of self-monitoring and evaluation in developing autonomy it echoes Freire's praxis[644] in its continuum of reflection, action, and further reflection. Nonetheless, Benson argues that this definition is problematic as it describes the decision making process in technical terms but does not make explicit the cognitive factors involved.[645] He contrasts this with Little's definition which holds that 'autonomy is not exclusively or even primarily a matter of how learning is organized'.[646]

Little's definition,[647] written ten years after Holec's,[648] concurs with Holec's but, in addition, draws attention to the importance of learner control over the cognitive processes. It gives increased emphasis to the aspect of learner autonomy that enables the transfer of what has been learned to other contexts. Little defines autonomy as follows:

'Essentially, autonomy is a capacity – for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action. It presupposes, but also entails, that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning. The capacity for autonomy will be displayed both in the way the learner learns and in the way he or she transfers what has been learned to wider contexts'.[649]

His emphasis on autonomy as a 'capacity' supports the notion that autonomy is not 'something that teachers do to their learners'.[650] It calls attention to the idea that learners have a capacity for autonomy but this capacity needs to be developed and this necessitates learners' involvement in collaboration with the teacher. He acknowledges that autonomy can only be developed through the practice of autonomy but learners need to be supported in its practice. This means that learners must be encouraged to understand their role as learners and to take responsibility for this role.[651] They must adopt a mind-set that supports their interest and involvement in both what they learn and how they

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[643] H. Holec, *Autonomy in Foreign Language Learning.* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1981), 3.
[644] P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970).
[645] P. Benson, *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning.* (Harlow: Longman, 2001).
[646] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 3.
[647] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 4.
[648] H. Holec, *Autonomy in Foreign Language Learning.* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1981), 3.
[649] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 4.
[650] *Ibid.*
[651] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991).

learn. Finally he advises that learner autonomy is not an easily described behaviour but it will be evident in how the learner approaches the learning process and in how he/she uses his/her knowledge outside of that particular learning context.

In common with Holec's and Little's definitions, Dam's definition stresses the need for learners to take responsibility for their own learning as a first step towards achieving autonomy. She uses a definition from the Bergen papers[652] to illustrate what she means by learner autonomy:

> 'Learner autonomy is characterized by a readiness to take charge of one's own learning in the service of one's needs and purposes. This entails a capacity and willingness to act independently and in co-operation with others, as a socially responsible person'.[653]

Like Little she defines autonomy as a capacity, which will lie dormant unless its development is nurtured. Thus, Dam, like Little, emphasises the need for learners to be guided and scaffolded into the concrete realisation of their capacities for autonomous learning. This presupposes the support of a teacher or more capable other. Her definition highlights the social interactive aspect of learner autonomy, the need to develop the capacity to work co-operatively with other learners and the teacher in the pursuit of goals. Her definition carries the wider social implication of linking classroom learning with the outside world – developing capacities whose uses are transferable.

Littlewood, like Little and Dam, holds that the capacity for autonomy is grounded on ability and willingness.[654] Willingness, he argues, entails the learner having the motivation and the confidence to take responsibility for decisions made about the learning process. Thus, ability and willingness are interdependent since learners are more likely to be willing to work autonomously if they have confidence in their knowledge and skills.[655] It follows that learners must be enabled to believe in their own potential, to develop their self-confidence and to increase their intrinsic motivation to learn the target language. This goal will be furthered by encouraging learners to become involved in planning the content and process of their learning. They must be supported in reflecting on what they will learn, why they will learn it and how best they will learn it. They thus need opportunities for and guidance in reflecting on their learning and the learning process. During and after the learning process learners need to reflect on and analyse how they learned.

On the basis of these definitions it may be seen that fostering learner autonomy entails the development of learners' capacities to take responsibility for their own learning. Usuki adds that taking responsibility for their learning means that learners must become aware of their role as

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[652] Institutt for Praktisk Pedagogikk. *Developing Autonomous Learning in the Foreign Language Classroom.* (Bergen: Universitetet I Bergen, Institutt for Praktisk Pedagogikk, 1990).
[653] *Ibid.:* 102.
[654] W.T. Littlewood. *Autonomy: an anatomy and a framework'.* System, 24 (4, 1996), 428.
[655] *Ibid.:* 428.

learners.[656] She argues that learner autonomy is not necessarily a matter of institutional mode rather it is a matter of learners' internal attitude, their attitude to themselves as learners.[657] Learner autonomy thus requires that learners be motivated to create their own environment for learning.[658] This builds on Trim's description of autonomy as an adaptive ability that allows learners to develop supportive structures within themselves rather than to have them built around them.[659] In fact Dickenson holds that learner autonomy may be internal to the learner without having to be made public.[660] What learners say or think about language learning may be more important than their style of learning or their personal characteristics.[661] Little supports this arguing that learner autonomy presupposes a positive attitude towards the purpose, content and process of language learning as well as well developed metacognitive skills.[662] The learner needs to know about learning but without the positive attitudes that support and is supported by self-confidence and intrinsic motivation there is no motivation to use the metacognitive skills.

Autonomous learning entails working in collaboration with others and this necessitates the development of social skills. Their teacher's support and understanding is essential.[663] Indeed Dam describes the autonomous language class as being both teacher and learner directed.[664] She explains that it is a learning-centred environment where learners are encouraged by their teachers to be consciously involved in their own learning. It is a language class in which learners are expected to actively engage in their own learning and are thus made aware of the different elements involved in the learning process. This awareness can also be used in other contexts.[665] Thus, at the heart of an autonomous approach to language learning is reflection, self-awareness, awareness of others, and decision-making.

Having established that fostering learner autonomy entails the development of learners' capacities to take responsibility for their own learning, the following two sections begin to explore the use of this

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[656] M. Usuki. *Learner autonomy: learning from the student's voice.* CLCS Occasional Paper No. 60. (Dublin: CLCS, 2002), 1.
[657] *Ibid.*
[658] *Ibid.*
[659] J.L.M. Trim, 'Some possibilities and limitations of learner autonomy', in *Self-Directed Learning and Autonomy*, ed. E. Harding-Esch (Cambridge: Dept. of Linguistics, University of Cambridge,1976).
[660] L. Dickenson. *Learner Autonomy 2: learner training for language learning.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1996).
[661] J. Ridley. *Learner Autonomy 6: developing learners' thinking skills.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1997).
[662] D. Little, 'Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact: promoting learner autonomy through the use of information systems and information technologies' in *Taking Control: Autonomy in Language Learning*, eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 204.
[663] A. Hoffman, 'Conference report: symposium on learner autonomy – AILA 11th World Congress, Finland, 4-9 August, '96,' Newsletter of the AILA Scientific Commission on Learner Autonomy in Language Learning (LALL), Issue 3, March 1997), 7.
[664] L. Dam. 'Why focus on learning rather than teaching? From theory to practice?' in *Focus on learning rather than teaching: why and how? Papers from the IATEFL conference on learner independence, Kraków, 14-16 May, 1998.* Eds. D. Little, L. Dam and J. Timmer. (Dublin: CLCS, Trinity College, Dublin, 2000), 20.
[665] *Ibid.*

construct in language learning, and identify approaches to fostering learner autonomy in language classrooms.

4.7 Autonomy in the use and learning of language

There is a two-way relation between language learning and language use, self-management in language learning and self-reliance in language use. In order for learners to communicate efficiently in the target language they need to achieve a high degree of autonomy as language users.[666] The development of autonomy in language learning is an essential support to the development of autonomy in language use.[667] Learners need to have the independence, self-reliance and self-confidence to meet the demands of the social, psychological and discourse roles in which they may find themselves.[668] They therefore need to be enabled to develop mastery of these roles in the classroom. Consequently there must be plenty of language input and opportunities for interaction with and through the target language in the classroom.

Applying Candy's[669] account of autonomy to language teaching Littlewood[670] highlights three kinds of autonomy that are relevant to the field of second language learning:

1. Learners should be helped to develop the ability to use the target language independently and to use it to communicate their personal meanings in real, unpredictable situations.
2. They should be enabled to develop the ability to take responsibility for their learning and to apply active, personally meaningful strategies to their learning.
3. As learners are helped to develop autonomy in communication and learning they gain greater autonomy as individuals.[671]

Littlewood notes however, that autonomy is only possible to the extent that learners have both the willingness and the ability to act independently.[672] The learners' willingness will depend on how motivated they are and how much confidence they have. Their ability to act independently depends on the level of their knowledge and skills. Thus, he argues that language learners need to be helped to develop the motivation, confidence, knowledge, and skills that they need in order (a) to be able to

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[666] D. Little. *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 27.
[667] D. Little. *Learner Autonomy, Teacher Autonomy: Future Directions.* Eds. B. Sinclair, I. McGrath and T. Lamb (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 16.
[668] *Ibid.*
[669] P. C. Candy. 'On the attainment of subject matter autonomy', in *Developing Student Autonomy in Learning.* Ed. D. Boud. (London: Kagan Page, 1988), 59 cited in W.T. Littlewood. 'Self-access: why do we want it and what can it do?' In *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning.* Eds. P. Benson and P. Voller (London: Longman, 1997), 81.
[670] W.T. Littlewood. 'Self-access: why do we want it and what can it do?' in *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning.* Eds. P. Benson and P. Voller (London: Longman, 1997), 81.
[671] *Ibid.*
[672] W.T. Littlewood. 'Self-access: why do we want it and what can it do?' in *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning.* Eds. P. Benson and P. Voller (London: Longman, 1997), 82.

communicate more independently, (b) to learn more independently and (c) (by extension) to be more independent as individuals. [673]

Children do not learn their mother tongue in order to communicate with their parents. They acquire the language as a direct result of their attempts to communicate using linguistic or whatever other resources are available to them. Communicative competence in the target language is continuous with the communicative competence that the learner already has in his/her first language.[674] Learners need to be made aware of this and be given opportunities to experiment with the target language so they can take responsibility for furthering their communicative development.[675] Little argues that enabling learners to be more responsible for their learning can help them to become more responsible and independent in general.[676] Through use of the target language communicative competence is developed, through the exercising of autonomy the capacity for autonomy is developed.[677] Learners become autonomous by being autonomous.

> 'When the focus of learning is a foreign language, autonomous learners become confident communicators in that language...and when the foreign language is the channel through which their autonomy is developed, it effects a genuine expansion of their identity, carrying them beyond the communicative, cultural and self-reflective confines of their mother tongue'.[678]

Autonomy is enhanced when learners are actively involved in productive use of the target language rather than reproducing language models provided by the teacher or the textbook.[679] It enables them to use the target language outside of the immediate learning environment and is also enhanced by this.[680] In addition it enables the learners to take advantage of language learning opportunities that arise during language use.[681] Thus the essential task of second language pedagogy is to engage learners in activities that will enable them to internalise the skills that are necessary for successful face-to-face interaction.[682] Learners must be enabled to turn their knowledge of the target language into 'action knowledge'. They need to be given opportunities to use the skills they have already developed from their L1 use. These will help them to develop insights into the target language system so that they may

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[673] W.T. Littlewood. 'Self-access: why do we want it and what can it do?', in *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning.* Eds. P. Benson and P. Voller (London: Longman, 1997), 82.
[674] L. Dam. *Learner Autonomy 3: From Theory to Classroom Practice.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1995), 3.
[675] *Ibid.:* 3.
[676] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991).
[677] D. Little. In L*earner Autonomy, Teacher Autonomy: Future Directions.* Eds. B. Sinclair, I. McGrath and T. Lamb (Harlow: Longman, 2000).
[678] *Ibid.:* 43.
[679] D. Little 'Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact: promoting learner autonomy through the use of information systems and information technologies' in *Taking control: Autonomy in Language Learning.* Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 20.
[680] *Ibid.*
[681] D. Little 'Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact: promoting learner autonomy through the use of information systems and information technologies', in *Taking control: Autonomy in Language Learning.* Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 204.
[682] *Ibid.:* 212.

use their linguistic skills in the performance of new tasks. In addition they need to develop insights into the learning process so that they may organise their learning as well as possible and derive maximum learning advantage from their use of the target language.

However, in formal language learning contexts, especially when they happen at a distance from the target language community there is often a disjunction between language learning and communicative use of the language.[683] To address this disjunction, Eck, Legenhausen and Wolff [684] have proposed a model of language learning as language use. In this model the learner is at once a communicator, an experimenter/researcher and an intentional learner.

Communicator: continually using and in this way gradually developing communicative skills in the target language.

Experimenter/researcher: gradually developing an explicit analytical knowledge of the target language system and some of the socio-cultural constructs that shape its use.

Intentional learner: developing an explicit awareness of the affective and metacognitive aspects of learning.[685]

Thus a learning environment must be constructed that allows the learners to experiment with their use of the target language. The learners should be encouraged to use the target language for communicating messages that are meaningful for the communicator and the receiver. However, as highlighted by Kolb, experience alone is not sufficient for progress to be made, experiences need to be processed consciously by reflecting on them.[686] They must be observed and consciously reflected upon. New hypotheses derived from these reflections must then be tested in order to gain more experience that must in turn be reflected upon.[687] Thus language learners need to develop the reflective skills to analyse what they have learned from their interactions with and through the target language.[688]

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[683] D. Little. 'Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact: promoting learner autonomy through the use of information systems and information technologies' in *Taking control: Autonomy in Language Learning.* Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 209.

[684] A. Eck, L.Legenhausen and D. Wolff 'Der Einsatz der Telekommunikation in einem lernororientierten Fremdspachenunterricht' in Interkulturelle Kommunikation und prozeßorientierte Medienpraxis im Fremdsprachenunterricht: Grunglagen, Realisierung, Wirksamkeir. Eds W. Gienow & K. Hellwig (Frankfurt: Lang, 1994), 43-57 cited in D. Little, Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact, Taking Control, 209.

[685] *Ibid.*

[686] D. Kolb. *Experiential learning. Experience as the source of learning and development.* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984).

[687] *Ibid.*

[688] V. Kohonen. 'Towards experiential foreign language education' in *Experiential Learning in Foreign Langauge Education.* Eds. V. Kohonen, R. Jaatinen, P. Kaikkonen and J. Lehtovaara. (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd., 2001).

The lowest level of proficiency in the target language depends on developing basic communication skills. Learning beyond this point is only possible if accompanied by metalinguistic and metacognitive processes of analysis and reflection.[689] Thus, to progress beyond basic communication skills and to become more autonomous in their langauge use learners must develop language awareness and language-learning awareness, as this is the only way to be sure that learners will be able to gain maximum advantage from occasions of target language use that arise outside the classroom.[690]

The Eck, Legenhausen and Wolff model implies a pedagogy in which learning by doing interacts with learning by reflection. Equal attention is given to the internalisation of target language forms through communication and the development of analytical skills through language awareness.[691] Thus, learning by doing interacts sharply with reflection. Communicative skills are developed alongside analytical skills. To promote such an approach to pedagogy Little proposes a version of Tharp and Gallimore's 'instructional conversation'[692] where the instructional conversation is carried out from the earliest stages and as much as possible in the target language.[693] Thus, the target language should be used for classroom management and instruction by the teacher and learners should be encouraged from the outset to use the target language to communicate their meanings. It follows that motivating, meaningful situations need to be created to encourage the learners to use the target language. This will help ensure that links are forged between what goes on in the language classroom and the characteristic modes of communication in the target language community.[694]

Of course use of the target language will have to be accompanied by opportunities for reflection on the use and learning of the target language. In this way the learner can be a communicator, a researcher and an intentional learner communicating in the target language, analysing and reflecting on how it is used and developing an explicit awareness of how best to learn it. Thus, communication and reflection play key parts in enabling learners to become autonomous learners and users of the target language. It is thus essential that the teacher facilitate the creation of opportunities for active

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[689] D. Little. 'Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact: promoting learner autonomy through the use of information systems and information technologies'in *Taking control: Autonomy in Language Learning.* Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 209.
[690] *Ibid.*
[691] D. Little. 'Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact: promoting learner autonomy through the use of information systems and information technologies' in *Taking control: Autonomy in Language Learning.* Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 210.
[692] R.C. Tharp and R. Gallimore. *Rousing Minds to Life: teaching, learning and schooling in social context.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) cited in D. Little. *Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact: promoting learner autonomy through the use of information systems and information technologies,* 210.
[693] D. Little. *Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact: promoting learner autonomy through the use of information systems and information technologies,* 210.
[694] D. Little, S. Devitt and D. Singleton. *Learning Foreign Languages from Authentic Texts: theory and practice.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1994, third edition).

use of the target language along with opportunities for reflection. The creation of a learning environment that supports and promotes learner autonomy is central to successful language learning and will be discussed in the next section.

4.8.1 Approaches to fostering learner autonomy in the language classroom

Learner autonomy is to be found among children in primary schools and secondary schools as well as among university students and adult learners.[695] However, learners do not suddenly become autonomous; they must work towards autonomy.[696] There are steps that the learner must take, there are ways of taking these steps and educational experiences and interventions will help in the fostering of learner autonomy.[697] However, fostering learner autonomy does not imply any particular approach to practice nor is it tied to any particular organisational model.[698] It refers to the provision of circumstances and contexts that will enable language learners to take responsibility for their language learning and will help rather than hinder learners from exercising their autonomy. In principle any practice that motivates and supports learners to take more control over any aspect of their learning can be seen as a means of developing learner autonomy. In the field of language learning autonomy has, however, become closely associated with certain practices.[699] The practices may have been designed specifically to foster learner autonomy or they may be established practices that intrinsically support the development of learner autonomy. Benson has classified these practices, depending on their focus, under six broad headings: resource-based, technology-based, learner-based, classroom-based curriculum-based and teacher-based approaches.[700]

Arguing the incoherence of the theoretical framework of learner autonomy in the field of second language learning Oxford developed a more 'systematic and comprehensive theoretical model than has previously existed'.[701] Her model offers four perspectives, each with a different focus, by which to view autonomy: technical, psychological, socio-cultural and political-critical perspectives. A technical perspective emphasises the situational conditions under which learner autonomy may develop. A psychological perspective focuses on the characteristics of learners. A socio-cultural perspective

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[695] D. Little. 'Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact: promoting learner autonomy through the use of information systems and information technologies'. In *Taking control: Autonomy in Language Learning*. Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 204.
[696] D. Thanasoulas. Learner Autonomy. elt newsletter September 2000. Accessed 10/11/07 on eltnewsletter.com/back/september 2000/art 322000.htm
[697] P.C. Candy. *Self-Direction for Lifelong Learning.* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991).
[698] D. Little. 'Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact: promoting learner autonomy through the use of information systems and information technologies.' In *Taking control: Autonomy in Language Learning.* eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 204.
[699] P. Benson, *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning*. (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 110.
[700] *Ibid.:* 113-76.
[701] R.L. Oxford. 'Toward a More Systematic Model of L2 Learner Autonomy', in *Learner Autonomy across Cultures: Language Education Perspectives*. Eds. D. Palfreyman and R.C. Smith. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 76.

focuses on mediated learning. A political-critical perspective focuses on the power structure, access to power and ideologies.[702] Oxford argues that consideration of these perspectives 'is likely to provide a stronger, richer understanding of learner autonomy'.[703]

Through each of the four perspectives Oxford identifies four important themes which should be considered: context, agency, motivation and learning strategies.[704] A definition of each theme follows:

Context: she defines context as referring to the situation, background, setting or environment in which the L2 learning takes place. Oxford[705] uses van Lier's definition to describe context as affording 'opportunities for learning to the active, participating learner'.[706] Each opportunity 'affords further action (but does not cause or trigger it)'.[707]

Agency: this is defined as 'the quality of being an active force in producing an effect'.[708] A learner is an agent if he/she acts intentionally towards achieving a goal.[709] One's sense of agency can be encouraged or hindered by social or cultural conditions.[710]

Motivation: this is defined as the internal desire to do something and thus L2 motivation is the desire to learn another language.[711]

Strategy: a strategy is 'a plan oriented to meeting a goal'.[712] L2 learning strategies are thus steps or plans that L2 learners intentionally employ 'to improve the reception, storage, retention, and retrieval of information'.[713] Strategies may be observable as, for example, in taking notes or unobservable such as mentally analysing a word.

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[702] R.L. Oxford. 'Toward a More Systematic Model of L2 Learner Autonomy', in *Learner Autonomy across Cultures: Language Education Perspectives*. Eds. D. Palfreyman and R.C. Smith. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 76-80.
[703] *Ibid.*: 80.
[704] *Ibid.*
[705] *Ibid.*
[706] L. van Lier. 'From input to affordance: social-interactive learning from an ecological perspective', in *Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning*. Ed. J.P. Lantolf Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 253.
[707] L. van Lier. 'From input to affordance: social-interactive learning from an ecological perspective', in *Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning*. Ed. J.P. Lantolf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 252 cited in R.L. Oxford. 'Interaction in the Language Curriculum: Awareness, Autonomy' 'Toward a More Systematic Model of L2 Learner Autonomy' in *Learner Autonomy across Cultures: Language Education Perspectives*. Eds. D. Palfreyman and R.C. Smith. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 80.
[708] R.L. Oxford. 'Toward a More Systematic Model of L2 Learner Autonomy' in *Learner Autonomy across Cultures: Language Education Perspectives*. Eds. D. Palfreyman and R.C. Smith. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 80.
[709] A. Bandura. Self-efficacy: the Exercise of Control. (NewYork: Freeman, 1997) cited in R.L. Oxford. 'Toward a More Systematic Model of L2 Learner Autonomy', 80.
[710] R.L. Oxford. 'Toward a More Systematic Model of L2 Learner Autonomy' in *Learner Autonomy across Cultures: Language Education Perspectives*. Eds. D. Palfreyman and R.C. Smith. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 80.
[711] *Ibid.*
[712] *Ibid.*
[713] *Ibid.*: 81.

Applying the Oxford perspectives' model[714] to the six practices identified by Benson[715] (as outlined at the beginning of this section) a comprehensive framework is offered by which to consider the various approaches to fostering learner autonomy. These are presented below.

4.8.2 Resource-based approaches

These emphasise the learners' independent interaction with learning materials.[716] Learners are given opportunities to become involved in the planning of the learning goals and the selection of materials to promote these goals. They are also involved in evaluating the success of their learning. Resource based approaches are strongly linked to the use of self-access centres. These are purpose-built facilities where learning resources are available to learners to work on.[717] The resources are designed and organised to enable learners to select and work on tasks by themselves.[718] Applying the Oxford perspectives model to the approach yields the following results:

Perspective: technical, the focus is on the physical situation where learner autonomy may develop.

Context: self-access centre.

Agency: control is handed over to learners but this cannot by itself create agency.[719] It is not generally assumed that independent interaction with learning resources is all that is needed for the development of learner autonomy.[720]

Motivation: how motivating this approach is depends on the learners' goals[721] and their learning styles[722].

Learning strategies: a resource based approach views strategies as tools that can be handed over to the learner via learner training.[723] However, Oxford argues that in order to be effective this would need to involve the teacher's knowledge of the learners' current use of

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[714] R.L. Oxford. 'Toward a More Systematic Model of L2 Learner Autonomy' in *Learner Autonomy across Cultures: Language Education Perspectives*. Eds. D. Palfreyman and R.C. Smith. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
[715] P. Benson. *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning.* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 113-76.
[716] *Ibid.:* 113.
[717] S. Sheerin. 'State of the art: self-access', Language Teaching, 24 (3, 1991): 143-57, 143.
[718] *Ibid.*
[719] P. Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972).
[720] P. Benson. *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning.* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 134.
[721] Z. Dörnyei. *Teaching and Researching Motivation.* (Harlow: Longman, 2001).
[722] J. Reid, Ed.*Understanding Learning Styles in the Second Language Classroom*. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1998).
[723] P. Benson. 'The philosophy and politics of learner autonomy', in *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning.* Eds. P. Benson and P. Voller (London: Longman, 1997).

strategies, their needs and their cultural beliefs.[724] Learners' full participation in the development of strategies would also be required.[725]

Resource based learning provides learners with opportunities to direct their own learning. However having opportunities to direct one's own learning does not necessarily foster learner autonomy or lead to better language learning. A self-access centre needs more than technology and the right configuration or resources to be successful. Sturtridge argues that success in resource-based language learning presupposes that the learner already possesses some of the skills associated with autonomy.[726] In the absence of these skills learners need to be encouraged and supported in becoming more autonomous.[727] To facilitate this teachers need to interact with learners in the self-access centre.[728] Gardner and Miller hold that the key to success in self-access centres is pedagogical input in the form of learner development and counselling.[729]

4.8.3 Technology-based approaches

Benson holds that these approaches emphasise the learners' independent interaction with educational technologies.[730] They are similar to resource based approaches but differ in the focus on the technologies used to access the resources. They may include, for example, concordancing,[731] email tandem learning,[732] computer enhanced interactive video,[733] or informational CD-ROMs[734]. It may be the interaction with the technology that fosters learner autonomy. Alternatively it may be the potential of the technology to facilitate interaction that would be difficult or impossible to have in the

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[724] R.L. Oxford. 'Toward a More Systematic Model of L2 Learner Autonomy' in *Learner Autonomy across Cultures: Language Education Perspectives*. Eds. D. Palfreyman and R.C. Smith. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 82.

[725] R. Oxford. *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. (Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 1990).

[726] G. Sturtridge. 'Teaching and language learning in self-access centres: changing roles?' in *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning*, Eds. P. Benson and P. Voller. (London: Longman, 1997), 66-78.

[727] R.L. Oxford. 'Toward a More Systematic Model of L2 Learner Autonomy' in *Learner Autonomy across Cultures: Language Education Perspectives*. Eds. D. Palfreyman and R.C. Smith. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 82.

[728] R. Kelly. 'Language counselling for learner autonomy: the skilled helper in self-access language learning', in *Taking control: Autonomy in Language Learning*. Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 93-4.

[729] D. Gardner and L. Miller. *Establishing Self-Access: From Theory and Practice*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 31.

[730] P. Benson. *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning*. (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 137.

[731] G. Aston. 'Involving learners in developing learning methods: exploiting text corpora in self-access' in *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning*, Eds. P. Benson and P. Voller. (London: Longman, 1997).

[732] T. Lewis, J. Woodin and E. St. John. 'Tandem learning: independence through partnership', in *Promoting Learner Autonomy in University Language Teaching*. Eds. E. Broady and M.-M. Kenning. (London: Association for French Language Studies/CILT, 1996, 105-20.

[733] D. Little. Interactive video cassette for self-access: a preliminary report on the implementation of Autotutor II', *Computers in Education, 23* (1-2, 1994): 165-70.

[734] M.-N. Guillot. 'Resource-based language learning: pedagogic strategies for Le Monde sur CD-ROM' in *Promoting Learner Autonomy in University Language Teaching*. (London: Association for French Language Studies/CILT, 1996), 139-58.

classroom.[735] The success of technology based approaches depends on the ways in which the technologies are made available to the learner as well as the interactions that take place around them. Applying Oxford's perspectives model the following insights are gained:

Perspective: technical, the situational conditions under which learner autonomy may develop are emphasised.

Context: most frequently the self-access centre but could be the computer room, a home setting or travel environment.

Agency: as with resource-based approaches control may be handed over to learners, giving them great control of and access to resources which will not in itself create agency.[736] It may be seen as 'merely handing over the reins'.[737] Merely changing situational conditions will not by itself create agency.[738] Agency is not something to be delivered to the learner.[739] Agency will only be developed through interaction between teacher and learners.[740] This approach pre-supposes certain attitudes, skills and strategies among learners.

Motivation: this approach can be very motivating as it can expose learners to an unlimited range of authentic materials. It can provide rich linguistic and non-linguistic input. However, the level of motivation it generates will depend on the learners' goals and preferred learning styles.[741]

Learning Strategies: like Oxford[742] Little holds that these will only be effectively developed through interaction between teacher and learners.[743]

Kenning argues that since the effective use of technology assumes certain prerequisites learners may need to have some of the skills associated with learner autonomy to derive benefit form them.[744]

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[735] P. Benson. *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning.* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 137.
[736] R.L. Oxford. 'Toward a More Systematic Model of L2 Learner Autonomy', In *Learner Autonomy across Cultures: Language Education Perspectives*. Eds. D. Palfreyman and R.C. Smith. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 81.
[737] A. Pennycook. 'Cultural alternatives and autonomy', in *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning*. Eds. P. Benson and P. Voller (London: Longman, 1997), 46. Cited in R.L. Oxford. 'Toward a More Systematic Model of L2 Learner Autonomy', 81.
[738] R.L. Oxford. 'Toward a More Systematic Model of L2 Learner Autonomy', 82.
[739] P. Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972).
[740] D. Little. 'Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact: promoting learner autonomy through the use of information systems and information technologies', in *Taking control: Autonomy in Language Learning*. Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 213.
[741] J. Reid, Ed. *Understanding Learning Styles in the Second Language Classroom.* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1998) cited in R.L. Oxford. 'Toward a More Systematic Model of L2 Learner Autonomy', 82.
[742] R.L. Oxford. 'Toward a More Systematic Model of L2 Learner Autonomy'. In *Learner Autonomy across Cultures: Language Education Perspectives*. Eds. D. Palfreyman and R.C. Smith. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 82.
[743] D. Little. 'Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact: promoting learner autonomy through the use of information systems and information technologies', in *Taking control: Autonomy in Language Learning.* Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 213.

However, Little holds that the success of this approach hinges on the scaffolding provided for learning by interaction and collaboration between teachers and learners and between learners.[745] This is supported by Oxford who maintains that learners need the mental and emotional support that comes from collaboration with the teacher.[746]

4.8.4 Learner-based approaches

These focus on the production of behavioural and psychological changes that will enable learners to take control of their learning.[747] These approaches emphasise learner development to help them acquire the skills they need to take advantage of opportunities offered for self-directed learning.[748] Learner development activities aim to increase learners' awareness of themselves as learners in order to improve their willingness and ability to manage their learning.[749] Applying Oxford's perspectives model a clearer picture of this approach is achieved:

Perspective: psychological and socio-cultural.

Context: generally the classroom.

Agency: skills for taking responsibility for their learning are realised through collaboration and interaction with the teacher and fellow learners. This gives them a sense of urgency.

Motivation: collaborative approach will help ensure that all efforts are made to intrinsically and extrinsically motivate learners. Learners are supported in building belief in their ability to organise and manage their work.

Learning Strategies: there is a focus on developing these through learners' full participation.

There is general agreement that learner-development activities should not be separated from language-learning activities.[750] Learners should be enabled to communicate in the target language while learning and reflecting on their language learning.[751]

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[744] M.-M. Kenning. 'IT and autonomy', in *Promoting Learners Autonomy in University Language Teaching*. Eds. E. Broady and M.-M. Kenning, (London: Association for French Language Studies/CILT, 1996, 121-38), 132-3.

[745] D. Little. 'Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact: promoting learner autonomy through the use of information systems and information technologies', in *Taking control: Autonomy in Language Learning*. eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 204.

[746] R.L. Oxford. 'Toward a More Systematic Model of L2 Learner Autonomy', in *Learner Autonomy across Cultures: Language Education Perspectives*. Eds. D. Palfreyman and R.C. Smith. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 82.

[747] P. Benson. *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning*. (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 142.

[748] *Ibid.*: 149.

[749] S. Sheerin. 'An exploration of the relationship between self-access and independent learning', in *Autonomy and Independence in Language* Learning, Eds. P. Benson and P. Voller. (London: Longman, 1997, 54-65), 59-60.

[750] P. Benson. *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning*. (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 143.

[751] M. Legutke and H. Thomas. *Process and Experience in the Language Classroom*. (London: Longman, 1991), 284.

4.8.5 Classroom-based approaches

Benson holds that these focus on developing and extending learner control over the planning and evaluation of classroom learning.[752] Learners are involved in decision making about their learning within a collaborative and supportive environment. Oxford's perspectives model applied to classroom based approaches gives a comprehensive overview:

Perspective: psychological and socio-cultural.

Context: classroom.

Agency: learners are supported in developing autonomy by collaboratively involving them in the decision-making processes concerned with the day-to-day management of their learning. However the degree of agency will depend on the degree of flexibility of the curriculum.[753]

Motivation: learners may be motivated by the belief that they have the locus of control and thus be intrinsically motivated. However this will depend on the degree of flexibility in the curriculum as without flexibility learners may feel that their decisions have little impact and that they are being given responsibility but not given freedom.[754]

Learning Strategies: these are developed through encouragement, support and collaboration.

The success of this approach is contingent on teachers surrendering their prerogative of making most or all significant decisions relating to the learning process.[755] Learners can successfully be involved in decision making on the planning and assessment of their classroom learning providing they are given opportunities to do so and appropriate support.[756] The degree to which learners can self-assess and control classroom activities is likely to be restricted by a predefined curriculum however, flexibility in the guidelines of a curriculum often creates spaces in which teachers can enable their learners to take a degree of control over their learning.[757]

4.8.6 Curriculum-based approaches

These focus on extending learner control over the whole curricular system.[758] This has been formalised in the idea of the process syllabus where learners collaborate with their teachers to decide

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[752] P. Benson. *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning*. (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 111.
[753] *Ibid.*: 162.
[754] *Ibid.*
[755] P.C. Candy. *Self-direction for Lifelong Learning*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991).
[756] B. Cram. 'Self-assessment: from theory to practice. Developing a workshop guide for teachers' in *Language Assessment in Action,* (Sydney: Macquarie University, National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, 1995) 271-306.
[757] D. Little. *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems*. (Dublin: Authentik, 1991).
[758] D. Crabbe. 'Fostering autonomy from within the classroom: the teacher's responsibility', System, 21 (4, 1993), 443-52.

the content and procedures of their learning.[759] It is also evident in approaches to curriculum negotiation that follow the ideas and practices implicit in the process syllabus.[760] The negotiation of learning content and procedures is the means by which communication and learning are achieved.[761] Learners are implicitly or explicitly supported in the decision making process.[762] Applying Oxford's perspectives model to the curriculum based approaches gives a clearer understanding of the approach:

Perspective: psychological, socio-cultural and political-critical.

Context: classroom.

Agency: decisions about the content and the procedures of learning are made by learners in collaboration with their teacher with emphasis on reflection and negotiation.

Motivation: learners to set their own learning goals and procedures for reaching these. They are thus intrinsically and extrinsically motivated.

Learning strategies: teacher knowledge, attitude and skills help develop these with learner participation and co-operation.

4.8.7 Teacher-based approaches

These emphasise the role of the teacher and teacher education in the practice of fostering learner autonomy.[763] The teacher takes the role of facilitator where he/she provides support for learners, counsellor where he/she interacts on a one-to-one basis with the learners, and resource where he/she is a source of knowledge and expertise.[764] Oxford's perspectives model applied to teacher-based approaches yields the following information:

Perspective: psychological, socio-cultural and political-critical.

Context: teacher education centres and classrooms.

Agency: in order to foster autonomy in their learners teachers must be free and able to assert their own autonomy in the practice of teaching. To create opportunities for learners to exercise autonomy teachers must recognise and assert their own.[765]

Motivation: teachers' reflections on their ability to be autonomous in their teaching is intrinsically motivating, and enabling learners to become more autonomous can be both intrinsically and extrinsically motivating.

Learning strategies: teachers develop their own sense of autonomy through reflection and negotiation and thus enable their learners to develop learning strategies.

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[759] D. Simmons and S. Wheeler. *The Process Syllabus in Action*. (Sydney: Macquarie University, National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, 1995).
[760] P. Benson, *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning*. (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 163.
[761] L. Dam. *Learner Autonomy 3: From Theory to Classroom Practice*. (Dublin: Authentik, 1995).
[762] *Ibid.*
[763] P. Benson, *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning*. (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 111.
[764] P. Voller. 'Does the teacher have a role in autonomous learning?', in *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning*. Eds. P. Benson and P. Voller (London: Longman 1997), 98-113.
[765] L. McGrath. 'Teacher Autonomy' in *Learner Autonomy, Teacher Autonomy: Future Directions*. Eds. B. Sinclair et al (London: Longman, 2000), 100-110.

To foster learner autonomy teachers must have confidence in learners' capacity to assert their autonomy and must be prepared to live through the consequences for their own teaching.[766] In fact Thavenius[767] asserts that developing learner autonomy does not just entail changing teaching techniques, it involves changing teacher personality. In order to foster autonomy in his/her learners the teacher must be free and prepared to assert their own autonomy in teaching.[768] The first step towards autonomy happens when the teacher assesses the elements of the teaching and learning process over which he/she has control.[769] It is argued that teacher education should mirror practices designed to foster autonomy among learners.[770]

A wide variety of approaches is available. Smith argues that the promotion of learner autonomy does not entail the use of any particular method or technology.[771] Benson supports this arguing that no single method of fostering autonomy can be judged best.[772] Although claims are often made for the effectiveness of one approach over the others most researchers and practitioners would agree that they are interdependent.[773] A particular approach cannot be fixed in advance as in order to continue to 'become appropriate' there must be ongoing negotiation between learners and their teacher.[774] If learners in a particular context do not respond well to a particular approach then it might be the approach which needs to be criticised, not the learners nor the validity of autonomy itself.[775] Thus, the effectiveness of an approach cannot be judged independently of the way in which it is implemented, the level of the learners, the background of the learners and the culture of the learning institute.[776] It seems likely that learner autonomy will best be fostered through a fusion of approaches.

> 'If autonomy implies control over learning management, cognitive processes and the content of learning, ..., it seems likely that it will be fostered most effectively through a combination of approaches'.[777]

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[766] M.P. Breen and S. Mann. 'Shooting arrows at the sun: perspectives on a pedagogy for autonomy' in *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning.* Eds. P. Benson and P. Voller (London: Longman 1997), 132-49.
[767] C. Thavenius. 'Teacher autonomy for learner autonomy', in *Learner Autonomy in Language Learning: Defining the Field and Effecting Change*. Eds. D. Crabbe and S. Cotterall, (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1999), 159-63.
[768] L. McGrath. 'Teacher Autonomy', in *Learner Autonomy, Teacher Autonomy: Future Directions.* Eds. B. Sinclair, I. McGrath and T. Lamb. (London: Longman, 2000), 100-10.
[769] *Ibid.*
[770] D. Little. 'Learning as dialogue: the dependence of learner autonomy on teacher autonomy'. System, 23 (2, 1995): 175-82.
[771] R.C. Smith. 'Pedagogy for Autonomy as (Becoming) Appropriate Methodology'. In *Learner Autonomy Across Cultures: Language Education Perspectives*. Eds. D. Palfreyman and R.C. Smith. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 130.
[772] P. Benson. *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning.* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 177.
[773] *Ibid.:* 111.
[774] A.R. Holliday. *Appropriate Methodology and Social Context*. (Cambridge University Press, 1994).
[775] R.C. Smith. 'Pedagogy for Autonomy as (Becoming) Appropriate Methodology', in *Learner Autonomy Across Cultures: Language Education Perspectives.* Eds. D. Palfreyman and R.C. Smith. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 130.
[776] P. Benson. *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning.* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 177.
[777] P. Benson. *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning.* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 177.

The approach or approaches used will depend on the teaching/learning context. Dam highlights five differences between a teacher-directed learning environment and a teacher/learner directed one[778] and these points are useful in providing a summary of the essential elements necessary for fostering learner autonomy in the language classroom regardless of approach. They may be summarised as follows:

1. There must be a shift in focus from teaching to learning. In the learner autonomous classroom 'what to learn' and 'how to learn' become the concern of both teacher and learners. Activities and materials are selected which will involve learners in their learning process, in developing their communicative competence in the target language.
2. There must be a change in the learner's role. The autonomous learner is made aware of the factors that contribute to the learning process such as aims, potentially useful materials and activities, social and affective influences and the teacher's role. The learner is required to define his/her own aims, choose his/her own materials and activities and learn to evaluate the outcome of his/her learning.
3. There must be a change in the teacher's role. To promote learner autonomy the teacher will focus on learning rather than teaching. He/She will be open to learners' suggestions and support their initiatives. He/she will involve the learners in decision making and in evaluation. Thus, the teacher will be a consultant as well as a co-learner in the learning process.
4. Evaluation/reflection must play a key role in the learner autonomous language classroom. Dam argues that evaluation is the pivot of the learning process. It pivots on questions like what am I /are you/ am I doing? Why? What was good/bad? Why? What can it be used for?
5. The learner autonomous language classroom must be seen to be a rich learning environment. It is a workshop where things are tried out or investigated; teachers are learners and learners are teachers; process and content are mutually dependent.[779]

Learner autonomy will not just happen, it must be consciously fostered. This will involve a change in traditional teacher and learner roles. There must be active co-operation and collaboration between teacher and learners. Negotiation between teachers and learners will be key. Reflection will be at the heart of the process, and the learning environment must support these factors.

4.8.8 The role of learning strategies

In addition to the approaches already discussed in this section, the ability to help learners to learn is regarded as key to the successful development of learner autonomy in language classrooms. However, many learners have 'unlearned' most of their skills as self-directed learners by the time they come to

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[778] L. Dam. *Learner Autonomy 3: From Theory to Classroom Practice*. (Dublin: Authentik, 1995), 4 - 6.
[779] *Ibid.*

the language class.[780] They come with preconceived ideas on how learning should happen and this often excludes self-directed learning opportunities. Many like to be directed by teachers and find themselves at a loss when given learning opportunities that require them to take responsibility for their learning.[781] However, it is difficult for learners to take control of their learning if they do not understand their learning processes. In order to make decisions about their language learning learners need insights into how to learn.[782] This has led to a development of techniques to help learners to learn.[783] This is referred to as learner training or learner development. The word training implies a narrow focus but in the context of language learning it takes on a broader, more educational view. Ellis and Sinclair define learner training as follows:

> 'Learner training aims to help learners consider the factors which affect their learning and discover the learning strategies which suit them best, so that they may become more effective learners and take on more responsibility for their own learning'.[784]

Dickenson argues that learner training is essential for any learner who wishes to achieve a degree of autonomy in the learning process as it will furnish them with the tools to become more independent.[785] It aims to help all learners become more involved and more independent and thus, more effective in their learning.[786] To achieve this Dickenson holds that learners need both psychological and methodological preparation.[787] Psychological preparation involves giving learners the confidence that they have the ability to take a more active and independent role in their learning. Psychological preparation depends on and is achieved through methodological preparation in that learners can best be persuaded of their ability to work independently by having practice and success in working this way. Methodological preparation is about enabling learners to develop strategies or techniques that will support active, independent involvement in learning the target language.[788] It may involve enabling learners to use strategies used by successful language learners.[789] It is achieved by giving learners practice in using their existing knowledge to make decisions about the learning

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[780] C. Knoshita Thomson. 'Self-assessment in self-directed learning: issues of learner diversity, 77-91' in *Taking Control. Autonomy in Language Learning*. Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, WWF Or and H.D. Pierson. (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, 1996), 77.
[781] *Ibid.*
[782] H. Holec. 'The learner as manager: managing learning or managing to learn?', in *Learning Strategies in Language Learning*. Eds. A. Wenden and J. Rubin. (Hemel Hempstead and Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1987), 145-56.
[783] R.L. Oxford. *Language Learning Strategies: what every teacher should know.* (Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle, 1990).
[784] G. Ellis and B. Sinclair. *Learning to Learn English: a course in learner training.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 2.
[785] L. Dickenson. *Learner Autonomy 2: Learner training for language learning.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1992), 13.
[786] *Ibid.*: 18.
[787] *Ibid.*
[788] *Ibid.*
[789] A.U. Chamot. 'The role of learning strategies in second language acquisition' in *Learner Contributions to Language Learning. New Directions in Research*. Ed. M.P. Breen. (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), 26.

process. It entails defining learning goals, methods of learning, resources to be used, methods of evaluation, and management of time.[790]

Informed decision making on the learning process implies the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Cognitive strategies are conscious techniques selected and used by learners in the learning process, they are learning techniques that the learner selects in response to a learning challenge.[791] O'Malley and Chamot identify metacognitive strategies as 'thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring the learning task, and evaluating how well one has learned'.[792] These necessitate reflection on learning and it has been argued that they are the key to learning success.[793] Metacognitive strategies are used to identify the learning task, select the appropriate cognitive strategy, monitor the use of the strategy, check the task is complete and assess how effective the learning was.[794] Metacognition is a form of self-knowledge that marks the difference between a passive learner who obediently follows the teacher and a reflective, self-aware learner.[795]

Cognitive and metacognitive strategies describe mental operations used by learners in the management of their own learning. In addition the learner needs to take action to control aspects of the learning situation related to the self and others. Social strategies are used in actions taken in relation to others in the learning situation.[796] They are essential to the support and maintenance of a social interactive approach to learning. Oxford[797] lists the following social strategies:

- Asking questions:
    1. Asking for clarification or verification
    2. Asking for correction
- Cooperating with others:
    1. Cooperating with peers
    2. Cooperating with proficient users of the new language
- Empathising with others:
    1. Developing cultural understanding

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[790] H. Holec. *Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning.* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1981), 3. (First published Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1979).
[791] L. Dickenson. *Learner Autonomy 2: Learner training for language learning.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1992), 19.
[792] J.M. O' Malley and A.U. Chamot. *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition.* (London: Macmillan, 1990), 137.
[793] A. Wenden. 'What do second language learners know about their language learning? A second look at retrospective accounts'. *Applied Linguistics 7* (2 1986): 186-205.
[794] B. Sinclair. 'Learner autonomy: the next phase'. In *Learner Autonomy, Teacher Autonomy: Future Directions.* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 9.
[795] R. Kelly. 'Language Counselling for learner autonomy: the skilled helper in self-access learning', in *Taking Control. Autonomy in Language Learning.* Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996, 93-113), 106.
[796] R.L. Oxford. *Language Learning Strategies: what every Teacher should Know.* (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1990).
[797] *Ibid.*: 21.

2. Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings

Actions taken to control the social and affective dimensions of the learning situation depend on learners' attitudes about their capabilities and about their role and the role of others in the learning process. Thus, training learners in the use of learning strategies will be of limited success unless learner attitudes about their capabilities and role in the learning process are taken into account.[798] Strategy training does not guarantee that learners will continue to use the strategies they have learned. It does not guarantee an increase in motivation and confidence in the learners. However, by making the learning process more transparent the learner is 'empowered to make his/her own changes'.[799] This empowerment will help ensure that learners' intrinsic motivation is developed and maintained.

4.8.9 The role of motivation

Regardless of the causes to which a learner attributes his/her successes and failures, he/she will not be motivated to persevere with his/her learning unless the end goal is perceived as being personally meaningful and desirable. Motivation is shaped by the subjective values that learners attach to learning goals and incentives to learn.[800] Learners vary in their perceptions of the value of goals as well as in the clarity with which they perceive goals. Those who have clearly defined interim goals leading to a main goal are likely to be most successful.[801] Where a learner is motivated to achieve a particular long-term goal and perceives interim goals to be a pathway to its attainment then

> '...motivation for the entire series of steps converges or is channelled into motivation for the immediate next step'.[802]

However, the achievement of goals is not the only factor involved in motivating learners. Another important dimension is the learner's perception of the learning experience. If the learner does not derive some satisfaction from the pursuit of his/her learning goal then motivation is bound to dissipate. Learners need to develop the awareness that learning is, in itself, motivating. The satisfaction and motivation to be derived through the learning process must be discussed and emphasised. Maehr refers to this type of ongoing learning motivation as continuing motivation.[803] It is more generally called intrinsic motivation. Ushioda lists four of the important positive features of intrinsic motivation:

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[798] A. Wenden. *Learner Strategies for Learner Autonomy*. (London: Prentice Hall International, 1991), 55.
[799] M. Tyacke. 'Strategies for success: bringing out the best in a learner'. *TESL Canada Journal/Revue TESL du Canada 8* (2, 1991): 45-56 cited in D. Simmons. 'A study of strategy use in independent learners', 61-75 in *Taking Control. Autonomy in Language Learning*. Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996, 93-113), 75.
[800] E. Ushioda. *Learner Autonomy 5: The Role of Motivation*. Ed. D. Little. (Dublin: Authentik, 1996).
[801] J. Raynor, 'Motivation in Career Striving', in *Personality, Motivation and Achievement*. Eds. J. Atkinson and J. Raynor (New York: Wiley, 1978), 208.
[802] *Ibid.*
[803] M. Maehr. 'Meaning and motivation: toward a theory of personal investment', in *Research on motivation in Education, Volume 1*. Eds. R. Ames & C. Ames. (Orlando: Academic Press, 1984, 115-44).

- it is self-sustaining because it generates its own rewards;
- it leads to voluntary persistence at learning;
- it focuses on skill development and mastery;
- it is an expression of personal control and autonomy in the learning process.[804]

Intrinsic motivation gives rise to positive feelings such as satisfaction and pleasure from the learning process. This is important because if learners receive an 'intrinsic reward' from the learning process, they are motivated to continue being involved without external pressures to do so.[805] Intrinsic motivation promotes the perception that learning is motivating in itself. As well as seeing the process as a source of pleasure it can also be seen as an opportunity for task mastery and skill development. Viewing the process in this light will help maintain motivation.[806] People have a need to be effective, competent and self-determining in their interactions with the world around them and this need motivates and energises them.[807] The directing, motivating force comes from within. This self-direction is crucial to sustaining intrinsic motivation. Even activities that are intrinsically motivating may seem less so if the conditions of engagement are dictated by others.[808]

To develop effective motivational thinking learners must develop the capacity to manage the affective dimension of the learning experience.[809] This capacity can be developed with the help of teachers. If the classroom takes the learners' motivational agendas as its starting point then the conditions for managing the affective side of the learning experience will be set. Learning will be perceived as being personally relevant and meaningful for the learners' subjective views of life. It will cater for the learners' interests and the meanings that they want to express. The capacity can be further promoted through the kinds of learning goals and evaluative systems teachers construct and encourage their learners to construct, and through appropriate feedback in relation to learning performance outcomes.[810] The feedback should foster reflection and self-evaluation in relation to the learning process and the learners' perception of skill and competence development.[811] This will set in process

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[804] E. Ushioda. *Learner Autonomy 5: The Role of Motivation*. Ed. D. Little. (Dublin: Authentik, 1996), 19.
[805] M. Maehr. 'Meaning and motivation: toward a theory of personal investment', in *Research on motivation in Education, Volume 1*. Eds. R. Ames & C. Ames. (Orlando: Academic Press, 1984, 115-44), 130.
[806] *Ibid.*
[807] E. Deci. *The Psychology of Self-Determination*. (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath & Co., 1980), 33.
[808] M. Lepper and D. Greene. 'Overjustification research and beyond: toward a means-end anlaysis of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation', in *The Hidden Costs of Reward: New Perspectives on the Psychology of Human Motivation*. (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1978), 109 cited in E. Ushioda. *Learner Autonomy 5: The Role of Motivation*. Ed. D. Little. (Dublin: Authentik, 1996), 21.
[809] R.L. Oxford. *Language Learning Strategies: what every Teacher should Know*. (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1990), 21.
[810] R.L. Oxford. *Language Learning Strategies: what every Teacher should Know*. (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1990), 21.
[811] E. Ushioda. *Learner Autonomy 5: The Role of Motivation*. Ed. D. Little. (Dublin: Authentik, 1996), 27.

the appropriate types of internal belief structures and attributional processes that will support learners' intrinsic motivation.

To foster the development of intrinsic motivation it is desirable to define learning in terms of mastery, skill development and absolute performance criteria. Foreign language learning offers a context in which these kinds of learning criteria can be realised. As discussed previously, language is best acquired through language use and this can bring into play motivational processes and patterns of thinking that support skill development and perceptions of growing competence.

The role of the learning experience in helping to shape motivational thinking processes is not limited to how learners perform or their perceptions of their performances.[812] The subjective experiences of language learning and language use, the feelings that these evoke and experiences associated with them, are also very pertinent to the internal motivation of the learners.[813] These affective experiences have the potential to be hooked at any stage during the learning process. For example, learners may begin to enjoy learning the target language because it gives them opportunities to engage in different experiences such as games, drama, theatre, creative movement, creating crafts, and so on. In other words, where the language enables learners to access things they like or want to do rather than being the object of learning.[814] In this way, learners can begin to associate language learning with areas of their lives that are personally meaningful. The language will be perceived as a means of accessing these interests and furthering their competencies and skills in these areas.[815] In the words of Barnes school knowledge is integrated with action knowledge as it becomes used for practical purpose.[816]

Since the majority of learners take a foreign language in school because they are required to, Ushioda argues that it is unlikely that learners' motivational thinking is, at the beginning of the process, derived from the experience of learning and using the language.[817] Their perception of skill development, enjoyment, a sense of satisfaction, and expectations of achieving immediate learning targets motivates them. Motivation that is directed towards long-term goals is in danger of deferring the experience of using the language until some time in the future. Raynor holds that if the learner is motivated by a particular long-term goal and sees interim goals to be instrumental to its attainment

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[812] E. Ushioda. *Learner Autonomy 5: The Role of Motivation.* Ed. D. Little. (Dublin: Authentik, 1996).
[813] R.M. Ryan, Connell and E.L. Deci. 'A Motivational Analysis of Self-Determination and Self- Regulation in Education', in *Research on Motivation in Education, Volume 2.* Eds. C. Ames and R. Ames. (Orlando: Academic Press Inc., 1985), 15.
[814] D. Crystal. *Child Language Learning and Linguistics: An Overview for the Teaching and Therapeutic Professions. (*London: Edward Arnold, 1987 2nd ed.), 75.
[815] E. Ushioda. *Learner Autonomy 5: The Role of Motivation.* Ed. D. Little. (Dublin: Authentik, 1996).
[816] D. Barnes. *From Communication to Curriculum.* (London: Penguin, 1976), 81.
[817] E. Ushioda. *Learner Autonomy 5: The Role of Motivation.* Ed. D. Little. (Dublin: Authentik, 1996).

then he/she will be motivated to achieve each step.[818] The learner needs the experience of using the language or he/she will not have a sense of skill development and progress, of developing competence and mastery. Thus it is incumbent on language teachers to enable their learners to engage with the target language through meaningful, satisfying tasks and activities that link classroom learning with the outside world.

Learners will never become truly autonomous in their language learning unless they are intrinsically motivated to learn the target language. Intrinsically motivated learning is learning that is contextualised, where the skills and knowledge acquired can be meaningfully applied. It involves learning by doing, developing skills in the context in which they are used. If students are expected to perceive a link with life outside the classroom, then the material or classroom activity must have relevance.[819] Thus, intrinsically motivated learning is embedded in real life. Skills are honed by a desire for competence that evolves from using these skills in a real life context. Learners should perceive the target language as being continuous with their lives outside the classroom, as a means of indulging their interests, expanding their competencies and as a source of enjoyment. Without subjective involvement, the learning process will fail to engage learners. It is therefore incumbent on every language teacher to negotiate approaches to the teaching-learning process that are appropriate to the needs, interests and abilities of his/her learners.

4.9 The role of the teacher

As has been highlighted throughout this chapter learner autonomy is not 'something that teachers do to their learners'.[820] It does not mean a complete shift of instructional mode from teacher to learners.[821] It involves creating a learning environment where the learning process is made transparent so learners are encouraged and enabled to make decisions about their learning, the teacher dares to let go, and the process is underpinned by evaluation.[822] Karlsson suggests that the role of the teacher is not to be an 'omniscient and omnipotent expert' but to enable the learner 'to share the responsibility of knowing'.[823] The main role of the teacher in an autonomous language learning environment is to enable the learners to be consciously involved in their own learning.[824] No amount of teaching can

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[818] J. Raynor, 'Motivation in Career Striving', in *Personality, Motivation and Achievement*. Eds. J. Atkinson and J. Raynor (New York: Wiley, 1978), 199-219.
[819] S.H. McDonagh. *Psychology in Foreign Language Teaching*. (London: George, Allen and Unwin, 1981), 150.
[820] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems*. (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 3.
[821] M. Usuki. *Learner autonomy: learning from the student's voice*. (Dublin: CLCS, Trinity College, Dublin, 2002), 1.
[822] L. Dam. *Learner Autonomy: From Theory to Classroom Practice*. (Dublin: Authentik, 1995), 6.
[823] L. Karlsson. 'Teacher roles: letting go of control. Independence'. *The Newsletter of the IATEFL Learner Independence Special Interest Group. (*Summer 1998), 9.
[824] L. Dam. 'Why focus on learning rather than teaching? *From Theory to Practice', in Focus on learning rather than teaching: why and how? Papers from the IATEFL conference on learner independence, Kraków, 14-16 May, 1998*. Eds. D. Little, L. Dam and J. Timmer. (Dublin: CLCS, Trinity College, Dublin, 2000), 25.

ever guarantee learning.[825] Therefore, teaching should not focus on the transfer of information but the empowerment of learners, enabling them to develop the capacity to take control of their learning process. Unless it is the aim of the teaching-learning environment to allow learners to be independent then most of them will remain dependent on the teacher.[826] The teacher's attitude to his/her learners may hold the key to learner autonomy.[827] Dickenson[828] identifies six ways in which teachers can help to ensure the promotion of learner autonomy:

- Teachers can promote autonomy by showing learners that they approve of it and by encouraging them to take more responsibility for their learning.
- By giving learners successful learning experiences of independent learning teachers can help learners see that they are capable of exercising greater autonomy in their learning.
- Learners will acquire autonomy by exercising autonomy thus teachers must give them increased opportunities for managing their own learning.
- Teachers must help them to develop learning strategies so they can exercise their independence.
- Teachers need to help learners to become aware of language as a system so they can understand the different learning strategies available and be able to understand simple reference books.
- Teachers should share with learners what they know about language learning to enable them to have better awareness of what to expect from the language learning task and how to react to problems they might encounter in the process.[829]

Thus, the teacher plays a key role in preparing the learners methodologically and psychologically to take control of their learning.

Wright[830] suggests that it is possible, according to their practice, to categorise teachers somewhere along a line between the two extremes of what Barnes[831] terms 'transmission' and 'interpretation'. What is implicit between the two extremes is locus of control, the extent to which learners are empowered to take responsibility for their own learning. Teachers who work to increase their learners' autonomy would be positioned on the interpretative end of the line. Wright summarises the 'interpretation' teacher as follows:

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[825] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 42.
[826] L. Dickenson. *Learner Autonomy 2: Learner training for language learning.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1992), 2.
[827] M. Usuki. *Learner autonomy: learning from the student's voice.* (Dublin: CLCS, Trinity College, Dublin, 2002), 1.
[828] L. Dickenson. *Learner Autonomy 2: Learner training for language learning.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1992), 2-3.
[829] *Ibid.*
[830] T. Wright. *Roles of Teachers and Learners.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 62.
[831] D. Barnes. *From Communication to Curriculum.* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976).

'...interpretation teachers believe that knowledge is the ability to organize thought, interpret and act on facts; that learners are intrinsically interested and naturally inclined to explore their worlds; that the teacher's role is to set up dialogues in which learners reorganize their states of knowledge; that learners already know a great deal and have the ability to fashion that knowledge'.[832]

The interpretation teacher sees learning as a dynamic process through which learners should be empowered to become more autonomous. Voller argues that it is this view of learning and of where the power should reside which has led to the emphasis on learner styles and strategies and the importance of negotiation between teachers and learners in promoting learner autonomy.[833]

Voller highlights that the ideal of the teacher as 'facilitator' of learning, 'as a helper whose role is to facilitate learning'.[834] Examining the most important features of the facilitator in autonomous language learning contexts, Voller,[835] like Holec[836] characterises them as fulfilling two complementary roles: providing psycho-social support and technical support. He lists the key psycho-social features as including:

- 'the personal qualities of the facilitator (being caring, supportive, patient, tolerant, empathic, open, non-judgemental);
- a capacity for motivating learners (encouraging commitment, dispersing uncertainty, helping learners to overcome obstacles, being prepared to enter into dialogue with learners, avoiding manipulating, objectifying or interfering with, in other words, controlling them);
- an ability to raise learners' awareness (to 'decondition' them from preconceptions about learner and teacher roles, to help them perceive the utility of, or necessity for, independent learning'.[837]

The key technical features include:

- 'helping learners to plan and carry out their independent language learning by means of needs analysis (both learning and language needs), objective setting (both short-and longer-term, achievable), work planning, selecting materials, and organising interactions;
- helping learners evaluate themselves (assessing initial proficiency, monitoring progress, and self- and peer-assessment);

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[832] T. Wright. *Roles of Teachers and Learners*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 62.
[833] P. Voller. 'Does the teacher have a role in autonomous language learning?', *in Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning*. Eds. P. Benson and P. Voller. (London: Longman, 1997), 98-113.
[834] *Ibid.*: 101.
[835] *Ibid.*
[836] H. Holec. 'On Autonomy: some elementary concepts', in *Discourse and Learning*. Ed. P. Riley. (London: Longman, 1985), 184-6.
[837] P. Voller. 'Does the teacher have a role in autonomous language learning?' in *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning*. Eds. P. Benson and P. Voller. (London: Longman, 1997), 102.

- helping learners acquire the skills and knowledge needed to implement the above (by raising their awareness of language and learning, by providing learner training to help them identify learning styles and appropriate learning strategies)'.[838]

Voller argues that these features may be achieved in autonomous language learning situations through the use of negotiation. It should be central to much of what goes on in the classroom through teacher-learner, learner-resource, and learner-learner interactions.[839] The teacher and learners work together as joint negotiators of the learning process, a collaborative approach being central to its success. The teacher negotiates with learners and 'external authorities'[840] about the syllabus and with learners about how learning goals are to be achieved. This will involve an exploration of the aims and objectives of the syllabus both implied and explicit. Once these are known then teacher and learners must negotiate to make the aims and objectives the learners' own through making their learning goals explicit and examining what the learners bring to the learning process. The teacher must be open to the learners' ideas and suggestions and support their initiatives.[841] The dialogue, the negotiation must be invented anew in every classroom.

The process of empowerment is gradual and the teacher's professional knowledge and experience will contribute to the content and direction of the learning process. Therefore teacher education is essential for the promotion of learner autonomy as its fostering requires teachers who are capable, motivated and informed.[842] The teacher must abandon the notion that he/she can guarantee success by his/her own efforts and instead to allow the learners to learn by doing.[843] Learners must be given the security and confidence to become more involved in their own learning. It is the role of the language teacher to enter into dialogue with learners so they know what is expected of them, to help them decide 'what to learn' and 'how to learn'. [844]

To foster autonomy the teacher must emphasise helping learners over teaching them. There must be a shift from teaching to learning. Learners must be supported in setting up their aims and objectives. They must then be enabled to make decisions on how best to achieve these. The teacher's understanding of the process should grow along with the learners' understanding. There is no set

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[838] P. Voller. 'Does the teacher have a role in autonomous language learning?' in *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning*. Eds. P. Benson and P. Voller. (London: Longman, 1997), 102.
[839] *Ibid.:* 109.
[840] *Ibid.*
[841] L. Dam. *Learner Autonomy: From Theory to Classroom Practice.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1995), 5.
[842] A. Wenden. *Learner Strategies for Learner Autonomy: planning and implementing learner training for language learners*. (Hemel Hempstead and Englewood. Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1991).
[843] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems*. (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 44.
[844] P. Benson & S. Toogood. *Learner Autonomy 7: Challenges to research and practice.* (Dublin: Authentik, 2002).

recipe; the understanding of the teaching learning process is always in flux.[845] By passing responsibility to the learners the teacher has time to observe and reflect on the learning process.[846] In this way the teacher can analyse classroom behaviour in order to evaluate it in conjunction with learners. This will enable self-assessment to be supported and legitimised. In addition methods of evaluation must be decided on in conjunction with the learners. Since the aims and objectives of the learning process are explicit to the learners they can more effectively negotiate appropriate methods of evaluation.

Teachers should from the earliest possible time in the language process, engage the learners in using the target language to express their own meanings.[847] Learners will develop competence in the language only to the extent that they are exposed to frequent opportunities for using it for authentic communicative purposes. The teacher must establish, what Stern terms, a second language 'ambience'[848] by using the target language for classroom management thus establishing a norm that it be used for classroom interaction. It should be used to construct and maintain multiple scaffolding with the group members supporting one another through the target language in its use. If it is to succeed the classroom discourse must adhere to the interactional and discourse norms of the outside community.[849]

Fostering learner autonomy can lend vital support to the development and growth of learner self-esteem. Enabling learners to build on the experience, interests, and competencies that they bring to the learning process validates their 'cutural capital'[850] as well as enabling learners to become intrinsically motivated to learn. However, learners need to be supported in the process.

Teacher autonomy is a precondition for learner autonomy.[851] In order to empower their learners to become autonomous, teachers must have the freedom and the capacity to be autonomous in their role. Most teachers work within constraints of one kind or another (for example, syllabus, examinations, textbooks), what is important is the way the teacher responds to these constraints.[852] Mc Grath argues

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[845] D. Little, 'Developing learner autonomy in the language classroom: theory, practice and the European Langauge Portfolio'. Lecture delivered to Higher Diploma in Education students at Trinity College Dublin, May 9th 2001.
[846] L. Dam. *Learner Autonomy 3: From Theory to Classroom Practice*. (Dublin: Authentik, 1995), 32.
[847] D. Little, 'Developing learner autonomy in the language classroom: theory, practice and the European Languge Portfolio'. Lecture delivered to Higher Diploma in Education students at Trinity College Dublin, May 9th 2001.
[848] H.H. Stern. Fu*ndamental Concepts of Language Teaching*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).
[849] R. Tharp and R. Gallimore. *Rousing Minds to Life*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
[850] H.A. Giroux. *Theory and Resistance in Education: a Pedagogy for the Opposition*. (South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey, 1983).
[851] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems*. (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 22.
[852] I. McGrath. 'Teacher autonomy'. In *Learner Autonomy, Teacher Autonomy: Future Directions*. Eds. B. Sinclair, I. McGrath and T. Lamb. (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 103.

that 'in order to be free from control by others one has to be capable of acting self-directedly'.[853] Little argues that the starting point for teacher autonomy is that the curriculum which the teacher presents to learners is uniquely his/hers.[854] Whatever the teacher is teaching, regardless of how closely he/she follows the prescribed syllabus or programme; he/she can only communicate his/her own unique interpretation of it to the learners.[855] Thus, Little argues, there is a sense in which the teacher cannot help but 'teach herself' the curriculum as the teacher presents to learners is his/her interpretation of it.[856] Because teachers interpret the syllabus in their own way, according to their own personal constructs, one teacher's teaching cannot be the same as anyone else's.[857] To use Little's own words:

> 'No doubt teaching must always have an eye on the syllabus; but even the most slavish disciple of the syllabus cannot avoid taking a host of individual decisions and initiatives in order to teach her classes. Why should those decisions and initiatives not work in favour of learner autonomy?' [858]

This recognition of one's autonomy in one's interpretation of the curriculum is the first step towards teacher autonomy. Learner autonomy will grow within the space that teachers consider themselves capable of creating for its development. The negotiation of learner autonomy is dependent on the extent that the teacher is prepared to exercise his/her own right to autonomy.[859] 'In order to allow learners the opportunity to develop autonomy, teachers must themselves exercise autonomy in relation to their own practice'.[860]

Teachers must be aware of their own system of constructs, to be familiar with the assumptions, prejudices and values that underlie their classroom behaviour.[861] What the teacher does in the classroom is shaped by his/her own personal constructs.[862] How teachers interpret syllabi and how they enable learners to cover the aims of the syllabi will depend on their construct system. Every teacher is unique and this is the foundation for teacher autonomy. However, teachers do not operate in isolation, and the education system demands a degree of accountability in relation to decisions taken and the efficacy of approaches selected. The notion of measuring the effectiveness of learner autonomy within the language classroom will be discussed in the following section.

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[853] I. McGrath. 'Teacher autonomy'. In *Learner Autonomy, Teacher Autonomy: Future Directions*. Eds. B. Sinclair, I. McGrath and T. Lamb. (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 102.
[854] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems*. (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 22.
[855] *Ibid.*
[856] *Ibid.*
[857] *Ibid.*: 40.
[858] *Ibid.*: 41.
[859] P. Benson. 'Autonomy as a learners' and teachers' right', in *Learner Autonomy, Teacher Autonomy: Future Directions*. Eds. B. Sinclair, I. McGrath and T. Lamb (London: Longman, 2000), 116.
[860] *Ibid.*: 117.
[861] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems*. (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 22.
[862] P. Salmon. *Psychology in the Classroom*. (London: Cassell, 1995), 28.

4.10 Measuring learner autonomy

When will teachers know that their learners are autonomous? When will learners know that they are exhibiting autonomous behaviour? A steady state of true autonomy is most likely unattainable.[863] There are degrees of autonomy, it is not an 'absolute concept',[864] nor is it a steady state.[865] It is possible to identify key aspects of autonomy but it can manifest itself in various ways depending, for example, on the learners' ages, how far they have progressed with their learning and learner personality.[866] The environment in which learners are working will also influence the degree of autonomous behaviour that they will be able to exhibit.[867] Thus, learners may have a developed capacity for autonomous language learning but may not work in this way all the time.[868] The teacher or the learning materials may make it difficult for the learner to exercise autonomous learning behaviours.[869] The opposite is also quite possible: that learners know how to manage their own learning but decide not to act on this knowledge. They may have been trained in learning strategies and encouraged to reflect on and make decisions about their learning but still hold back for psychological or personal reasons. Thus the absence of autonomous learning behaviours cannot be taken as evidence of the absence of a capacity for autonomy.[870]

Autonomy is not an all or nothing concept and nor is it a constant concept.[871] The ability to exercise control over one aspect of our learning does not mean that it will be transferred to another. It varies in individual learners according to a range of variables for example, the learning situation, the task, the topic, to mention but a few.[872] A learner may show evidence of being very autonomous in one area but none at all in another.[873] For example all learners exhibit a high degree of autonomy in learning their mother tongue but most learners have difficulty attaining the same level of autonomy in learning a second language in institutional settings.

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[863] B. Sinclair. 'Materials design for the promotion of learner autonomy: how explicit is 'explicit'? in *Taking Control. Autonomy in Language Learning.* Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson

[864] D. Nunan. Designing and adapting materials to encourage learner autonomy. In *Autonomy and Independence in Langauge Learning.* Eds. P. Benson and P. Voller. (Harlow: Longman, 1997), 193.

[865] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991).

[866] *Ibid.:* 4.

[867] H. Holec, Ed. *Autonomy and Self-Directed Learning: Present Fields of Application.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1988), 8.

[868] B. Sinclair. Materials design for the promotion of learner autonomy: how explicit is 'explicit'? in *Taking control: Autonomy in Language Learning.* Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 150.

[869] H. Holec, Ed. *Autonomy and Self-Directed Learning: Present Fields of Application.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1988), 8.

[870] W.T. Littlewood. *Autonomy: an anatomy and a framework'.* System, 24 (4) 1996, 428.

[871] B. Sinclair. Materials design for the promotion of learner autonomy: how explicit is 'explicit'? in *Taking control: Autonomy in Language Learning.* Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 150.

[872] B. Sinclair. 'Materials design for the promotion of learner autonomy: how explicit is 'explicit'?' in *Taking control: Autonomy in Language Learning.* Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 150.

[873] D. Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 4.

Another difficulty with measuring learner autonomy lies in the power structures of the classroom. Learners have often become socialised into seeking to please the teacher. Knowing that the teacher wishes to foster autonomous learning they may exhibit signs that they are working this way.

> '... they will gradually discover what these behaviours are and will subsequently reveal them back to me. Put simply, learners will give up their autonomy to put on the mask of autonomous behaviour'.[874]

Where learners have not been sufficiently engaged in reflection and discussion on the benefits of autonomy they will exhibit autonomous behaviour out of a sense of duty. This problem has its roots in teacher attitude and will only be addressed by teacher reflection and resultant action.[875]

Genuinely autonomous behaviour will be self-initiated rather than generated in response to a task where it is explicitly or implicitly required to be observed.[876] If autonomous behaviour is to be promoted then there should be some way of judging the degree to which it has been fostered. There must be an adequate description of the potential behaviours involved. It is perhaps in deference to the difficulty of measuring learner autonomy that a later definition of autonomy offered by Little focuses on autonomy in relation to a task:

> 'Human beings are autonomous in relation to a task when they are able to perform that task: (i) without assistance, (ii) beyond the immediate context in which they acquire the knowledge and skills on which successful task performance depends, and (iii) flexibly, taking account of the special requirements of particular circumstances'.[877]

Thus, given that autonomy is not a constant state, it would appear that the best way of measuring developed capacity for autonomy is, over a period of time, to observe and reflect on learner behaviour exhibited before, during and after task completion. The development of learner autonomy cannot be separated from the goals and content of learning or from the learning environment. The learning environment plays a key role in determining the degree to which learner autonomy is fostered and the degree to which learners are comfortable with exhibiting autonomous behaviour. Observations must be accompanied by teacher reflection on the role he/she plays in actively promoting and fostering an autonomous learning environment. A fuller picture will be achieved through discussion and negotiation with learners on their experiences of working on the tasks as has been previously discussed.

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[874] M.P. Breen and S. Mann. 'Shooting arrows at the sun: perspectives on a pedagogy for autonomy', in *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning.* Eds. P. Benson and P. Voller (London: Longman, 1997), 141.

[875] P. Benson & S. Toogood. *Learner Autonomy 7: Challenges to research and practice.* (Dublin: Authentik, 2002).

[876] P. Benson, *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning.* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 52.

[877] D. Little. 'Language awareness and the autonomous language learner'. *Language Awareness, 6* (2/3 1997), 93-104.

4.11 Concluding comments

The chapter sought to provide substantial empirical and other evidence to demonstrate that approaches designed to foster learner autonomy are more successful than teacher-led approaches.[878] An autonomous approach helps to ensure that new language learning is embedded in learners' everyday experience, culture and prior knowledge, and, thus that the target language is perceived by learners as a means of developing their interests and enhancing their sense of personal identity.[879] Of course the development of learner autonomy in a formal language learning context must be conscious and intentional on the part of the teacher and the learner. There must be an acceptance that there is more than one way of approaching a learning-task and that learner insights are as important as the teacher's.[880] To support this there must be a choice of learning resources available and the textbook cannot be adhered to slavishly.

It was argued that in order to make decisions about their language learning learners need to gain insights into how to learn.[881] Teachers must share what they know about language learning with their learners and help them to develop learning strategies so that they can make informed decisions about the learning process. This will help learners to be methodologically prepared for exercising autonomy. Psychological preparation will come through practice and success in working autonomously.[882] Methodological preparation will support the psychological preparation.[883]

There is a bi-directional relationship between language learning and language use.[884] Successful language learning depends on language use and successful language use depends in part on the learner's ability to continually update his/her capacity to communicate in the target language. Learners need both the willingness and the ability to communicate independently. This would imply that every language teaching approach should assign a central role to learning through communication and to developing learners' autonomy in language use and language learning. Learners must be engaged in activities that will enable them to internalise the skills necessary for successful

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[878] L. Legenhausen.'The emergence and use of grammatical structures in conversational interactions: comparing traditional and autonomous learners' in *The Construction of Knowledge, Learner Autonomy and Related Issues in Foreign Language Learning*. Eds. B. Mißler and U. Multhaup. (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 1999), 27-40.
[879] D. Little. 'Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact: promoting learner autonomy through the use of information systems and information technologies', in *Taking Control. Autonomy in Language Learning.* Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 204.
[880] P. Benson & S. Toogood. *Learner Autonomy 7: Challenges to research and practice.* (Dublin: Authentik, 2002).
[881] H. Holec. 'Self-assessment'. In *Self–Directed Learning and Self-Access in Australia: from Practice to Theory*. Proceedings of the National Conference of Adult Migrant Education Programme, Melbourne, June 1984. Ed. R.J. Maseon (Melbourne: Council of Adult Education, 1984, 141-58), 142.
[882] L. Dickenson. *Learner Autonomy 2: Learner training for language learning.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1992), 18.
[883] *Ibid.*
[884] D. Little. 'Strategic competence considered in relation to strategic control of the language learning process'. in *Strategies in language learning and use*. (Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing), 11.

communication of their messages and to gain confidence in their ability to do so.[885] In addition they need to develop the reflective skills to analyse what they have learned from their interactions with and through the target language.[886] Learning by doing must interact with reflection and this reflective process can be supported by discussion and writing.[887]

As was shown in this chapter, there is no set approach to fostering learner autonomy in the language classroom.[888] Any practice that motivates and supports learners to take control over any aspect of their learning can be seen as developing learner autonomy. Certain practices have become closely associated with the development of autonomy in the second language classroom.[889] Teachers must find their own ways of integrating elements of these approaches into their practice. Even within the constraints of syllabus and time, teachers can exercise their autonomy to interpret and present the syllabus in their own way.

Following the theme of active learning being co-constructed by both teacher and learner and the claim in this chapter that effective language learners are cognitively and affectively active in their learning, the discussion in Chapter 6 will attempt to explore the potential relationship, if any, between the creation of an encouraging learning environment with lots of opportunities for different types of language use and interaction, and its impact on language learners. This chapter, building on the previous two chapters, identifies the volume of theoretical advice available to practitioners for the best possible routes to structuring and facilitating effective language learning environments, but has not undertaken to offer concrete strategies for implementation. These will be considered in subsequent chapters, but the following chapter will attempt to bridge the divide between theoretical perspectives on good practice in language teaching and learning, and its actual implementation in classrooms. This will be achieved by examining national, governmental and European policy making bodies' responses to the literature in the field and their subsequent issuance on best practice in schools.

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[885] P. Benson & S. Toogood. *Learner Autonomy 7: Challenges to research and practice.* (Dublin: Authentik, 2002).
[886] V. Kohonen. 'Towards experiential foreign language education', in *Experiential Learning in Foreign Language Education.* Eds. V. Kohonen, R. Jaatinen, P. Kaikkonen and J. Lehtovaara. (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd., 2001).
[887] D. Little. 'Developing learner autonomy in the language clasroom: theory, practice and the European Language Portfolio'. Lecture delivered to Higher Diploma in Education students at Trinity College Dublin, May 9th 2001.
[888] D. Little. 'Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact: promoting learner autonomy through the use of information systems and information technologies,' in *Taking Control. Autonomy in Language Learning.* Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 204.
[889] P. Benson. *Teaching and researching Autonomy in Language Learning.* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 110.

Chapter Five

Language Teaching and Learning in Europe and Ireland

5.1 Introduction

As has been argued in previous chapters, it is widely accepted in the language teaching profession that learners need not just knowledge and skill in the grammar of a language but also the ability to use the language in socially and culturally appropriate ways. Language learning can help learners to communicate and receive meanings that are important to them. It can also enable them to develop a deeper understanding of others' cultures and of their own. In this way it can help learners to develop an understanding and respect for different cultures and different ways of life and thus to deepen understanding. Language learning in Europe is given priority as a means of promoting understanding, tolerance, solidarity and political and economic integration. The Council of Europe has a long and well established tradition of developing consensus on the aims and guiding principles of language teaching and learning. The overarching aims of the Council of Europe in the field of modern languages involve:

- The deepening of mutual understanding among citizens in Europe;
- Respect for diversity of ways of life and of cultures;
- The protection and promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity;
- The promotion and development of plurilingualism as a life-long process;
- The development of the language learner;
- The development of learners' capacities for independent language learning;
- Transparency and coherence in language learning courses or programmes.[890]

To help achieve these aims the Council of Europe is promoting a language target of mother tongue + two other languages for the citizens of Europe.[891] Developing levels of competence in different languages is believed to support mutual tolerance and understanding. It is thus hoped to develop political and economic integration and to support cultural heritage through language learning.[892] Therefore the European Union aims to improve the quality and quantity of language teaching and

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[890] Günther Schneider and Peter Lenz. *European language Portfolio Guide for Developers*. (Strasbourg: Modern Languages Division, Council of Europe, 2001), 3.

[891] Commission of the European Communities, *White Paper on Education and Training: Teaching and Learning – Towards the Learning Society*. (Brussels, 1995), 47.

[892] J. Trim. 'The Work of the Council of Europe in the field of Modern Languages 1957-2001' Council of Europe website www.ecml.at/efsz/files/Trim.pdf accessed October 14th 2008.

learning in Europe as a means of promoting communication but most especially as a means of promoting understanding and solidarity among its citizens.[893]

At present just over half (53%) of European citizens say they can speak another language[894] and the range of languages spoken is very narrow.[895] English is the most widely taught foreign language. The dominance of English as a global lingua franca poses an obstacle to diversification.[896] In addition popular misapprehensions and misconceptions about the difficulties involved in learning a language act as a challenge to the promotion of language learning.[897] Other challenges hinge on the compartmentalised treatment of languages in school with each language being treated as a separate subject and where they must compete with other school subjects for a place on the timetable.[898]

In Ireland there is no overarching policy on the provision of language teaching and learning. It is not compulsory to learn a foreign language and there is no framework to ensure complementarity and continuity between different levels of education.[899] There are however initiatives to expand and diversify the range of languages on offer to learners. This has issued some success although the new languages must compete with existing languages on offer.[900] Language teaching and learning at second level has a framework of a common syllabus at junior and senior levels. There is continuity and progression between the two programmes in terms of aims, objectives and content. Both promote the development of communicative competence, cultural awareness and language awareness. However, even though the syllabus is communicative in intent there is still a deficit between curriculum aims and learner capabilities at the end of the programme.[901]

This is a difficulty throughout Europe and initiatives and tools to help address it include the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF)[902], European Learner Portfolio (ELP) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). The ELP is designed to support the Council of

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[893] Council of Europe. *The Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe*. (Council of Europe, 2003), 7.
[894] Paul Holdsworth. 'The European Union and language learning' in *European Perspectives on Three Key Issues In Language Teaching North and South.* Papers from a European Year of Languages Conference supported by the Departments of Education North and South. Ed. D. Little (Dublin: Trinity College, 2002), 7.
[895] Commission of the European Communities, *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity – Consultation* (Commission Staff Working Paper: Brussels, 2002), 6.
[896] J.-C. Beacco and M. Byram. *Guide for the development of Language Education Policies in Europe*. Main Version. Draft 1 (rev.) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2003), 28.
[897] *Ibid.*: 73.
[898] *Ibid.*: 72.
[899] David Little. *Languages in the Post-Primary Curriculum. A Discussion Document*. (Dublin: NCCA, 2003), 4.
[900] *Ibid.*
[901] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Inspection of Modern languages: Observations and Issues*. (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004).
[902] Council of Europe. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Europe's political aims to preserve linguistic and cultural diversity, to increase tolerance, to promote plurilingualism and also education for democratic citizenship.[903] As its name suggests it is a portfolio in which learners record their aims, their achievements and evidence of these achievements. It promotes the concept of knowledge as something to be constructed and thus advances learner autonomy.[904] CLIL has developed from the need to offer learners more opportunities for exposure to the target language.[905] Subjects or modules of subjects are taught through the target language incorporating a dual focus of language and non-language content.

Under the auspices of the European Union Ireland seeks to improve the quantity and quality of language teaching and learning. It meets this aim with varying degrees of success.[906] This chapter will give an overview of the language teaching and learning policies of the European Union. It will examine some of the challenges to successful language teaching and learning in Europe and some initiatives that have been introduced to address these. It will then examine the Modern languages teaching and learning situations in Ireland – some of its difficulties and some of its initiatives.

5.2 The European context

The Council of Education Ministers on the 31st of March 1995 deemed it necessary for everyone, regardless of what training or education route they have chosen, to be able to acquire and keep up their ability to communicate in at least two Community languages in addition to their mother tongue.[907] The member states of the European Union adopted this resolution in a modified form by adding the words 'if possible'.[908] Nonetheless the Council of Europe continues to promote the aim of 'mother tongue plus two' as a matter of economic necessity. It argues that how the European Union addresses the issue of language learning will be key to its success as a knowledge-based economy.[909] In particular, it has pointed out in recent resolutions that school children as a general rule should have the opportunity to learn one or more languages other than their mother tongue, starting at an early age.[910] As a member of the European Community and the European Centre for Modern Languages, which implements the Council of Europe's language policies, Ireland is party to the resolutions aimed

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[903] David Little and Radka Perclová. *European Language Portfolio Guide for Teachers and Teacher Trainers.* (Strasbourg: Copuncil of Europe, 2001), 3.
[904] D. Little, E. Ushioda & J. Ridley. *European Portfolio for post-primary learners.* Council of Europe Accreditation No. 12.2001. (Dublin: Integrate Ireland Language and Training, 2004).
[905] David Marsh, Ed. 'Executive Summary'. *CLIL/EMILE – The European Dimension. Actions, Trends and Foresight Potential.* (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2002).
[906] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Inspection of Modern languages: Observations and Issues.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004).
[907] Commission of the European Communities, *White Paper on Education and Training: Teaching and Learning – Towards the Learning Society.* (Brussels, 1995), 47.
[908] *Ibid.*
[909] Commission of the European Communities, *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity – Consultation* (Commission Staff Working Paper: Brussels, 2002), 5.
[910] European Union Website www.eu.com accessed 18th October 2008

at the promotion of language learning and teaching. It is no surprise therefore that Ireland has recently emphasised its aim of improving and diversifying language learning.[911]

Learning and speaking languages other than the mother tongue offers greater personal and professional opportunities and real access to the rights conferred by the European Union, in particular the right to live and work anywhere in the EU.[912] Language learning is encouraged to promote employability. The single European market requires increasing numbers of workers with foreign language skills. It is envisaged that in the not too distant future the job seeker without language skills will face the same difficulties as an illiterate job seeker in the last century.[913] Language learning will also encourage mobility enabling Europeans to travel abroad in Europe for pleasure or for study or for work. Language learning is also about personal development as knowing a foreign language gives one more choices in life: choices about books, television programmes, films, where to go on holiday, but also what news one listens to and whose point of view one hears.[914]

Learning languages is seen as a means of promoting mutual tolerance and understanding as well as political and economic integration in Europe.[915] It is held that linguistic diversity represents a key component of Europe's cultural heritage and that to remain so it should be supported. Embracing diversity is thus a foundation stone for constructing a Europe in which all citizens enjoy equal status and equal rights and where their languages are supported and encouraged.[916] Fostering knowledge of European languages other than the mother tongue is believed to be a means of developing successful political, economic and personal contacts between people from different linguistic groups. Language learning can promote intercultural understanding and thus help to eradicate xenophobia, racism and intolerance.[917] Since foreign language learning involves new ways of communicating, of expressing oneself, of co-operating it enables one to see life from someone else's point of view and to understand that there is always more than one reality. In short learning a foreign language can help lead to greater tolerance, understanding and solidarity which are the skills that every community needs to be healthy and vibrant.[918]

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[911] See for example the primary schools initiative and the post-primary initiative in section 5.5.2
[912] European Union Website www.eu.com accessed 18th October 2008
[913] Paul Holdsworth. 'The European Union and language learning' in *European Perspectives on Three Key Issues In Language Teaching North and South.* Papers from a European Year of Languages Conference supported by the Departments of Education North and South. Ed. D. Little (Dublin: Trinity College, 2002), 7.
[914] *Ibid.*: 7.
[915] Council of Europe. *The Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe.* (Council of Europe, 2003), 7.
[916] European Union Website www.eu.com accessed 18th October 2008
[917] European Union Website www.eu.com accessed 18th October 2008
[918] Paul Holdsworth. 'The European Union and language learning'. In *European Perspectives on Three Key Issues In Language Teaching North and South.* Papers from a European Year of Languages Conference supported by the Departments of Education North and South. Ed. D. Little (Dublin: Trinity College, 2002), 8.

The challenge of how to address the issue of language learning faces all of the European Union as Europeans' range of foreign languages is very limited: 41% speak English as a foreign language; 19% speak French, 10% speak German, 7% speak Spanish and 3% speak Italian. No other language achieves even 1%.[919] This narrow range could make it difficult for businesses to achieve their full potential in a multilingual marketplace.[920] However, 'communication strictu sensu is not the only issue; what matters, in other words, are understanding and solidarity'.[921] It is for these reasons that language skills are held by the Council of Europe to be life skills and skills that should be learned throughout life. It therefore argues that every European should have the opportunity to improve his/her language knowledge from pre-school into a life-time of adult education.[922]

At present just over 53% of European citizens say they can speak another language.[923] There are however great variations between countries. In Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark, well over 80% of people say they can speak a foreign language.[924] However, in the UK only 33% of people can speak a foreign language and in Ireland 50% can do so.[925] Furthermore when asked whether they can hold a conversation in a foreign language the proportions are lower with 27% of people in the UK saying they can do so and 33% of people in Ireland.[926] Nonetheless there is great interest and support for the promotion of language learning. 71% of people in the E.U. believe that everyone in the European Union should speak at least one foreign language.[927] 61% of the Irish surveyed prior to the commencement of the European Year of languages thought it very or fairly useful to know another language.[928] Of those who do not speak a foreign language 56% in the UK and 40% in Ireland wish that they could.[929] These findings along with the huge increase in primary school children learning a foreign language and initiatives such as the French decision that all their teachers should in future have language skills give grounds for optimism on the future of language learning in Europe.

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[919] Commission of the European Communities, *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity – Consultation* (Commission Staff Working Paper: Brussels, 2002), 6.
[920] *Ibid.*
[921] Paul Holdsworth. 'The European Union and language learning', in *European Perspectives on Three Key Issues In Language Teaching North and South. Papers from a European Year of Languages Conference supported by the Departments of Education North and South.* Ed. D. Little Dublin: Trinity College, 2002), 8.
[922] *Ibid.*
[923] *Ibid.*: 7.
[924] *Ibid.*
[925] *Ibid.*
[926] *Ibid.*
[927] *Ibid.*
[928] Eurobarometer prior to the commencement of the European Year of Languages in 2001 surveyed 1000 Irish people.
[929] Paul Holdsworth. 'The European Union and language learning', in *European Perspectives on Three Key Issues In Language Teaching North and South. Papers from a European Year of Languages Conference supported by the Departments of Education North and South.* Ed. D. Little (Dublin: Trinity College, 2002), 7.

Competence in languages is believed to be a foundation of democratic citizenship in Europe both as a prerequisite to and as a means of its practice.[930] Thus, language learning is prioritised as means of enabling Europeans to become plurilingual and intercultural citizens, able to interact in all aspects of their lives.[931] Plurilingual and pluricultural competence describe where a person has proficiency of varying degrees in several languages and experience of several cultures.[932] Plurilingualism is held by the Council of Europe to be 'crucial for social and political inclusion of all Europeans whatever their linguistic competences, and for the creation of a sense of European identity.'[933] The European Union thus aims to improve the quantity and the quality of language teaching and learning in Europe. The aim is to have more people speaking foreign languages, people speaking a wider range of foreign languages and people speaking foreign languages to an overall higher standard.[934] There are however many obstacles posed to this aim and these will be discussed in the following section.

5.3 Obstacles to plurilingualism

The Council of Europe asserts that the plurilingual learner will have varying degrees of proficiency in several languages for the purposes of communication.[935] Plurilingual education is based on the principle that the acquisition of one language is based on competences and knowledge developed during the acquisition of other languages. Thus, competences (for example, the ability to read a text), and knowledge (for example, the ability to recognise words of French origin in English), can be transferred between the languages being learned through a teaching approach that highlights them. To foster plurilingualism it is recommended that language subjects and non-linguistic subjects should be harmonised and links made between them. The aim is to promote and develop cross-curricular skills that may be re-activated regardless of the language being learned.[936] Thus an emphasis on fostering plurilingualism may act as an incentive to develop skills in other languages and would lead to equal dignity being given to all languages whatever their statute in the community.[937] The development of plurilingualism is therefore not merely a functional necessity but an essential component of

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[930] Stephan Breidbach. *Plurilingualism, Democratic Citizenship in Europe and the Role of English.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2003), 7.
[931] Council of Europe. *The Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe.* (Council of Europe, 2003), 7.
[932] *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2001), 260.
[933] Council of Europe. *The Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe.* (Council of Europe, 2003), 9.
[934] Paul Holdsworth. 'The European Union and language learning', in *European Perspectives on Three Key Issues In Language Teaching North and South. Papers from a European Year of Languages Conference supported by the Departments of Education North and South.* Ed. D. Little (Dublin: Trinity College, 2002), 7.
[935] *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2001), 260.
[936] V. Castellotti and D. Moore. *Social Representations of Languages and Teaching.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2002 reprinted 2003), 19.
[937] J.-C. Beacco and M. Byram. *Guide for the development of Language Education Policies in Eu*rope. Main Version. Draft 1 (rev.) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2003), 28.

democratic behaviour.[938] However, there are obstacles that continue to militate against the widespread development of plurilingualism.

Membership of the European Union has acted as a spur to countries to promote linguistic diversity. In 1995 when Austria, Finland and Sweden joined the E.U. they decided to diversify their strongly English oriented language teaching.[939] In Sweden the proportion of the school population learning French rose from 3% to 20% and numbers learning German rose from 20% to 40%.[940] The newly joined states have also increased their range of languages. Thus, a wider choice of languages is offered although real choices are still limited.[941] The dominance of English poses an obstacle to diversification.

The Council of Europe is aware that the dominance of English as the most widely taught foreign language poses problems for the promotion of linguistic diversity through foreign language teaching. It argues that 'one single vehicular language is not a panacea for international communication in a linguistically complex Europe'.[942] Consequently the Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe advises that the pursuit of diversity and plurilingualism requires a political will and action to counteract economic factors and popular misperceptions.[943] It warns that if this does not happen then there will be a reduction in the number of languages known and a linguistic homogenisation in general, with knowledge of several languages being the reserve of the social elites.[944]

Despite these warnings a Eurydice study covering 29 countries found that 9 of them, including the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden and several German Länder have made the teaching of English compulsory.[945] In other countries the obligation to learn a foreign language alongside the widespread offering of English in schools gives English a quasi-compulsory status.[946] The fact that English is a

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[938] J.-C. Beacco and M. Byram. *Guide for the development of Language Education Policies in Europe*. Main Version. Draft 1 (rev.) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2003), 35.
[939] Claude Truchot. *Key aspects of the Use of English in Europe.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2002 reprinted 2003), 9.
[940] *Ibid.*
[941] EURYDICE 2001, *Foreign Language Teaching in Schools in Europe.* (Brussels: European Commission, 2001) cited in J.-C. Beacco and M. Byram. *Guide for the development of Language Education Policies in Europe.* Main Version. Draft 1 (rev.) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2003), 23.
[942] Council of Europe. *Language Learning for European Citizenship*. Final report (1989-96). Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing), 52.
[943] Council of Europe. *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe. From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education*. (Council of Europe, 2003), 19. Accessed on www.coe.int/lang (Language Policies) October 18th 2008.
[944] *Ibid.*
[945] EURYDICE 2001, *Foreign Language Teaching in Schools in Europe.* (Brussels: European Commission, 2001).
[946] Claude Truchot. *Key aspects of the Use of English in Europe.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2002 reprinted 2003), 8.

global lingua franca through pop culture, computer games, satellite television, and so on gives it a sort of second language status and thus makes it easier to learn. This status and its global role means that English will continue to be the first language of Europe for the foreseeable future. It has long had this status in Western Europe and since 1989 it has gained the same status in central and Eastern Europe.

The status of English may be attributed to the social role attached to it more than to its usefulness.[947] English is both international and global, 'a means of access to modernity'.[948] It is the only language associated with that dimension and regardless of how widespread other languages may be on the international scene English enjoys prestige. This prestige may lead to the opinion that other languages are superfluous as a knowledge of English is sufficient to satisfy communication needs and model social aspirations.[949] Indeed such is its status that native speakers of English sometimes argue that since it is a global lingua franca it is unnecessary for them to learn foreign languages. English has displaced French as the language of diplomacy and in academia it is tending to become the dominant and often the sole language used in symposia, congresses and similar events.[950] In Sweden, for example, the writing of doctoral theses in English is now common to most academic disciplines.[951]

Little presents two reasons why the view that English is the only language of importance is misguided.[952] Firstly, it ignores or dismisses the importance of language learning as the means by which we gain access to other cultures and societies. Secondly, it does not take cognisance of the fact that however much speakers of other languages use English for purposes of international communication they will continue to use their mother tongues at home. These mother tongues will continue to act as foundations for significant political, social, economic and cultural institutions in their countries. It is thus essential that measures continue to be taken to support and encourage language teaching and learning. Quantitative progress has been made in the overall situation for foreign language teaching and learning, but there is still reason for concern. Foreign language teaching in obligatory education still follows long established policies giving foreign languages the same status as they always had:

- languages are still taught in the same way as other school subjects in terms of time allocation, organisation of curriculum time, assessment and certification. In other words languages are

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[947] Claude Truchot. *Key aspects of the Use of English in Europe.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2002 reprinted 2003), 8.
[948] J.-C. Beacco and M. Byram. *Guide for the development of Language Education Policies in Europe.* Main Version. Draft 1 (rev.) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2003), 28.
[949] *Ibid.*
[950] Claude Truchot. *Key aspects of the Use of English in Europe.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2002 reprinted 2003), 10.
[951] *Ibid.*: 11.
[952] D. Little. *Languages in the Post-Primary Curriculum. A Discussion Document.* (Dublin: NCCA, 2003), 21.

treated as though they were objects of knowledge like other subjects despite the fact that language acquisition is a natural competence;

- languages thus compete with other subjects;
- different languages are treated as separate subjects and thus compete with each other in grouped options for curriculum time;
- foreign languages are put in competition with regional minority languages. [953]

Treating foreign languages as options to be chosen by learners, although apparently responding to social demand, leads to concentration on two or three 'major' European languages. This possibility of choice often leads to specialisation and competition among language teachers. Indeed languages are often thought of in terms of reciprocal exclusion possibly due to the belief that knowledge of one language hinders development of knowledge of another.[954] This perception is accentuated by the compartmentalised treatment of languages in schools. The national language(s), foreign languages, regional and heritage languages (which are often optional or absent from the curriculum) are taught as separate subjects. Little is done to interconnect the subjects and more often than not the learners are left to make the connections by themselves. Such compartmentalisation leads to a false perception of languages as the acquisition of each is presented as being in competition with the others.[955]

Ordinary conceptions of languages and language learning often sap motivation to learn. Two main deterrents listed by the Irish in the Eurobarometer taken prior to the European Year of Languages were 'lack of motivation', and 'not enough time to study'.[956] These deterrents are tied to two common misperceptions: the lack of motivation stems from the belief that English is enough as there is a general impression that everyone speaks English; the belief that one hasn't enough time stems from the belief that language learning is difficult and demands a long period of study before any benefits are reaped. Beacco and Byram highlight other misconceptions that militate against the learning of languages[957]:

- People say, you have to be gifted to learn languages. However everyone has the competence to acquire languages. Some speak more languages than others because they live in a multilingual environment and thus have been able to develop their plurilingual competence.

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[953] EURYDICE 2001, *Foreign Language Teaching in Schools in Europe.* (Brussels: European Commission, 2001) cited in J.-C. Beacco and M. Byram. *Guide for the development of Language Education Policies in Europe.* Main Version. Draft 1 (rev.) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2003), 23.
[954] J.-C. Beacco and M. Byram. *Guide for the development of Language Education Policies in Europe.* Main Version. Draft 1 (rev.) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2003), 72.
[955] *Ibid.:* 85.
[956] *European Year of Languages 2001 in Ireland.* Report of the National Co-ordinating Body 2002, 1.
[957] J.-C. Beacco and M. Byram. *Guide for the development of Language Education Policies in Europe.* Main Version. Draft 1 (rev.) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2003), 73.

- People say, you have to be intelligent to learn languages. If an analytic approach to language learning is being used then some intellectual discipline may be required, however, it is not essential and it plays little part in approaches favoured by communicative, natural and unconventional methodologies.
- People say, languages are for the elite. Foreign language learning was for a long time part of the education of the privileged. However, knowledge of languages has become commonplace and is considered a key competency in working life. Knowledge of languages is now a component of quality of life.
- People say, it takes a long time to learn a language. If the goal is native speaker perfection then it will take a long time. However, one can learn a language partially and to a level regarded as sufficient to current needs and this will require much less of a time investment.
- People say, language learning is boring. This will depend on the teaching/learning situation however, current methodologies emphasise active, involved learning where the emphasis is on developing communicative competence rather than analysing grammar.
- People say, language learning is difficult. This is due to the type of methodology used in the classroom. Current active, involved learning methodologies link new learning to learner interests and previous knowledge thus harnessing learners' intrinsic motivation and making the learning task easier.
- People say, you learn languages when you're very young. Language learning during childhood is experienced as being as being easier because the teaching is not very academic and there is little social inhibition. Learning languages later may be supported by previous experiences of learning and by learning strategies.[958]

The teaching and learning of languages differs from that of other subjects in that language acquisition is not a school subject but a human competence. Potential learners and their parents often have outdated beliefs about how languages are learned and taught.[959] The methods of language teaching and learning used in the classroom as well as the purposes or aims have changed radically in recent decades. In the past language learning may have been experienced as an academic exercise involving the study of grammar and translation. It was an activity based on exercises and repetition with a focus on developing writing and reading skills. The aims of the language learning experience were achieved only at the end of a long period of study when learners had acquired enough knowledge to study literary and philosophical texts. The model that learners of the past sought to imitate was that of the educated, monolingual native speaker, in other words using the language without any mistakes or accent. Thus, it was believed that learning a language takes a long time and only those who have

[958] J.-C. Beacco and M. Byram. *Guide for the development of Language Education Policies in Europe*. Main Version. Draft 1 (rev.) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2003), 73.
[959] *Ibid.*: 44.

reached native speaker level of competence may be regarded as knowing the language, partial mastery being regarded as a sign of failure.

Current teaching approaches emphasise an integrated approach to the development of the four skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking with grammar being studied in context to support communicative intent. The emphasis is on ensuring that what is learned in class can be used in everyday conversation. Thus current approaches resemble more 'natural' approaches to language learning. These approaches have called in to question the model of the native speaker as the only legitimate objective. It is now recognised that a more appropriate model is a person with plurilingual competence: one who has varying degrees of competence across the four language skills in one or a number of foreign languages. It is held that people's repertoire of languages will change in emphasis in accordance to their varying linguistic needs throughout a lifetime and thus they need to add to their repertoire through life-long learning options.

Thus the perceptions of language learning usually lag behind contemporary developments and learners and their parents may mistakenly assume that learning a language involves years of academic study and that the reward will only come at the end of all the time invested in learning it. In fact the pay-off can be immediate and languages can be used after brief periods of learning. Beacco and Byram thus recommend attention to how to learn languages be systematically incorporated into the initial stages of learning.[960] This, they argue will help learners since 'learning to learn languages means learning to manage one's acquisition of languages independently and analytically'.[961] Drawing learners' attention to how language works and helping them to develop communication and learning strategies furnishes them with the skills to continue their language learning independently of the teacher. It fosters learner autonomy and prepares them for life-long learning. In this way their competence in the target language can grow as their communication needs develop.

To help reach targets for language learning by fostering learner autonomy the European Commission has developed a Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, Content Language Integrated Learning and The European Language Portfolio. These will be discussed in the following sections.

5.4.1 European initiatives to promote language teaching and learning

Traditionally knowledge of a language is regarded as imperfect if it is not as close as possible to native speaker capacities of the language concerned. Contemporary thought and theory stress the

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[960] J.-C. Beacco and M. Byram. *Guide for the development of Language Education Policies in Europe.* Main Version. Draft 1 (rev.) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2003).
[961] *Ibid.*: 44.

variety of ways in which languages can be mastered and the dynamic nature of individual repertoires. Leaving aside the pursuit of perfection enables language teaching and learning to be diversified. Considering that there will be further teaching or learning opportunities to develop existing competences or create new ones enables learners to concentrate on their present and potential communicative needs. The results expected of learners following a particular language course can be defined using precise indicators. A typology of competences or parts of competences has been developed in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF).[962]

The CEF comprehensively describes what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication. It supports the notion of plurilingualism where learners can feel confident about the possibility of gaining partial competence in one or more languages according to their communicative needs. It defines levels of proficiency that allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis. Thus it gives learners and their teachers a framework of reference against which to measure their growing competences. A description is given of the knowledge and skills that learners need to develop in order to be able to act effectively. These descriptions of proficiency within each competence are formulated in terms of what the learners can do in the target language at their level.[963] The language competences and parts identified in the CEF are:

- Oral production: this involves speaking in the sense of giving a lecture or presentation to an audience.
- Spoken interaction: this involves speaking in the sense of participating in a conversation or a debate.
- Written production: this involves writing a text.
- Written interaction: this involves interaction through writing in real time through internet chat groups, e-mails, and so on.
- Reading comprehension: this involves reading in the traditional sense.
- Aural and visual reception: these involve watching television, listening to a radio programme, listening to a song, and so on.

These competences comprise the recognition or production of different types of written or oral discourse. The form and organisation of the written and oral discourse will depend on different language communities and different contexts. When deciding to embark on a course of study in a foreign language it is necessary to determine the competences to be gained and the target level to be

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[962] Council of Europe. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
[963] Council of Europe, Language Policy Division. *Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEF).* Manual Preliminary Pilot Version. (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2003), 13.

attained in each. It is not necessary to develop perfection in each competence from the outset. The focus is thus on the learner satisfying their present and potential communicative needs in the target language. Language learning is treated as a cyclical process where skills will be developed over time as the need arises and as learner capabilities and interests allow. Major European examining bodies and many national curriculum authorities have already adopted the Common Reference Levels elaborated in the CEF. They offer a new approach to language curriculum design and assessment as well as a means of comparing levels of achievement from country to country. The CEF forms the basis for the description of objectives and the self evaluation grids in the European Language Portfolio and is also useful in helping to determine expected language outcomes in a Content and Language Integrated Learning approach.

Content and Language Integrated Learning grew from a widespread agreement within the European Union that a discrepancy exists between what is provided in foreign language education and the outcomes in terms of learner performance.[964] During the period 1980-95 members of the language teaching profession and other stakeholders sought educational solutions to provide young people with better skills in foreign languages.[965] Almost all the solutions which emerged highlighted the need to focus on meaning alongside form to achieve best practice with a majority of learners. The requisites for success in language teaching and learning were seen to be inextricably linked to exposure.[966] There was a subsequent examination of the school curricula to find ways of providing learners with opportunities for increased exposure to the target language. A solution advanced was Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL): subjects are taught through a foreign language in a dual focus of language and non-language content. The integration of both subject and language learning aims to 'safegaurd' the subject being taught while simultaneously promoting language as a medium for learning as well as an objective of the learning process.[967] It connects different areas of the curriculum through a meaningful and economic use of study time. CLIL reinforces the notion that language is a tool which will only have meaning and sense when activated in contexts that are motivating and meaningful for learners.[968] It is argued that CLIL may be the only way of providing enough exposure to target languages to ensure successful learning of two additional languages.[969]

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[964] David Marsh. CLIL/EMILE – *The European Dimension. Actions, Trends and Foresight Potential.* (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2002), 9.
[965] *Ibid.*
[966] *Ibid.*
[967] Do Coyle. 'Relevance of CLIL to the European Commission's Language Learning Objectives' in *Executive Summary. CLIL/EMILE – The European Dimension. Actions, Trends and Foresight Potential.* Ed. David Marsh (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2002), 27.
[968] *Ibid.:* 28.
[969] Carmen Muñoz. 'Relevance and Potential of CLIL'. Kees de Bot. 'CLIL in the European Context'. Do Coyle. 'Relevance of CLIL to the European Commission's Language Learning Objectives' in *Executive Summary. CLIL/EMILE – The European Dimension. Actions, Trends and Foresight Potential.* Ed. David Marsh (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2002), 35.

CLIL has become a growth field across Europe from pre-school to vocational education. The use of the approach has been high in some of the pre-accession states and in recent member states. Realisation of the approach is currently estimated at involving about 3% of schools.[970] Coyle posits that CLIL promotes four principles under the headings of content, communication, cognition, and culture/citizenship.[971] Each of these principles will now be discussed.

Content: this places subject learning and the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding inherent to that subject area at the heart of the learning process. However, the symbiotic relationship between understanding the language and understanding the subject content demands a focus on how the subject is taught while working with and through another language rather than in another language. This shift, Coyle argues, brings with it a need to redefine methodologies to take account of language use, by both the teacher and learners, which encourages real engagement and interactivity.[972] Using the target language as a medium of instruction and communication makes the teacher more aware of the learners' linguistic needs and initiates tuned-in strategic behaviour, for example, teacher's strategies to make input comprehensible and context-embedded.[973]

Communication: this defines language as a means for both communication and learning. Using CLIL, language is learned by using it in authentic, unrehearsed yet 'scaffolded' situations to complement the more structured approach common in foreign language lessons. In addition it builds on the language learned and practised in the foreign language lessons by providing more opportunities to develop language skills, strategies and competencies. Alternatively, linguistic competence developed during the language lesson may be transferred to another language in a CLIL setting where a different foreign language is used.[974] The need for constant comprehension checks on the part of the teacher results in high levels of communication between teachers and learners and among learners themselves.[975]

Cognition: CLIL should cognitively challenge learners regardless of their ability. It provides opportunities for learners to develop their interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive-

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[970] David Marsh, Ed. Executive Summary. CLIL/EMILE – *The European Dimension. Actions, Trends and Foresight Potential.* (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2002), 11.
[971] Do Coyle. 'Relevance of CLIL to the European Commission's Language Learning Objectives', in *Executive Summary. CLIL/EMILE – The European Dimension. Actions, Trends and Foresight Potential.* Ed. David Marsh (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2002), 28.
[972] *Ibid.*
[973] *Ibid.*: 35.
[974] *Ibid.*: 28.
[975] *Ibid.*: 35.

academic language proficiency (CALP).[976] CLIL may strengthen learners' ability to process input, preparing them for higher-level thinking skills and enhancing cognitive development. Learners are challenged to understand, think, and reconceptualise in more than one language and alternative perspectives are presented to them through the different languages.[977] The need for visual and other types of support make the teachers aware of the general need of interactional and cognitive support that foreign language learners require.[978]

Culture/Citizenship: studying a subject through a different language will help foster a deeper level of inter-cultural understanding.[979] It can pave the way towards understanding and tolerating different perspectives. This, Coyle argues, 'is fundamental to fostering European understanding and making citizenship a reality'.[980]

These principles, she posits, make CLIL a major and significant contributor to the realisation of the European Commission's Language Policy. They demand 'a timely revisioning of learning in general and language learning in particular in our schools'.[981] She calls for a CLIL to be made more mainstream so that it will become an entitlement during compulsory education extending to vocational, work and recreational contexts. She argues that CLIL will then become a key component of the European Language Portfolio.[982]

The changes brought about by the introduction of CLIL highlight that interaction and output are the keys for successful teaching and learning of languages.[983] Only through interactional activities for which the target language needs to be used on a daily basis in natural conversational settings can learners be motivated to keep using the language in the school setting.[984] CLIL fosters implicit and incidental learning by focusing on meaning and communication and providing rich input while the language class can keep a complementary focus-on-form approach where needed.[985] CLIL may lower learners' affective filters[986] by creating a relatively anxiety free environment for learning to take

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[976] Do Coyle. 'Relevance of CLIL to the European Commission's Language Learning Objectives', in *Executive Summary. CLIL/EMILE – The European Dimension. Actions, Trends and Foresight Potential.* Ed. David Marsh (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2002), 28.
[977] *Ibid.*: 36.
[978] *Ibid.*
[979] Do Coyle. 'Relevance of CLIL to the European Commission's Language Learning Objectives', in *Executive Summary. CLIL/EMILE – The European Dimension. Actions, Trends and Foresight Potential.* Ed. David Marsh (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2002), 28.
[980] *Ibid.*
[981] *Ibid.*
[982] *Ibid.*
[983] *Ibid.*: 28.
[984] *Ibid.*
[985] *Ibid.*: 35.
[986] S. Krashen. *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Leaning.* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1981).

place.[987] The concept of authenticity relates both to the content and the interaction. Learners work with the authentic contents of the content subject and they interact in the foreign language about the real world. Their motivation to learn content through the foreign language may foster and sustain motivation to learn the language itself. Linguistic and content subject competence can therefore be more effectively promoted within this integrated approach than when content and language are taught in isolation.[988]

A CLIL approach can help learners to understand the relevance of forms of collaboration such as group work and project work. The classroom is seen as a laboratory where teacher and learners work collaboratively on projects, a place where subjects are not arbitrarily divided and taught in isolation but are seen as a complex whole.[989] CLIL provides alternative ways of approaching language learning and if this reduces exclusion or helps mainstream learners in other ways then it is advantageous. Coyle argues that it helps learners to develop their analytic, reflective and hypothesising skills which develops their language learning confidence and encourages them to become greater risk-takers in language.[990] It is thus an approach which is suitable for all language learners as is the European Language Portfolio which will now be discussed.

5.4.2 The European language Portfolio

To support the development of plurilingual and pluricultural competence the European Language Portfolio (ELP) has been developed and piloted by the Council of Europe. It developed as a general concept in 1997 and was launched on a pan-European level during the European Year of Languages (2001). There are different types of portfolios available, including one for use in Irish post-primary schools, but a common set of principles and guidelines has been agreed for all.[991] The European Language Portfolio is designed as a tool to support and give recognition to language learning and intercultural experiences at all levels.[992] It is based on the tenet that all competence is valued regardless of whether gained inside or outside formal education. It fosters and supports learner autonomy in language learning.

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[987] Do Coyle. 'Relevance of CLIL to the European Commission's Language Learning Objectives', in *Executive Summary. CLIL/EMILE – The European Dimension. Actions, Trends and Foresight Potential.* Ed. David Marsh (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2002), 35.
[988] Dieter Wolff. 'On the importance of CLIL in the context of the debate on plurilingual education in the European Union', in *Executive Summary. CLIL/EMILE – The European Dimension. Actions, Trends and Foresight Potential.* Ed. David Marsh (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2002), 47.
[989] *Ibid.*: 48.
[990] Do Coyle. *Intertalk 1997.* University of Jyväskylä. Cited in CLIL/EMILE – The European Dimension. Actions, Trends and Foresight Potential. Ed. David Marsh (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2002), 85.
[991] A version for use in Irish post primary schools was designed and launched by the Centre for Language and Communication Studies, Trinity College Dublin in October 2001. It is currently available from Authentik Language Resources Ltd., Dublin.
[992] European Language Portfolio Homepage: *http://culture2.int/portfolio*

The ELP is an instrument to engage learners in reflective thinking about their language skills and the learning process. It links language learning directly with language use. It aims to promote language learning, intercultural skills, plurilingualism, mobility – both educational and vocational, and democratic citizenship.[993] Thus, in its reporting and pedagogical functions the ELP is designed to support the Council of Europe's political aims: to preserve linguistic and cultural diversity, to promote linguistic and cultural tolerance, to promote plurilingualism and to promote education for democratic citizenship.[994] It helps make the learning process and its products more transparent for learners in a concrete and cumulative way.

The ELP has a reporting and a pedagogical function.[995] Its reporting function is to display the owner's capabilities in the language. Its purpose is to supplement formal recognitions of achievement by presenting additional information about the owner's experience and practical examples of his/her capabilities in languages. The ELPs reporting function will be most relevant for those approaching the end of schooling or already in employment.[996] The pedagogical function of the ELP is to make the language learning process more transparent to learners to help them develop their capacity for self-reflection and self-assessment. The pedagogical function is thus to enable them to gradually assume more and more responsibility for their own learning. This function coincides with the Council of Europe's goals to foster the development of learner autonomy and to promote lifelong learning. To meet its reporting and pedagogical functions the ELP consists of three parts: a language passport, a language biography and a dossier. Each of these components will now be discussed in more detail.

The Language Passport section summarises the owner's linguistic identity, language learning experience and language qualifications at a given point in time in an internationally transparent manner. It lists the languages in which the holder has skills and profiles these skills in terms of the Common reference levels of second/foreign language proficiency.[997] It provides a resumé of the holder's language learning and intercultural experience as well as a record of formal qualifications attained. It is the principal reporting tool however it also allows for self-assessment, teacher assessment and assessment by educational institutions and examinations boards.[998] The assessment

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[993] David Little and Radka Perclová. *European Language Portfolio Guide for Teachers and Teacher Trainers.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2001), 3.
[994] *Ibid.*
[995] *Ibid.*
[996] *Ibid.*
[997] Council of Europe. *A Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
[998] David Little and Radka Perclová. *European Language Portfolio Guide for Teachers and Teacher Trainers.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2001), 1.

process will take place only at significant stages in the learning cycle, for example, at the beginning of a course of study or at the end of a term.[999]

The Language Biography section enables the owner to set learning targets, record learning and intercultural experiences and regularly assess his/her progress.[1000] It is a tool to encourage learners to think about their learning, to support and shape learners' ongoing involvement in their learning.[1001] It takes the form of a personal learning diary that is filled in on a week to week basis. The learner is encouraged to state what he/she can do in each language and to include information on linguistic and cultural experiences gained in and outside formal educational contexts. Thus it provides a record of ongoing experience in learning and using languages and summarises levels of skill attainment in all the languages known to the holder. It is designed to promote plurilingualism, the development of competences in a number of languages.[1002]

The dossier is the section in which the owner keeps samples of his/her work in the languages he/she has learnt or is learning. It thus helps to document and illustrate achievements or experiences recorded in the Language Passport or Biography.[1003] The function of the dossier is to sell the owner's skills by showing them at their best in as many different contexts as possible. Thus, the owner must decide what to include and what to remove as his/her skills develop and why. Therefore working with the Dossier means the learner must engage in regular self-evaluation.[1004]

The ELP takes the learner as its starting point. Knowledge of the language is thus perceived not as something external to the learners but as something that they construct for themselves in conjunction with the teacher, textbook, and other resources and materials at their disposal.[1005] The ELP is designed to encourage learners to think about what they can do in the language rather than how much coursework or material they have covered.[1006] It makes the process of skill development visible and helps to make the syllabus objectives transparent by encouraging learners to record their goals and progress in the Language Biography and to illustrate this process in the Dossier. Individual ownership

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[999] *Working with the European Language Portfolio: A handbook for teachers in Irish post-primary schools.* (Dublin: Authentik, 2001), 7.
[1000] David Little and Radka Perclová. *European Language Portfolio Guide for Teachers and Teacher Trainers.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2001), 1.
[1001] *Working with the European Language Portfolio: A handbook for teachers in Irish post-primary schools.* (Dublin: Authentik, 2001), 7.
[1002] David Little and Radka Perclová. *European Language Portfolio Guide for Teachers and Teacher Trainers.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2001), 1.
[1003] *Ibid.*
[1004] *Working with the European Language Portfolio: A handbook for teachers in Irish post-primary schools.* (Dublin: Authentik, 2001), 11.
[1005] *Working with the European Language Portfolio: A handbook for teachers in Irish post-primary schools.* (Dublin: Authentik, 2001), 4.
[1006] *Ibid.*

is a defining feature of the ELP however it is designed to promote thinking processes that must be stimulated and fed by classroom interaction.[1007]

The ELP can stimulate a reflective, self-reliant approach to learning. Little and Perclová argue that although adoption of the ELP will make demands on the teachers' time initially it will help make their teaching more enjoyable and ultimately easier because learners will come to understand that they too are responsible for what goes on in the classroom.[1008] This change in role means that learners can no longer sit passively waiting for the teacher to take the initiative to stimulate and interest them. They are challenged to say what they find interesting and to share responsibility for ensuring that what goes on in class is interesting and useful to them. The ELP is a tool designed to stimulate learners to think about their learning by making it visible and thus to make it easier for them to take their own initiatives.[1009]

The CEF, CLIL and the ELP have developed out of a desire to provide learners with greater exposure to languages and to help foster greater learner autonomy in the learning of languages. The CEF is now used as a basis for most new syllabi developed in Europe. Its use has helped to make the language learning process more transparent for learners. The CEF has not been used as a basis for the existing second level language learning syllabi. Where CLIL and the ELP have been used both have been shown to be very useful in meeting learners' needs. There has not however been widespread uptake of either initiative in Ireland. Nonetheless there is a desire here to improve approaches to language teaching and learning as well as the range of languages on offer. The situation for language teaching and learning will now be discussed with special reference to primary and secondary levels.

5.5.1 Languages and educational policy in Ireland

The European Commission holds that secondary education has an important role to play in promoting the quality and quantity of language learning as it is at this stage that 'young people complete the essential core of language skills that will serve them throughout life.'[1010] However, it argues that the objective of 'mother tongue plus two' is presented with obstacles because in some member states foreign language learning is not compulsory for all learners and others propose to make foreign language learning optional.[1011] Ireland is one of the EU member states where foreign language learning is not compulsory. This is potentially worrying since only 61% of Irish people consider it

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[1007] *Working with the European Language Portfolio: A handbook for teachers in Irish post-primary schools.* (Dublin: Authentik, 2001), 5.
[1008] David Little and Radka Perclová. *European Language Portfolio Guide for Teachers and Teacher Trainers.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2001), 26.
[1009] *Ibid.:* 45.
[1010] Commission of the European Communities, *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity – Consultation* (Commission Staff Working Paper: Brussels, 2002), 8.
[1011] *Ibid.*

useful to know a language other than their mother tongue and the third level colleges are becoming increasingly concerned about maintaining student numbers on their language courses.[1012]

There is no language policy that provides for the inclusion of languages other than Irish in the post-primary curriculum. The need for a language policy was highlighted regularly during the European Year of Languages in 2002 and still continues to be a contested issue[1013] Irish is an obligatory subject at junior and senior cycles but foreign languages are not. Indeed, even at junior cycle level it is recommended that learners have access to the study of a modern European language but may learn no other language but Irish if they choose. The fact that all Irish people speak English can be a disincentive to the learning of other languages. As discussed previously there is a widespread perception that there is no need to learn other languages since English is the new lingua franca.[1014] In addition languages are perceived as being difficult compared to other subjects. Thus there has been a decrease in the numbers of students taking languages at upper secondary level. Nonetheless, foreign languages play a significant role in post-primary education because the National University of Ireland (NUI) has a matriculation requirement of Irish and a foreign language. However, in the event that the NUI drops this requirement there is no guarantee that foreign languages will maintain their importance in post-primary education. Little[1015] recommends formulating a language policy based on the results of a thorough investigation of Ireland's present and future language needs undertaken according to internationally accepted standards.[1016] In the absence of an overall policy on languages in education there is a danger that the downward trend in numbers taking foreign languages will expand.[1017]

There is no comprehensive, principled policy relating all the language syllabi in the Irish educational system.[1018] This means that there is little provision made within the system for the integration of language learning experiences between the different language syllabi. There is no one integrated language curriculum but a series of curricula that are independent of one another. Very little attempt has been made to elaborate transferable principles between the different levels at primary, secondary and third levels. Thus there is insufficient provision for continuity and flexibility between the different

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[1012] European Year of Languages 2001in Ireland. *Report of the National Co-ordinating Body*, 2002, 9-10.
[1013] *Ibid.:* 11.
[1014] *Evaluation of Foreign Languages at Upper Secondary Level Project*. Country Statement: Ireland. (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004), 4.
[1015] D. Little. *Languages in The Post-Primary Curriculum: A Discussion Document*. (Dublin: NCCA, 2003), 4.
[1016] See for example, R.D. Lambert, Ed. *Language planning around the world: contexts and systematic change* (Washington, DC: National Foreign Language Center, 1994) cited in D. Little. Languages in The Post-Primary Curriculum: A Discussion Document. (Dublin: NCCA, 2003), 14.
[1017] *Evaluation of Foreign Languages at Upper Secondary Level Project*. Country Statement: Ireland. (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004), 4.
[1018] D. Little. *Languages in The Post-Primary Curriculum: A Discussion Document*. (Dublin: NCCA, 2003).

language learning experiences.[1019] Since there is no framework to ensure complementarity and continuity between different levels for the language learners they may experience different teaching approaches, different assessment procedures, different types of syllabi leading potentially to confusion and demotivation for the learner.

In the absence of a language policy encompassing English, Irish and foreign languages, attempts to make changes to the present system will be 'piecemeal and provisional'.[1020] A language policy is needed to define the position of English as the mother tongue of the majority of the population, of Irish as the mother tongue of a minority and the second language of the majority, of other mother tongues such as sign language and the languages of immigrants, and of foreign languages.[1021] Little argues that this policy should be historically and culturally sensitive and should 'embody an explicit response to the European policies of plurilingualism and diversification...'[1022] In terms of Ireland's membership of the European Union and the Council of Europe a language policy should require all students to take Irish and at least one foreign language throughout their second level education.[1023] In addition the policy should also explicitly encourage diversification of foreign language provision based on an analysis of the country's present and future language needs.[1024] An overarching policy should articulate the rationale for the study of languages by all learners at all levels and should identify clear objectives regarding Irish, English and other languages.[1025]

The absence of a language policy in Ireland has impacted on both learners and teachers. It has played a part in the lack of cross-language collaboration between language teachers.[1026] This means that opportunities for pooling of expertise and experience for the development of syllabi, methodologies and resources are lost. Almost two decades ago, Singleton argued that Irish, English and the continental languages had developed different pedagogical traditions each of which had insights to offer the other.[1027] He argued, for example, that the continental languages and Irish could learn from the tradition of creative self-expression traditionally associated with English. English teachers, in return, could learn from the practical emphasis in much foreign language teaching. This argument still holds. A cross-language collaboration would help promote the benefits of an integrated approach to language awareness for learners.[1028] This is important since a high degree of language awareness

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[1019] D. Little. *Languages in The Post-Primary Curriculum: A Discussion Document.* (Dublin: NCCA, 2003), 19.
[1020] *Ibid.*: 38.
[1021] *Ibid.*
[1022] *Ibid.*
[1023] *Ibid.*
[1024] *Ibid.*
[1025] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Inspection of Modern Languages: Observations and Issues.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004), 9.
[1026] David Singleton, *Teangeolas,* No. 28, 1990, p. 13.
[1027] *Ibid.*: 14.
[1028] *Ibid.*

promotes the development of both first and second language skills.[1029] The continental languages along with Irish could provide powerful sources of linguistic otherness as a stimulus for metalinguistic reflection. This is particularly relevant since language awareness forms one of the behavioural objectives in the Primary, Junior and Leaving Certificate syllabi for foreign language learning.

Although they are not compulsory modern languages have always enjoyed an important position in Irish second-level schools and this tradition continues although not to the same extent as in the past. Participation levels in modern languages in second level schools have developed in an unstructured fashion. Most students at Junior Certificate level study at least one foreign language with the majority continuing with a language to Leaving Certificate level. In the matter of curriculum options each school's management authority decides on the range of languages to be offered. The most commonly learned modern language is French. The following table[1030] shows the numbers of students taking the four main languages in the Leaving Certificate examination in June 2003:

Language	Candidates	% of total candidates[1031]
French	32,496	60
German	8,692	16
Spanish	1,550	3
Italian	168	0.3

Table 5.1 Numbers of students taking the four main languages in the Leaving Certificate examination

There is an imbalance in uptake. Learners attending fee-paying schools tend to have more access to foreign languages than those attending non-fee-paying institutions. However, even in the fee-paying establishments access to continental languages is often tied to 'overall academic ability' as supposedly reflected by the entrance examination.[1032] Thus, the degree of access to foreign languages is used by school and parents as a marker between 'academic sheep and non-academic goats'.[1033] The Inspection of Modern Languages report is based on an analysis and synthesis of 45 individual modern language inspection reports completed between November 2001 and January 2003.[1034] In most of the schools inspected, languages are offered to learners of all levels of ability. However, it was observed that in a small number of schools access to modern languages is based on learners' general academic ability

[1029] David Singleton, *Teangeolas,* (No. 28, 1990), 13.
[1030] Source: *Evaluation of Foreign Languages at Upper Secondary Level Project*. Country Statement: Ireland. (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004), 4.
[1031] Based on a total of approximately 54,000 candidates
[1032] David Singleton, *Teangeolas,* (No. 28, 1990): 13.
[1033] *Ibid.*
[1034] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Inspection of Modern Languages: Observations and Issues*. (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004), 3.

sometimes linked to the perceived level of difficulty of a particular language.[1035] For example, in one school a document referring to German advises that only learners with 'considerable linguistic ability' should attempt it.[1036] In another Italian is taught to the less academic learners and the others are taught French.[1037] The report thus recommends that:

> 'When offering choices to their students, schools should endeavour to correct common misconceptions, for example that German and French are difficult languages, while Spanish and Italian are easy.'[1038]

The report expresses particular concern that in some schools learners with special educational needs are being denied the opportunity to study any foreign language.[1039] In these schools the practice regarding streaming, setting or withdrawal for learning support prevents these learners from studying a modern foreign language. These learners are being denied access to an important curricular area and their future range of academic and career choices may consequently be restricted.[1040] The report argues that although these learners need not be expected to attain the same level of competence in languages as others they may achieve partial competence suited to their needs, abilities and interests.[1041] A language policy should set down clear rationale for the study of languages by all learners at every level. Thus, clear objectives for the learning of Irish, English and other languages should be identified and articulated. The fact that most people in the Republic of Ireland have learned a second language (Irish) from primary school onwards 'should give us a particular edge in relation to our potential for acquisition of third and fourth languages'.[1042] However, the Irish Inspectorate holds that the European Commission's action plan of achieving mother tongue + 2 foreign languages 'seems a very ambitious goal, given that all students must study Irish as well'.[1043] Although there is no overarching language policy in the Republic of Ireland efforts are being made to promote language learning and teaching at both primary and secondary levels. Relatively recent initiatives are having the desired effect of promoting diversity and expanding language learning and teaching. Two of these initiatives, The Primary Modern Languages Initiative and The Post-Primary Languages Initiative will now be discussed.

[1035] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Inspection of Modern Languages: Observations and Issues*. (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004), 7.
[1036] *Ibid.*
[1037] *Ibid.*
[1038] *Ibid.*
[1039] *Ibid.*
[1040] *Ibid.*
[1041] *Ibid.*
[1042] European Year of Languages 2001in Ireland. *Report of the National Co-ordinating Body,* 2002, 11.
[1043] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Inspection of Modern languages: Observations and Issues*. (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004), 9.

5.5.2 Primary and post-primary language initiatives

Both English and Irish are studied in all primary and second level schools. Foreign languages do not form part of the primary school curriculum. However, in 1998 a pilot project for the teaching of modern languages in primary schools was launched. It was initially called The Primary Modern Languages Pilot Project but has since 2001 been known as the Primary Modern Languages Initiative. About 10% of all primary schools participate in this initiative at 5th and 6th class level.[1044] The languages concerned are French, German, Spanish and Italian. The language option offered is dependent on what the individual school can offer. Languages are being introduced at primary level to help forward the European Commission's long-term objective that every young European school leaver be able to speak two European languages in addition to his/her mother tongue.[1045] It is also acknowledged by the project that modern languages in the school curriculum have an important strategic role to play in the social and economic development of Ireland.[1046]

The aims of the modern languages' curriculum at primary level are:

- to foster a positive attitude towards language learning and to promote self-confidence, self-esteem and enjoyment in learning a language;
- to develop communicative competence, enabling the child to use the language in a variety of contexts;
- to develop an awareness of the target language and its relationship with other languages;
- to develop the child's awareness, appreciation and respect for other cultures, particularly those associated with the target language.[1047]

These aims complement the aims of the modern languages' curriculum at Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate levels.

The primary schools' modern languages' curriculum consists of three strands. These strands are:

- Communicative competence, enabling the child to use language appropriately in a range of contexts;
- Language awareness, ensuring the development and enhancement of the child's experience of the nature and functions of language through the implementation of an integrated-curriculum approach;

[1044] C. O' Brien. 'Chairperson's foreword' in *Modern Languages in Primary Schools. Teacher Guidelines.* (Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2001), 5.
[1045] *Ibid.*
[1046] *Ibid.*
[1047] N.C.C.A. *Pilot Project on Modern Languages in the Primary School: Draft curriculum guidelines.* (Dublin: NCCA, 1999), 15.

- Cultural awareness, including a wider, cultural European dimension. The learning of another language facilitates the gaining of insights into another culture.[1048]

In practice there is expected to be much overlap between the three strands and the four language skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking, which are integrated in exploring and developing the content of the strands.[1049] The primary school curriculum advocates a cross-curricular approach. It is recommended to teach the target language within an integrated curriculum with, for example, activities through the target language which could be used to reinforce and consolidate skills that were initially taught in the mother tongue.[1050] This correlates with EU initiatives to promote a cross-curricular plurilingual approach to the teaching and learning of languages. It is hoped that teaching within an integrated curriculum may help to over-come problems in language continuity at post-primary level.[1051]

The Department of Education and Science established the Post-Primary Languages Initiative in November 2001 to implement the policy of 'diversifying, enhancing and expanding the teaching of languages in second level schools'.[1052] Italian, Spanish, Japanese and Russian are the languages being promoted. The range of languages on offer continues to expand. Syllabi for Arabic, Japanese and Russian have recently been published. Participating schools are given grants for the purchase of materials and for allocations of supplementary hours. The Initiative collaborates with other relevant linguistic and educational bodies to engage in research on teaching materials, planning and delivering in-service training for teachers and the dissemination of information on opportunities for language development available to teachers and students.[1053] The results so far have been encouraging with the numbers of schools offering Spanish, Italian and Japanese increasing in the years following the Initiative. The initiatives have had some success in increasing the numbers of learners studying languages at an early age and in diversifying the range of languages available in schools. However, the lack of clear policy governing the introduction of new languages to the curriculum leads to a haphazard rather than a planned approach to diversification.[1054] In addition because Ireland does not have an integrated approach to language in the curricula new languages must compete with those that are long established. In the meantime French continues to be the dominant language offered in Irish

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[1048] N.C.C.A. *Pilot Project on Modern Languages in the Primary School: Draft curriculum guidelines*. (Dublin: NCCA, 1999), 7.
[1049] *Ibid.*
[1050] *Ibid.*: 10.
[1051] *Ibid.*
[1052] *Post-primary Languages Initiative, Co-ordinator's Introduction*. (Dublin: Marino Institute of Education, 2001), 3.
[1053] See the Languages Initiative's website: *www.languages.initiative.ie*
[1054] D. Little. *Languages in The Post-Primary Curriculum: A Discussion Document*. (Dublin: NCCA, 2003), 15.

second level schools having more candidates presenting for examination than all the other modern foreign languages together.[1055]

The teaching and learning and examining of modern languages in Irish Second Level schools has its framework in a common Leaving Certificate syllabus and Junior Certificate syllabus. Thus there is continuity and progression between the two programmes in terms of aims, objectives and content. The syllabi frameworks predate the publication of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and no attempt has yet been made to match the syllabi objectives to the Framework reference levels except in the context of the European Language Portfolio for Irish second level schools.[1056] In their structure the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate modern languages syllabi are firmly grounded in the teaching and learning of languages for communication. They are founded on the uses to which learners are likely to need, to want and to expect to put their knowledge of the target language and the skills acquired in language class. There are common syllabi for the teaching of Modern Languages at both junior and senior secondary levels. These syllabi will now be discussed.

5.6 The Junior Certificate Syllabus

The first three years of language learning in second level schools are defined by the Junior certificate syllabus which is examined by a terminal examination at the end of the third academic year. The Junior Certificate modern languages syllabus is defined as communicative, organised around 'the needs expectations and interests' [1057] of the learners in the language classroom. There is a common framework for all modern languages. The learners' needs pertain to their use and understanding of the target language in the classroom. However, the learner will also expect to be equipped with an ability to cope linguistically in the target language community. The learner can also reasonably expect that the themes and activities of the class will be of interest to him/her.[1058] The syllabus lists the minimum content of themes and communicative tasks to be covered by learners in the Junior Certificate Course. These themes and communicative tasks aim to furnish them with the knowledge and skills to use and understand for everyday classroom communication and in everyday real-life situations.

Thus the general aims of the Junior Certificate programme in are not focused solely on the learners' current situations but attempt to address the present, continuing and future demands learners may

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[1055] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate, *Evaluation of Foreign Languages at Upper Secondary Level Project.* Country Statement: Ireland. (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004), 3.
[1056] This version of the European language Portfolio was developed in the Centre for Language and Communication Studies, Trinity College, Dublin and is published by Authentik, Dublin. See *www.tcd.ie/CLCS/portfolio/*
[1057] Department of Education and Science, *Rules and Programmes for Secondary Schools 2004/5* (Dublin: An Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta, 2005), 31.
[1058] *Ibid.*

make on their competence in the target language.[1059] These general aims are divided into broad categories of general educational aims and general communicative aims. The general educational aims seek to foster learners' personal and social development and to increase their options in work, training and leisure. The general communicative aims target the development of learners' communicative competence in order to enable them to avail of the general education aims.

The general educational aims are:

a) 'to contribute to pupils' awareness of language as a system of communication;
b) to give pupils an awareness of another culture and thus a more objective perspective on aspects of their own culture;
c) to contribute to the development in pupils of the capacity to engage in fruitful transactions and interactions with others;
d) through (a), (b) and (c), to contribute to pupils' overall personal and social development;
e) to give pupils the possibility of access to sources of information, cultural enrichment and entertainment through the target language;
f) to encourage and equip pupils to consider participating in social and cultural activities which may involve some use of the target language;
g) to make it possible for pupils to consider taking up job and further education/training opportunities which may involve some use of the target language;
h) to give pupils the kind of language learning experience that will encourage and facilitate their learning further languages in later life;
i) through (e), (f), (g) and (h), to enlarge pupils' work, further education and leisure options.' [1060]

The attainment of the general aims is, as previously stated, contingent upon the achievement of the general communicative aims.

The general communicative aims of the Junior Certificate programme are:

a) 'to enable pupils to cope with the normal classroom use of the target language;
b) to equip pupils with a competence in the target language which would enable them to provide themselves with basic necessities, to avoid misdemeanours and/or serious embarrassment, and to engage in some degree of social interaction in a country/situation where only the target language was in use;
c) to furnish pupils with linguistic skills which will make it possible for them to pursue at least some aspects of their general interests through the medium of the target language;

[1059] Department of Education and Science. *Rules and Programmes for Secondary Schools 2004/5* (Dublin: An Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta, 2005), 32.
[1060] *Ibid.*: 31-32.

d) through (a), (b), (c) and otherwise, to ensure that pupils' competence in the target language is such as to be conducive to the fulfilment of the general educational aims specified above.'[1061]

To help achieve the general communicative aims the syllabus lists a set of behavioural objectives which are communicative tasks. These tasks are organised according to themes. The themes and their tasks are expressed communicatively and are expected to help learners achieve their present and future communicative needs. The themes under which the communicative tasks are grouped are:

- Meeting and getting to know people
- Engaging in and talking about leisure pursuits
- Making plans
- Visiting/staying in a home where the target language is spoken
- Talking about your own family and home
- Talking about animals
- Talking about things you have done, things that have happened and the way things were
- Talking about school and communicating in the classroom
- Travelling
- Coping with not feeling well or a minor accident
- Finding out and telling people the time, the day the date
- Finding your way and helping other people to find their way
- Eating and drinking and talking about food and drink
- Shopping
- Using the telephone
- Writing a short note/postcard
- Writing a short personal letter
- Writing for information of to make a booking
- Filling out a simple form/making out a simple curriculum vitae.

As previously stated each of these themes is further elaborated under the sub-headings of 'Communicative tasks' (for example, asking someone his/her name; asking someone his/her age) and 'Some exponents' (for example, comment + s'appeler; quel + âge + avoir). These tasks accommodate the learning production of language of varying degrees of complexity according to the needs and abilities of the learners.

The behavioural objectives are the communicative tasks that the learner should be able to perform to meet the general aims set out above. There is a balance between objectives that relate to transactional,

[1061] Department of Education and Science, *Rules and Programmes for Secondary Schools 2004/5* (Dublin: An Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta, 2005), 32.

message oriented activities (for example, information getting activities and shopping), and those which have to do with the initiation and maintenance of social contact (for example, interactional, listener oriented activities). This reflects the syllabus aims to prepare learners to use the language for social as well as utilitarian purposes.[1062] Some of the tasks are related to, or are a prerequisite for authentic language use because of constraints imposed by teaching and testing.[1063] The communicative tasks are broadly divided into those that involve some productive use of the target language and those that involve only receptive use of the target language. Learners are expected to develop a level of productive and receptive skills. The language that learners are expected to know receptively will not be expected to be known productively. However, the language needed for productive use are expected to be known receptively as well as productively.[1064] The themes and their tasks are expressed communicatively. Learners from different levels of ability should be able to complete these tasks successfully. Therefore the tasks should be structured to allow a variety of ways of completing them using language of varying complexity.[1065]

Learners communicative competence in the themes and communicative tasks listed will be tested in the Junior Certificate examination.[1066] The majority of candidates presenting for assessment in the Junior Certificate examination are assessed by means of a terminal written test, a reading test and an aural test. The Junior Certificate examination allocates marks as follows:

Higher Level

Listening Comprehension	140 (44%)
Reading Comprehension	100 (31%)
Written expression	80 (25%)
Total	320

Ordinary Level

Listening Comprehension	140 (43.75%)
Reading Comprehension	120 (37.5%)
Written Expression	60 (18.75%)
Total	320

In modern languages oral competence may be assessed by the learner's teacher and a grade submitted to the Department of Education. This provision for oral assessment is taken up in a minority of schools usually fewer than 2%. It aims to evaluate learners' proficiency in conversation topics

[1062] Department of Education and Science, *Rules and Programmes for Secondary Schools 2004/5* (Dublin: An Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta, 2005), 33.
[1063] *Ibid.*
[1064] *Ibid.*: 31.
[1065] *Ibid.*: 32.
[1066] *Ibid.*: 33.

appropriate to the learners in the 15+ age group. The following are taken into account: comprehension, correctness, accuracy in pronunciation, range of vocabulary, facility of expression and fluency. Since the option of the oral examination is taken up in so few schools the vast majority of the marks in the Junior Certificate at both higher and ordinary levels are awarded for receptive skills. Only 25% of marks at higher level and 18.75% at ordinary level are awarded for language production. Questions in reading and aural comprehension tests are asked and replied to in the mother tongue. This is likely to have serious backwash effects on the way languages are taught and learned in Irish second level schools. Examination preparation may encourage a less than judicious amount of the mother tongue being used during the language class.

It could be argued that there is a mismatch between the aims of the Junior Certificate syllabus and the modes and techniques used to formally assess it. The syllabus aims to develop the linguistic skills of the learners yet the oral skills of the vast majority of learners are not assessed.[1067] This has repercussions for teaching and learning as it is likely that if assessment is conducted through written tests then the teaching and learning styles will reflect the same bias.[1068] In addition since the Junior Certificate examination occurs in its entirety at the end of third year then teaching and learning is likely to exhibit an increasing emphasis towards the verbal and logico-mathematical as the learners progress towards the end of the Junior Cycle.[1069] This is not supportive of the 'principles of breadth and balance' on which the Junior Certificate is based nor is it conducive to the active learning methodologies envisaged in the development of the Junior Certificate Programme.[1070] Anecdotal evidence suggests that for many teachers methodologies have not changed to the extent presumed in the philosophy and specification of the Junior Certificate Programme.[1071] There is concern that the existing formal assessment undermines the best features of the Junior Certificate programme encouraging an emphasis on rote learning and a teacher centred approach. Indeed examiners' and inspectors' reports repeatedly highlight evidence of rote learning in Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations.[1072] The examination may be reinforcing the subject centred nature of teaching and learning. Despite the intentions of the curriculum designers, there seems to be little cross-curricular work in schools and efforts to develop general thinking or problem-solving skills in students are inhibited.[1073] This has implications for learners' experiences of and engagement with the

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[1067] N.C.C.A. *The Junior Certificate Review. Progress Report: issues and options for development.* (Dublin: NCCA,1999), 32.
[1068] *Ibid.:* 33.
[1069] *Ibid.*
[1070] *Ibid.*
[1071] D. Little. *Languages in the Post-Primary Curriculum. A Discussion Document.* (Dublin: NCCA, 2003), 36 and 39
[1072] See for example Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Inspection of Modern languages: Observations and Issues.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004).
[1073] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate, *The Junior Certificate Review Progress Report: issues and options for development,* 1999, p. 33.

curriculum.[1074] The Junior Certificate and the language learning experiences encountered therein forms the foundation on which the Leaving Certificate syllabus is developed. As previously stated there is continuity between the two syllabi in terms of aims, objectives and content.

5.7 The Leaving Certificate Syllabus

Following the completion of the Junior Certificate programme learners may embark on a two-year Leaving Certificate course. The Leaving Certificate programmes state their general aims as seeking to contribute to all aspects of the individual while placing particular emphasis on preparing learners for further education and training, for employment, and for living in the community as participative, enterprising citizens.[1075] There are three programmes leading to the award of the Leaving Certificate: the Leaving Certificate Programme; the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme, and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme. These programmes aim to offer continuity and progression from the Junior Certificate programmes. Each of the programmes has its own character, the Leaving Certificate Programme, for example, aims to prepare students for further education, training or employment, while the Leaving Certificate Applied programme is designed for those who do not wish to go directly to third level education. The programmes promote to varying degrees:

- Self directed learning
- Independent thought
- A spirit of enquiry
- Critical thinking
- Problem solving
- Self-reliance
- Initiative
- Enterprise
- Preparation for further education
- Preparation for adult life
- Preparation for working life[1076]

There is a common syllabus framework for French, German, Spanish, Italian and Russian. The Russian syllabus was published in 2003. French is by far the most commonly learned language. More students take French than all the other languages combined.[1077]

[1074] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate, *The Junior Certificate Review Progress Report: issues and options for development,* 1999, 33.
[1075] Department of Education and Science, *The Leaving Certificate. French Syllabus*. (Dublin: The Stationery Office).
[1076] *Ibid.*
[1077] Department of Education and Science. *Evaluation of Foreign Languages at Upper Secondary Level Project.* Country Statement: Ireland. (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004), 3.

The syllabus is communicative on the basis that it is founded on the uses to which the learners are likely to need, want or expect to put their knowledge of the target language and skills acquired in language class. The objectives within the syllabus are expressed in terms of language in use, the process of communicating a message.[1078] There is also emphasis on the analytical dimension of language learning: raising learners' language awareness and developing their cultural awareness. As with the Junior Certificate syllabus the two chief components of the Leaving Certificate syllabus for foreign languages are its general aims and its behavioural objectives which are more specific.

The general educational aims for the teaching and learning of modern languages in senior cycle are concerned with developing communicative skills, a critical awareness of language, language learning strategies and intercultural skills. The aims are as follows:

1. To foster in learners the communicative skills in the target language as will enable them to:
    a. take a full part in classroom activities conducted in the target language;
    b. participate in normal everyday transactions and interactions, both spoken and written, both at home and abroad;
    c. extract information and derive enjoyment from the mass media and the more accessible literature of the target language community;
    d. consider as a realistic option the possibility of pursuing leisure activities, further study and/or career opportunities through the medium of the target language.
2. To give pupils a critical awareness of how meaning is organised and conveyed by the structure and vocabulary of the target language and thus to contribute to their understanding of the workings of human language in general.
3. To help learners develop strategies for effective language learning.
4. To equip learners with a broad acquaintance with the cultural, social and political complexion of countries in which the target language is a normal medium of communication and thus to help raise their awareness of cultural, social and political diversity generally.[1079]

The behavioural objectives, which derive from the general aims, are subdivided into three components:

1. Basic Communicative Proficiency
2. Language Awareness
3. Cultural Awareness

[1078] Department of Education and Science. *The Leaving Certificate. French Syllabus,* 'Preamble'. (Dublin: The Stationery Office), 1.
[1079] *Ibid.:* 4-5.

An integrated approach to the development of these three objectives is recommended.[1080] They are further elaborated as a series of general activities for each of which relevant linguistic skills and structures are listed. An overview of these follows.

1. Basic Communicative Proficiency

This is the first and largest part of the behavioural components section of the syllabus. It builds on the communicative targets of the Junior Certificate programme. The objectives are organised around eleven different themes or general activities. Each theme is expressed in communicative terms, for example, Theme 1.1 Meeting and getting to know people and maintaining social relations. Each theme is accompanied by a list of performance targets which are communicative activities, for example, 'introducing a third party; asking after someone; wishing someone well'. In addition there is a list of linguistic skills pertinent to the theme, for example, developing an awareness of appropriateness of register. These skills are accompanied by lists of the structures and grammar necessary for the achievement of the linguistic skills and performance targets.

The objectives are related to the practical challenges that learners might be confronted with when operating in the target language community and when participating in classroom activities and discussions through the target language.[1081] Thus, they relate present and potential needs. The objectives aim to develop awareness of the target language but also of relevant aspects of the mother tongue and other languages that the learners know. Thus, the objectives aim to develop an awareness of the functioning of language in general.

2. Language Awareness

The activities and themes of this section of the syllabus aim to:

(i) stimulate learners' interest in language issues to raise their awareness about the workings of the target language and their encounters with it. The underlying rationale is that this will stimulate learners' interest in and enthusiasm for learning the target language.[1082] Developing this kind of awareness through rich and interesting target language input enables better progress in attaining grammatical and lexical accuracy and communicative efficiency.[1083]

(ii) Equip learners with the skills and learning strategies to enable them to become more effective language learners. The underlying rationale is to enable learners to develop

[1080] Department of Education and Science. *The Leaving Certificate. French Syllabus.* (Dublin: The Stationery Office), 2.
[1081] *Ibid.*
[1082] N.C.C.A. *Leaving Certificate French. Draft Guidelines for Teachers.* (Dublin: NCCA and An Roinn Oideachais), 9.
[1083] N.C.C.A. *Leaving Certificate French. Draft Guidelines for Teachers.* (Dublin: NCCA and An Roinn Oideachais), 10.

positive attitudes towards language learning and to allow them to become more autonomous in their language learning efforts.[1084]

(iii) Provide a framework for the teaching and acquisition of grammar within a communicative approach.[1085]

In the syllabus 5 general activities/themes for developing learners' language awareness are set out, each with corresponding performance targets. These themes and targets are designed to help teachers and learners to work out schemes of work and to ensure that learners are clear about what the goals are in relation to each General Activity/Theme.[1086] These General Activities/Themes are:

- Learning about language from target language material
- Exploring meaning
- Relating language to attitude
- Talking and writing about your experience of the target language
- Consulting reference materials (for example, dictionaries and grammars) relating to the vocabulary and grammar of the target language.[1087]

Many of the performance targets in the Language Awareness section are aimed at fostering learner autonomy.[1088] It is acknowledged that the syllabus cannot include all the words and structures learners may need when using the language. They therefore need to develop strategies to cope with words and structures that are new to them. Thus, effective language learning also involves the learning of strategies to deduce meaning. The fostering of learner autonomy will help learners to achieve their language learning objectives. The performance targets in the language awareness section are aimed at promoting learner autonomy, helping learners to find their own way and thus enhancing their chances of success.[1089]

3. Cultural Awareness

This component aims to develop learners' awareness of the culture target language community.[1090] In the context of the syllabus cultural awareness concerns the way of life of the target language community and also its cultural heritage. The underlying rationale is that taking account of cultural

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[1084] N.C.C.A *Leaving Certificate French. Draft Guidelines for Teachers.* (Dublin: NCCA and An Roinn Oideachais), 10.
[1085] *Ibid.*: 9.
[1086] Department of Education and Science. *Evaluation of Foreign Languages at Upper Secondary Level.* Country Statement: Ireland. (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004), 5.
[1087] Department of Education and Science. *The Leaving Certificate. French Syllabus.* (Dublin: The Stationery Office), 18-19.
[1088] *Ibid.*: 3.
[1089] *Ibid.*
[1090] N.C.C.A *Leaving Certificate French. Draft Guidelines for Teachers.* (Dublin: NCCA and An Roinn Oideachais), 18.

differences is essential for successful communication.[1091] It enables learners to gain insights and perceptions into the target culture and thus to promote their intellectual and social development allowing an acceptance and tolerance of cultural differences.[1092] A further element in the rationale is that the activity themes will encourage 'content-instruction' through the target language.[1093] As with other components of the syllabus a list of general activities and themes is given. These are:

111.1 'Learning in the target language about the present-day culture associated with the target language.'

111.2 'Reading modern literary texts (notably novels, short stories, poems and plays, or extracts from these) in the target language.'

111.3 'Describing and discussing everyday life in the target language community.'

111.4 'Understanding, describing and discussing aspects of the relations between the target language community and Ireland.'

111.5 'Understanding, describing and discussing in general terms issues that transcend cultural divisions.'[1094] A sample list is given including items such as teenage culture, the generation gap, and sexual and racial equality.

As with other activities/themes lists of performance targets for each is given. It is suggested that a comparative methodology be used to implement the cultural aims so that aspects of the target culture community culture and aspects of Irish culture be examined together.[1095] Learners are encouraged to go beyond a superficial appraisal of culture by critically examining national stereotypes, both Irish and those of the target language community. In addition they are encouraged to interact with the target culture at an affective level, i.e., 'Stating and defending personal opinions about the desirability of maintaining, developing or changing relationships with the community in question.'[1096]

It is advised that learners' awareness of the target culture be developed initially in relation to familiar contexts such as the family, home, meals, and so on in familiar 'service' contexts such as timetables, opening and closing times, schooling and so on. The range of contexts is then to be developed to include more abstract themes such as the attitudes and the values of the other culture, for example,

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[1091] Department of Education and Science, The Leaving Certificate. French Syllabus. Preamble. (Dublin: The Stationery Office), 3.
[1092] NCCA, *Leaving Certificate French. Draft Guidelines for Teachers.* (Dublin: NCCA and An Roinn Oideachais), 18.
[1093] Department of Education and Science, *The Leaving Certificate. French Syllabus.* Preamble. (Dublin: The Stationery Office), 3.
[1094] *Ibid.:* 20-22.
[1095] N.C.C.A. *Leaving Certificate French. Draft Guidelines for Teachers.* (Dublin: NCCA and An Roinn Oideachais), 18.
[1096] *Ibid.*

individualism and nationalism, politics, and so on.[1097] Another aspect of cultural awareness that must be explored is sociolinguistic awareness where learners acquire a knowledge and understanding of the linguistic conventions of the target language, an awareness of language forms and registers appropriate to purpose and context.[1098]

Assessment

The general principles of assessment for the Leaving Certificate syllabus are:

a) The tasks that learners will encounter in the examination will have 'real life' validity. They will be the types of everyday activities in which people engage or will be preparatory for real tasks.
b) Language input in reading and listening tasks will be authentic where possible.
c) Assessment in each of the four skills will be primarily concerned with exchange of meaning.[1099]

The core objectives of the Leaving Certificate language examinations are to assess candidates on their ability to:

a) Show an understanding of the spoken target language in a variety of registers and situations in both brief and more extended forms.
b) Show an understanding of the written target language in a variety of registers in brief and more extended forms.
c) Express themselves, in both speech and writing, with relative fluency and correctness to describe, obtain and give information, give explanations, and express ideas, opinions and feelings.

Differentiation

As the syllabus aims to cater for a wide range of learner abilities, the assessment is at two levels, Ordinary level and Higher level. The syllabus is the same for both but the performance targets will use language of varying degrees of complexity. The format of the examination is different for both levels, as is the allocation of marks. Thus, differentiation is effected by means of mark allocation and weighting of skills. At Higher level the productive skills (speaking and writing) are given equal

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[1097] N.C.C.A. *Leaving Certificate French. Draft Guidelines for Teachers.* (Dublin: NCCA and An Roinn Oideachais), 22.
[1098] N.C.C.A. *Leaving Certificate French. Draft Guidelines for Teachers.* (Dublin: NCCA and An Roinn Oideachais), 23.
[1099] Department of Education and Science. *The Leaving Certificate. French Syllabus.* (Dublin: The Stationery Office), 23.

weighting with receptive skills (reading and listening).[1100] At Ordinary level, receptive skills are allocated more marks than productive skills.

Assessment criteria take account of:

1) candidates demonstrated ability to transfer meaning;
2) the degree of accuracy and appropriacy of the language including the range of vocabulary and structures used.[1101]

Format

The examination will assess candidates' ability to:

a) understand the spoken language
b) understand the written language
c) communicate in the spoken language
d) communicate in the written language.

To assess oral competence the following criteria are used:

Range of vocabulary
Range of expression
Awareness and use of grammar
Independence from the examiner's support
Appropriateness
Fluency
Pronunciation

In written production at Higher level the following assessment criteria are used:

Range and appropriateness of vocabulary
Range and accuracy in the use of structures
Development and/or manipulation of stimulus
Organisation of content

In written production at Ordinary level the criteria are slightly different:

Intelligibility of message
Development and/or manipulation of stimulus
Awareness and use of grammar
Range of vocabulary

[1100] Department of Education and Science. *The Leaving Certificate. French Syllabus.* (Dublin: The Stationery Office), 24.
[1101] *Ibid.*

Marking

A guide to marking at Higher and Ordinary level:

Higher Level	Ordinary Level
Speaking 25%	Speaking 20%
Listening Comprehension 20%	Listening Comprehension 25%
Reading Comprehension 30%	Reading Comprehension 40%
Writing 25%	Writing 15%

The Oral Assessment

The oral assessment consists of a general conversation between the examiner and the candidate based on the syllabus content. Candidates also have the option of discussing a literary work or a project and of bringing a picture that acts as a stimulus for conversation. The examination lasts for thirteen minutes.

The Listening Comprehension Assessment

The listening comprehension requires candidates to listen to a tape recording and answer questions in English or Irish on what they have heard. Comprehension questions examine an understanding of general information and specific details in stimuli based on syllabus content.

The Reading Comprehension Assessment

Candidates must demonstrate an understanding of and extract specific information from texts. The texts may include public signs, menus, brochures, letters, newspaper and magazine articles and works of literature. Material at Higher level will require candidates to explore different levels of meaning within a text and to demonstrate an awareness of stylistic aspects of literary texts.

The Written Assessment

Candidates are required to use the target language to express feelings and attitudes, give and obtain information, describe, relate, offer explanations, summarise, elaborate, and so on.

Implementation of the syllabus is determined to no small degree by the ways in which learners are assessed.[1102] In the Leaving Certificate each of the four language skills is tested. However, the oral examination being structured as a thirteen-minute interview between a learner and the examiner can be very limited in its ability to test spontaneous oral proficiency. When languages are learned outside of the classroom then proficiency in writing and in non-reciprocal oral communication is dependent on and also supports the development of proficiency in reciprocal oral communication. If this is to be incorporated into classroom teaching then the modes of assessment must reflect the interdependence

[1102] D. Little. *Languages in The Post-Primary Curriculum: A Discussion Document.* (Dublin: NCCA, 2003), 13.

of language skills.[1103] This is particularly pertinent to the Junior Certificate where the test of oral proficiency is not widely availed of. Where skills are not adequately tested there is a danger that they will be neglected in the preparation for the examinations. Indeed this has been shown to be the case in Irish Modern Languages classes as will be discussed in the next section.

5.8 Teaching and learning of modern languages: observations and issues

Reports made by the Inspectorate and the Chief Examiners at both Junior and Leaving Certificate levels from 1995 to 2004 give evidence that the target language is not being consistently used in Modern Languages classes.[1104] The 2004 Composite Report by the Inspectorate advises that in only about one third of the one hundred and sixty four lessons observed was comment entirely positive with regard to the use of the target language in the language class.[1105] In written expression learners display evidence of deficiencies in vocabulary and structures that could have been acquired if the target language were used for classroom management. [1106] The rarity of high scores in the listening comprehension section of the examination is also attributed to the fact that the target language is not being used as the medium of communication by teachers or by learners.[1107] Many candidates fail to get the gist of the text being listened to in the examination because they concentrate in a narrow way on particular phonetic items. This concentration on phonetic items rather than on the global meaning is a result of insufficient exposure to the target language in the classroom.

The target language is being taught, in too many cases, through the mother tongue. Thus the Inspectorate urges more extensive use of the target language for classroom management by both teachers and learners.[1108] It is repeatedly advised that failure to use the target language in the classroom is both counterproductive and demotivating since learners may interpret it to mean that the teacher does not consider it to be a genuine means of communication. If from the start the target language is used increasingly for routine communication between teachers and learners and between

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[1103] D. Little. *Languages in The Post-Primary Curriculum: A Discussion Document.* (Dublin: NCCA, 2003), 13.
[1104] See for example, *Junior Certificate Examination 2002. French. Higher and Ordinary Levels. Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science), 8; *Leaving Certificate Examination 1995. French. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: An Roinn Oideachais, 1996), 21; *Junior Certificate Examination 1996. French. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report. Ordinary Level Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 1996), 4.
[1105] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Inspection of Modern Languages: Observations and Issues.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004), 17.
[1106] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Junior Certificate Examination 2002. French. Higher and Ordinary Levels. Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science), 8. *Leaving Certificate Examination 1995. French. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: An Roinn Oideachais, 1996), 7.
[1107] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Leaving Certificate Examination 1995. French. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: An Roinn Oideachais, 1996), 13.
[1108] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Inspection of Modern Languages: Observations and Issues.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004), 17.

learners themselves 'then the benefits to the learners will be great'.[1109] If learners are encouraged to expand their communication skills for present as well as potential needs then their communicative competence will develop to enable them to take part in classroom activities as well as in normal everyday transactions, written and oral through the target language.

The Inspectorate notes that there is considerable scope for greater use of the target language by teachers and learners alike. It also raises concern over the narrow range of teaching strategies used. In more than half the reports inspectors recommend that teachers adopt a wider range of teaching strategies and the use of active learning methodologies in their lessons with a view to encouraging greater oral participation by learners.[1110] It advises that greater oral response from learners can be encouraged through the early use of creative teaching strategies and authentic teaching materials.[1111] It lists use of active learning strategies, such as pair work, group work, songs and drama as features of good practice. Thus it counsels that teachers make more planned use of pair work, group work, games and role-play with a view to promoting greater learner involvement in the learning process.[1112]

The Inspectorate is concerned that there is an over-reliance on translation as a teaching methodology.[1113] In a small number of reports the inspectors note a tendency to rely on translation as a teaching methodology and recommend that this tendency be avoided.[1114] Teachers in these cases are using translation to check learners' comprehension. The Inspectorate urges that learners be encouraged to ask in the target language for clarification or explanation when they need it. Teachers can also check comprehension by asking for synonyms or simple paraphrases. This it holds would support the use of the target language and encourage the production by the learners of simple, authentic language in every class.[1115]

The Inspectorate is concerned by the relatively small amount of emphasis on the formal teaching of pronunciation.[1116] They recommend a more formal approach to the teaching of pronunciation and intonation. A Chief Examiner's report proposes that the Junior cycle is an ideal time for this especially in 1st year as learners 'respond enthusiastically to pronunciation exercises, songs and

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[1109] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Junior Certificate Examination 1996. French. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report. Ordinary Level Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 1996), 5.
[1110] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Inspection of Modern Languages: Observations and Issues.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004), 19.
[1111] *Ibid.*
[1112] *Ibid.*
[1113] *Ibid.:* 20.
[1114] *Ibid.:* 19.
[1115] *Ibid.*
[1116] *Ibid.:* 17.

generally having fun with sounds'.[1117] Increased aural exposure to the spoken language through use of the target language as the medium for classroom management by both teacher and learners would help to improve pronunciation.[1118]

There is insufficient opportunity created for oral participation by learners in Modern Languages classes.[1119] Thus greater oral participation including opportunities for the generation of spontaneous oral language is one of the most frequent recommendations in the inspectors' reports.[1120] Some of the inspectors' reports express the concern about reliance of learners on memorisation from textbooks particularly in preparation for oral examinations. The 1995 Chief Examiner's Report on higher level Leaving Certificate French advises:

> 'At a national level, it is a cause of some concern that so much time and energy is devoted to large-scale rote learning of prepared answers, an activity which is of very little benefit to students either in the context of the examination or their educational development'.[1121]

This practice continues to be prevalent more than a decade later. Learners try to learn by heart elaborate models 'instead of activating the smaller range of 'active' learning they can call upon from their own prior knowledge'.[1122] Examiners report how in some cases the rote learning is taken to such extremes that learners just wait to hear the 'trigger word' from the examiner before delivering a chunk of material learnt by heart. The problem arises when the question containing the 'trigger word' is not correctly responded to by the prepared speech.[1123]

Rote learning and insufficient use of the target language in the language classroom leads to learners attaining inadequate levels of strategic competence. This means that learners are unable to deal with vocabulary or structures that they do not understand during the course of the oral examination. A sizeable minority of 15% of candidates is found to be very deficient in grammatical structures.[1124] Their responses are confined to 'oui' or 'non'. If their response is expanded then their speech is littered with basic errors of gender, agreement and most particularly of conjugation of verbs.[1125] Around 70% of candidates' oral production contains an unacceptable number of mistakes in

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[1117] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Leaving Certificate Examination 1995. French. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report. Ordinary Level Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 1996), 27.
[1118] *Ibid.:* 3.
[1119] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Inspection of Modern Languages: Observations and Issues.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004), 22.
[1120] *Ibid.*
[1121] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Leaving Certificate Examination 1995. French. Higher level Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: An Roinn Oideachais, 1996), 26.
[1122] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Inspection of Modern Languages: Observations and Issues.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004), 21.
[1123] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Leaving Certificate Examination 1995. French. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: An Roinn Oideachais, 1996), 26.
[1124] *Ibid.:* 24.
[1125] *Ibid.*

morphology, syntax and pronunciation.[1126] These were particularly evident when examiners probed prepared responses to ascertain to what extent structures used in the response had been internalised. Inspectors emphasise the importance of using the target language in class to support the acquisition and development of vocabulary, syntax and language skills.[1127]

Integration of skills will lead learners away from the perceived need to learn by rote as increased exposure to content through the exercising of the four skills will build learners' competence and confidence. The fact that so many Inspectors' reports consistently recommend a more integrated approach to the four skills indicates that this good practice is not as widespread as it might be.[1128] There is a tendency in lessons observed by inspectors to teach the four skills in isolation rather than in an integrated manner.[1129] The inspectors caution against compartmentalisation and advise that teachers adopt a thematic approach to bring greater balance and integration of the four skills.[1130]

Chief examiners argue that an integrated approach will allow the different skills to reinforce one another and to consolidate learning through ongoing repetition and revision.[1131] Integration of skills will lead learners away from the perceived need to learn by rote as increased exposure to content by exercising the four skills will build learners' competence and confidence. Written or listening texts could be used in pre-task preparation for writing activities.[1132] Authentic texts are recommended as a source of vocabulary, idioms and structures.[1133] The Inspectorate recommends working on projects for presentation as a means of integrating the skills with the cultural awareness component of the syllabus. This it notes would promote the use of group work and the exploitation of multi-media.[1134]

An integrated approach to skill development will entail extensive and intensive reading of a variety of text-types combined with regular revision of the rules of grammar.[1135] Candidates' writing skills often lag behind their other skills. Examiners suggest that writing skills can be improved by giving and

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[1125] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Leaving Certificate Examination 1995. French. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: An Roinn Oideachais, 1996), 27.
[1126] *Ibid.:* 17.
[1127] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Inspection of Modern Languages: Observations and Issues.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004), 18.
[1128] *Ibid.:* 20.
[1129] *Ibid.*
[1130] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Junior Certificate Examination 1996. French. Higher level Chief Examiner's Report. Ordinary Level Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 1996), 9.
[1131] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Leaving Certificate Examination 1995. French. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: An Roinn Oideachais, 1996), 12.
[1132] *Ibid.*
[1133] *Junior Certificate Examination 1996. French. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report. Ordinary Level Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 1996), 28.
[1134] *Leaving Certificate Examination 1995. French. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: An Roinn Oideachais, 1996), 4.

correcting written homework regularly.[1136] It is recommended that two or three of the most common errors be focused upon and a brief explanation of the grammar points involved given.[1137] In addition it is recommended that at Junior Certificate level a short period of ten minutes once or twice a week be devoted to the systematic teaching of grammar.[1138] Inspectors comment favourably on the fact that grammar is systematically taught and that learners are encouraged to note new vocabulary in their notebooks.

The theme of cultural awareness, one of the main behavioural objectives in the modern language syllabi, does not feature explicitly in the classes observed.[1139] Only a few inspectors reports refer to the reading of modern literary texts in the target language which is one of the activities suggested in the Leaving Certificate syllabi under the heading 'Cultural Awareness'. The Inspectorate thus counsels that greater attention be given to the development of cultural awareness.[1140]

Many of the lessons observed were based on textbooks, past examination papers and listening comprehension tapes. Inspectors note the tendency on the part of teachers towards over-reliance on the textbook and on past examination papers.[1141] The inspectors comment positively where the textbooks are used selectively and supplemented by authentic texts or teacher-prepared handouts.[1142] It is suggested that teachers should avoid an over-emphasis on the textbook and make greater use of authentic materials both printed and recorded. An over-reliance on textbooks and examination papers is due to the absence of long-term syllabus informed planning resulting in a curriculum which is too narrowly focused on examination requirements.[1143]

Inherent in the Leaving Certificate syllabus is the aspiration that learners learn to appreciate and enjoy literature and gain insights into factors that make reading novels and short stories 'a uniquely rewarding experience'.[1144] However the examiners have found evidence that learners are frequently engaged in a 'relentless dissection of short passages.'[1145] Inspectors note a tendency on the part of teachers towards an over-reliance on text-books and on past examination papers.[1146] The Inspectors'

[1136] *Junior Certificate Examination 1996. French. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report. Ordinary Level Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 1996), 9.
[1137] *Ibid.*
[1138] *Ibid.*
[1139] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Inspection of Modern Languages: Observations and Issues.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004), 16.
[1140] *Ibid.*
[1141] *Ibid.:* 15.
[1142] *Ibid.*
[1143] *Ibid.:* 27.
[1144] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Leaving Certificate Examination 1995. French. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: An Roinn Oideachais, 1996), 16.
[1145] *Ibid.:* 6.
[1146] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Inspection of Modern Languages: Observations and Issues.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004), 15.

report thus recommends that learners be given experience of a variety of text types during the course of their studies.[1147] Teachers and learners are urged not just to concentrate on examination type reading exercises. Instead it is suggested that a literary work be used as a focus over a number of weeks or a term with the text being read at home and discussed in class.[1148] Class content time could be used to clear up difficulties and discuss in French topics such as story-line, characters and civilisation.[1149] This, it is argued, will give learners much more satisfaction than a 'merry-go-round' of short, decontextualised texts.[1150] Acknowledging that learners need some training in examination techniques examiners suggest that this be done in a few weeks near the examination.[1151] It is advised that spending time on a variety of reading texts over the two year cycle would prepare learners much more thoroughly for the examination than the constant 'rehearsal' of examination type questions.[1152] Texts should be of a variety of lengths and types in preparation for the examination.[1153] An integrated approach to skills development is advised where an extensive and intensive reading of a variety of text-types be combined with regular revision of the rules of grammar.[1154]

Inspectors recommend that learners work on a variety of texts of different lengths and different types in preparation for the examination.[1155] Texts should be used from which learners can extract information without having to understand every word or phrase to boost confidence and enhance reading skills.[1156] A text should not be presented without preparation. It urges that learners be furnished with pre-reading activities to prepare them for the text.[1157] It adds that learners should make use of the opportunities that reading provides for vocabulary learning and to enhance their understanding of grammar.[1158] Learners should also be made familiar with reading strategies.[1159] In addition learners should work on their coping strategies for dealing with unknown elements.[1160] They need to realise that the presence of unknown elements need not be a hindrance to understanding at

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[1147] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Leaving Certificate Examination 1995. French. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: An Roinn Oideachais, 1996), 6.
[1148] *Ibid.*
[1149] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Leaving Certificate Examination 1995. French. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: An Roinn Oideachais, 1996), 6.
[1150] *Ibid.*
[1151] *Ibid.:* 4.
[1152] *Ibid.:* 6.
[1153] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Inspection of Modern Languages: Observations and Issues.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004), 6.
[1154] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Leaving Certificate Examination 1995. French. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: An Roinn Oideachais, 1996), 4.
[1155] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Junior Certificate Examination 1996. French. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report. Ordinary Level Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 1996), 6.
[1156] *Ibid.:* 7.
[1157] *Ibid.*
[1158] *Ibid.:* 6.
[1159] *Ibid.*
[1160] *Ibid.:* 7.

least what the text contains.[1161] Once again an integrated approach is urged as learners are advised to use the opportunities that reading provides for learning vocabulary and enhancing their understanding of grammar.[1162]

The Inspectorate highlights how the Leaving Certificate syllabi for modern languages accord importance to developing learner autonomy and teaching learners how to learn languages. It adds that the importance of learner autonomy cannot be overstated in the context of language learning.[1163] However, it asserts as one of its concerns an imbalance between teacher directed learning and independent learning.[1164] There is a need to encourage greater learner autonomy and to redress the imbalance between teacher-directed learning and independent learning.[1165] There is 'insufficient student-student interaction'.[1166] The report acknowledges that one of the most valuable instruments for the promotion of learner autonomy is the European Language Portfolio. However it was being used in only one of the forty-five schools visited where it was being piloted with a 1st year group. The report recommends the use of a language portfolio, or at least the use of 'can-do' check-lists, to give learners' 'greater responsibility for, and control over, their own language learning'.[1167]

The report comments that in reviewing the inspection reports the dominance of the formal written test is striking as is the relative infrequency of the formal testing of oral skills. It highlights the need to employ a wider range of assessment modes and to test all four language skills.[1168] Where there is formal testing of oral competence it is with rare exceptions confined to the Leaving Certificate year group and focuses exclusively on preparation for the terminal examination.[1169] The report recommends that learner oral competence be systematically assessed at all levels. This, it argues would encourage the purposeful use of the target language in the classroom and 'support the development of student linguistic competence and confidence'.[1170]

Little argues that anecdotal evidence suggests that in post-primary foreign language classrooms

(i) a large amount of English is spoken

(ii) there is not much spontaneous target language use,

[1161] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Junior Certificate Examination 1996. French. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report. Ordinary Level Chief Examiner's Report.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 1996), 7.
[1162] *Ibid.*: 6.
[1163] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Inspection of Modern Languages: Observations and Issues*. (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004), 20.
[1164] *Ibid.*: 22.
[1165] *Ibid.*: 28.
[1166] *Ibid.*: 22.
[1167] *Ibid.*
[1168] *Ibid.*: 28.
[1169] *Ibid.*: 23.
[1170] *Ibid.*: 25.

(iii) little attention is paid to the explicit development of learner autonomy,

(iv) only very occasional use is made of media and information technologies,

(v) little attempt is made to develop learners' taste for extensive reading in the target languages.[1171]

Reports from the Inspectorate[1172] and the Chief Examiners[1173] based on classroom observation and learners' performance in examinations arrive at the same conclusions and add that opportunities for developing cultural awareness are being lost. Foreign language teaching and learning has improved immensely through the introduction of communicative syllabi, the recommendation to use a Communicative Approach and initiatives to expand and diversify the range of languages on offer. However there are still some serious shortfalls in our foreign language provision in Irish second level schools.[1174] The current curricula for foreign languages state learner autonomy as an educational goal but fail to define the concept and do not offer guidance on the pedagogical approaches likely to lead to its development.[1175] There is evidence that too much mother-tongue is used in language classrooms.[1176] The combination of these facts means that learners are given neither sufficient opportunity to develop autonomy in the use of the target language nor adequate opportunity to develop autonomy in learning the target language. Language learners thus remain over reliant on their teachers and textbooks and are not being properly prepared for life-long learning in languages.

5.9 Concluding comments

The general trend of Education systems in Europe seems to be to give foreign languages a more important role than previously.[1177] A greater number of languages are being offered with more time and curricular status being devoted to them.[1178] This results from the increased social demand for languages which comes from a greater awareness that knowledge of foreign languages is advantageous in working life.[1179] There is also the aspirational force founded on the belief that language learning will help learners to develop an awareness of their own and others' cultures and thus become more understanding and tolerant.

[1171] D. Little. *Languages in the Post-Primary Curriculum. A Discussion Document.* (Dublin: NCCA, 2003), 36 and 39.

[1172] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Inspection of Modern Languages: Observations and Issues.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004).

[1173] See for example *Chief Examiners' Reports Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate French 1995-2004.*

[1174] D. Little. *Languages in the Post-Primary Curriculum. A Discussion Document.* (Dublin: NCCA, 2003), 4.

[1175] *Ibid.:* 36.

[1176] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Inspection of Modern Languages: Observations and Issues.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004).

[1177] J.-C. Beacco and M. Byram. *Guide for the development of Language Education Policies in Europe. Main Version.* Draft 1 (rev.) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2003), 22.

[1178] EURYDICE 2001, *Foreign Language Teaching in Schools in Europe.* (Brussels: European Commission, 2001).

[1179] J.-C. *Beacco and M. Byram.* Guide for the development of Language Education Policies in Europe. Main Version. Draft 1 (rev.) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2003), 23.

As has been discussed in this chapter, language teaching and learning is being given priority in Europe as a means of promoting greater mutual understanding and acceptance of difference in our multilingual and multicultural societies. It is thus hoped to develop political and economic integration and to support cultural heritage through language learning.[1180] Therefore the European Union aims to improve the quality and quantity of language teaching and learning in Europe as a means of promoting communication but most especially as a means of advancing understanding and solidarity among its citizens.[1181] In Ireland moves have been made to develop the quality and quantity of language teaching and learning through initiatives such as the Primary Modern Languages Initiative and the Post-Primary Languages Initiative. However, as has been identified in this chapter, in the absence of a overarching language policy in Ireland, several significant problems exist. European tools and initiatives such as the European Language Portfolio, Content and Language Integrated Learning and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF)[1182] have had a very small impact at post-primary level. It is the opinion of the writer after consultation with teachers that this is due to poor dissemination of information on these initiatives as well as pressures of curriculum which leave teachers with little time or support to experiment with new tools, or teaching methods.

It has been argued that new languages introduced to the curriculum have to compete for time and space with existing languages, and another difficulty identified is that languages are treated as separate subjects in isolation from one another. As far back as 1987 the Curriculum and Examinations Board recommended that language should constitute a key curriculum area and that the relationship between first, second and foreign language learning should be made explicit in the curriculum and in classroom practice.[1183] An integrated curriculum has as its basis the argument that educational systems have a responsibility to develop learners' skills in using their mother tongue. It also holds that there is a responsibility to teach them one or more other languages as a means of enabling them to have access to other societies and cultures. In addition it advises that learners be given a critical awareness of language as a rule-governed system of communication. In an integrated curriculum languages should be taught partly in relation to one another. Thus in an integrated curriculum second and foreign languages are taught for the purposes of communication and also to furnish learners with an awareness of what language learning entails to support them in life-long learning.[1184] Despite the sustained focus on language learning for communication and the introduction of a common syllabus framework for foreign languages, there has been no progress towards the aim of an integrated

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[118] European Union Website *www.eu.com accessed on 18th Octobaer 2008*

[118] Council of Europe. *The Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe.* (Council of Europe, 2003), 7.

[118] Council of Europe. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[118] Curriculum and Examinations Board. *Report of the Board of Studies for Languages.* (Dublin, 1987), 2.

[118] David Little. *Languages in the Post-Primary Curriculum a discussion paper.* (Dublin: NCCA, 2003), 7.

language curriculum since 1987. Thus there is no overall context to help learners understand and relate their different kinds of language learning. As Beacco and Byram put it:

> 'The lack of adequate coordination between the different languages learned ... is a source of inefficiency and it helps to mask the single nature of plurilingual competence.'[1185]

Plurilingual competence was identified as a key element in language awareness and is essential for successful independent language learning. Where it is not developed learners will continue to be overly dependent on their language teachers for guidance in learning the target language.

Given that there is little integration between languages it is hardly surprising that there is almost no integration between languages and other subject areas. Most initial teacher education and continuing professional development for post-primary teachers aims to develop or enhance expertise in teaching approaches to a particular subject. However, teachers need continuing professional development that focuses on the potential for making connections between and integrating subjects. They also need to be given time for planning and evaluating this intercurricular approach if it is to have an effect on learners' learning experience. Schools should be given support to enable learners to experience an integrated approach to languages and to languages and other subjects.

Other challenges identified in the chapter point to a lack of integration in the development of the four language skills, a failure to use the target language, lack of opportunities for oral language use in classes, and over-reliance on textbooks and rote learning. It is acknowledged that a wider range of teaching methodologies is necessary to encourage greater oral participation of learners and the Inspectorate advocates the development of strategies to increase the use of the target language by learners.[1186] The chapter has argued that teachers need to be furnished with techniques to encourage greater oral participation of learners within an integrated approach to skill development and an integrated approach to the curriculum. It recognises that language teaching and learning needs to be connected with other language teaching and learning experiences, with learners' interests and needs, with the world outside the classroom and with the rest of the curriculum in order to achieve a truly holistic approach to language teaching and learning.

The previous chapters have offered a detailed and close examination of the development of language teaching and learning in a school context, and identified a number of common themes which define good practice in the literature in the field. Principal among these is the communicative approach which acts as an over-arching philosophy and approach, encompassing the main tenets of good

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[1185] J.-C. Beacco and M. Byram. *Guide for the development of Language Education Policies in Europe. Main Version.* Draft 1 (rev.) (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2003), 23.

[1186] Department of Education and Science Inspectorate. *Inspection of Modern Languages: Observations and Issues*. (Dublin: Department of Education and Science, 2004), 18.

practice as highlighted and explored in each chapter, and as reinforced in the Council of Europe's initiatives expounded in this chapter. The following chapter will attempt to outline an approach to teaching and learning which proposes to incorporate and implement a communicative approach to language teaching and learning in classrooms in an intrinsically motivating, cognitively and affectively challenging environment that involves learners in socially collaborative, engaging and participatory modes of learning. The extent to which, if any, a Drama in Education approach to teaching and learning can be effectively harnessed in language education will be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter Six

Drama in Education in Language Teaching and Learning

6.1 Introduction

It has been argued that active learning and social interaction in learning, as co-constructed by both teachers and learners, can positively impact on the achievement of higher cognitive and affective functions in language teaching and learning. It was also claimed that learner autonomy can be supported by certain approaches to teaching and learning. This chapter aims to examine whether, and to what extent, a Drama in Education approach can be successfully related to the implementation of a communicative and learner-centred approach in the language classroom. In order to explore this, a definition of Drama in Education, as opposed to the better known practices of drama games and exercises, simulation or imitation, and theatre based activities (including staging school plays and spectacles) as commonly understood as drama in language teaching, will be offered. An extensive discussion on the role and value of a Drama in Education approach in language teaching and learning, and its related practices will be outlined, drawing on concrete examples to illustrate the proposed approach. The relationship between a Drama in Education and a communicative approach will be explored, in order to assess the connections, if any, and potential areas of similarity and complementarity between these two approaches to education.

6.2.1 What is Drama in Education?

Drama in Education (DiE) is a teaching methodology and a mode of learning which engages learners in an active learning process. Szauder views it as 'a system of schooling in its own right'[1187], Wooland[1188] holds that DiE is a method of integrating curriculum subjects, and O' Neill et al. argue that it works best when used as part of a learning process firmly embedded in the school curriculum.[1189] O' Sullivan sums up these ideas by describing DiE as being 'not only a subject but a means of learning, a pedagogy, whose implications reach all aspects of school life'.[1190] The aim is to learn through drama. The elements of drama are used in educational settings to bring out what learners know but do not yet know that they know. It is argued that DiE establishes a meaningful

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[1187] E. Szauder. 'Identity, Homogeneity and Uniformity in Drama Reserch'in *Building Bridges. Laying the Foundations for a Child-Centred Curriculum in Drama and Education.* C. O' Sullivan and G. Williams. Eds. (Birmingham: National Association for the Teaching of Drama, 1998), 94.

[1188] B. Wooland. *The teaching of Drama in the Primary School.* (London: Longmans, 1993).

[1189] C. O'Neill et al. *Drama Guidelines.* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1976), 7.

[1190] C. O' Sullivan. 'Drama across the primary school curriculum', in *Building Bridges. Laying the Foundations for a Child-Centred Curriculum in Drama and Education.* Eds. C. O' Sullivan and G. Williams. (Birmingham: National Association for the Teaching of Drama, 1998).

context in which to foster new learning.[1191] It focuses on the process of learning rather than the creation of a spectacle or theatrical product which is sometimes the case when drama is used in traditional classrooms. It is a genre in which there is not a performance to an external audience but where presentation to an internal audience is essential.[1192] The participants, together with the teacher, engage in drama to make meaning for themselves. The participants are not normally involved in learning and presenting lines from a play. They create their own play through developing, from a number of perspectives, a dramatic response to fictional and non-fictional situations and materials. They take on roles to explore and investigate the subject matter of the drama, developing responses to it through active engagement and reflection.[1193] It is lived at life-rate and operates from a discovery-at-this-moment basis rather than being memory based[1194] as would occur in a traditional play.

DiE is an exploratory educational approach concerned with making meaning.[1195] It uses as its foundation the human ability to imagine and re-create the behaviour of others in different times and in different places.[1196] Elements of theatre and pedagogical approaches are combined to permit learners become actively involved in viewing a situation from a variety of perspectives. It permits direct engagement with the event, a range of role taking, and an encounter with the power of drama without demanding sophisticated acting techniques.[1197] Learners are given opportunities to use space, movement and speech to make meanings. The emphasis is not so much on character or story but more on problem solving and living through a particular moment in time.[1198] DiE is a means of using learners' own experience to understand the experience of other people.[1199] It involves 'stepping into the shoes' of another person in order to experience life from their perspective. It enables the learners to actively identify with imagined roles and situations and thus learn to explore issues, events and relationships.[1200] Identification with these roles and situations is used to lead towards moments of reflection and participants are enabled to look at reality through a fictional lens.[1201] An experience is explored through the creation and examination of layers of non-linear episodes relevant to the experience which cumulatively enrich and extend the fictional context and allow the situation to be

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[1191] D. Heathcote. *Collected Writings on Education and Drama.* Eds L. Johnson and C. O' Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984).
[1192] P. Bowell and B.S. Heap. *Planning Process Drama.* (London: David Fulton Publishers, 2001), 7.
[1193] *Ibid.*
[1194] D. Heathcote. *Collected Writings on Education and Drama.* Eds L. Johnson and C. O' Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984).
[1195] J. Norman. Brain Right Drama. In *Drama. The Journal of National Drama.* Summer 1999, 9.
[1196] J. Neelands. *Learning Through Imagined Experience.* Ed. Patrick Scott. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1992), 4.
[1197] C. O'Neill. *Drama Worlds: a framework for process drama.* Ed. L. Barnett. (Portsmouth, NH: 1995).
[1198] B.J. Wagner. Dorothy Heathcote. *Drama as a Learning Medium.* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999 Revised Edition), 1.
[1199] *Ibid.:* 52.
[1200] C. O' Neill and A. Lambert . *Drama Structures. A practical handbook for teachers.* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1982), 11.
[1201] B.J. Wagner. Dorothy Heathcote. *Drama as a Learning Medium.* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999 Revised Edition), 1.

viewed from different angles.[1202] By drawing on their knowledge and experience of the real world learners create a make-believe world. This make-believe world grows in depth under teacher guidance, and through intervention[1203] learners are led to see the meaning of their actions[1204] and thus helped to understand themselves and the world in which they live. Through DiE, learners' understanding about human behaviour, themselves and the world in which they live grows.[1205]

> 'This growth in understanding, which will involve changes in customary ways of thinking and feeling, is likely to be the primary aim of drama teaching.'[1206]

DiE came to the fore as a powerful teaching-learning instrument in the 1970s when there was a shift from using it as a means of personal development for the individual to recognising it as:

> 'a precise teaching instrument, which works best when it is seen as part of the learning process, and when it is embedded firmly within the rest of the school curriculum'.[1207]

The use of DiE as a classroom methodology was popularised by exponents such as Heathcote, Bolton and O' Neill.[1208] They pioneered the use of drama as a means of exploring situations, events and relationships while, at the same time, achieving aims and objectives from subject curricula.[1209] They achieved this by using drama to enable learners to enter into and work within imagined roles and fictitious situations. Prior to this practitioners such as Slade[1210] and Way[1211] encouraged the use of drama in the classroom chiefly as an aid to personal development through creative play and self-expression with teacher intervention kept to an absolute minimum.[1212] With DiE used as a 'precise teaching instrument'[1213] the teacher took an active role by structuring the learning situation to create potential areas of learning in which learners could participate.[1214] Indeed, Heathcote argues that the teacher has a responsibility to intervene so that the work does not proceed on a superficial level.[1215]

[1202] C. O'Neill. 'Drama in Education' in *The Encyclopedia of English Studies and Language Arts, Vol. 1.* Ed. A.C. Purvis. (New York: National Council of Teachers of English and Scholastic, 1994), 405-409. Cited in B.J. Wagner. Dorothy Heathcote. *Drama as a Learning Medium.* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999 Revised Edition), 1.
[1203] C. O' Neill and A. Lambert . *Drama Structures. A practical handbook for teachers.* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1982), 11.
[1204] B.J. Wagner. Dorothy Heathcote. *Drama as a Learning Medium.* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999 Revised Edition), 1.
[1205] C. O' Neill and A. Lambert . *Drama Structures. A practical handbook for teachers.* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1982), 13.
[1206] *Ibid.*
[1207] C. O'Neill et al. *Drama Guidelines.* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1976), 7.
[1208] D. Hornbrook. *Education in drama.* (London: Falmer, 1991).
[1209] G. Bolton. *Acting in Classroom Drama. A Critical Analysis.* (Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books Limited, 1998).
[1210] P. Slade. *Child Drama.* (London: University of London, 1954), 8.
[1211] B.Way. *Development Through Drama.* (Harlow: Longman, 1963).
[1212] S. Clipson-Boyles. *Drama in Primary English Teaching.* (London: David Fulton Publishers, 1998), 2.
[1213] C. O'Neill et al. *Drama Guidelines.* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1976), 7.
[1214] C. O' Neill and A. Lambert . *Drama Structures. A practical handbook for teachers.* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1982), 21.
[1215] D. Heathcote. *Collected Writings on Education and Drama.* Eds L. Johnson and C. O' Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984), 12.

Drama in Education envisages the teacher creating learning opportunities and challenges for learners within a fictional context. New learning is promoted through the challenge which is implicit in the drama.[1216]

6.2.2 Simulation versus Drama in Education

The use of drama activities in the classroom is nothing new.[1217] However, all too frequently this is confined to the use of drama games, cue cards for role play, imitation of real life activities through mime, staging plays, reconstruction of stories and re-enactment of poems. The emphasis in these types of activities is on simulation or imitation with little place for learner manipulation of the material or of making the content their own.[1218] The work tends to be teacher directed. It is not collaboratively created or negotiated. Learners are busy representing someone else's work or interpreting and performing the dictates of the role cards.[1219] The focus is on action with learners enacting and re-enacting. Bolton argues that these types of activities centre on learners 'externalising what has never been internalised'.[1220] Representation is to the fore and opportunities for exploring links between the work in hand and life outside the classroom are diminished and the concept of imitation in the classroom is reinforced. [1221]

Drama activities centred on imitation or simulation can only offer a replication of reality, thus offering learners minimal chances of developing deeper understandings of themselves and about life in general.[1222] Learners are carried along by responsive action and are thus denied the space or opportunity to stand back and reflect on what they are experiencing.[1223] These types of activities are closed in nature focusing only on themselves and on the immediate moment without making links with the learners' worlds and the world outside the classroom. Imitation encourages passivity and this counteracts efforts to enable learners to become more autonomous in their learning.[1224] Drama in Education, by contrast, has as its basis learners' needs and interests and thus makes links between classroom learning and the world outside. It develops through learners' contributions and therefore encourages and supports learners to become involved in and to take responsibility for their learning. DiE encourages participants to work towards meanings beyond the literal in a way that is not possible

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[1216] J. Norman. 'Brain Right Drama', in *Drama. The Journal of National Drama.* Summer 1999, 9.
[1217] G. Bolton. *Acting in Classroom Drama. A Critical Analysis.* (Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books Limited, 1998).
[1218] G. Bolton. *Towards a theory of drama in education.* (London: Longman, 1979), 130-131.
[1219] *Ibid.:* 130-131.
[1220] G. Bolton. *Towards a theory of drama in education.* (London: Longman, 1979), 130-131.
[1221] C. O' Sullivan. 'Drama or Mimesis' in *IDEA JOURNAL 1 (1),* 1997, 19.
[1222] *Ibid.*
[1223] *Ibid.*
[1224] *Ibid.:* 22.

with simulation exercises.[1225] It enables social variables to be examined and the inevitability of events to be questioned.

DiE provides a bridge between the unfamiliar world of concepts and data and the familiar world of human experiences and endeavours.[1226] Participants feel that it is happening because the same rules as are used in real life apply. The important difference between life and the make belief life created by the DiE situation is that there is an opportunity for one problem to be faced at a time. However, the difference is that in real life there are many other issues to consider at the same time. Drama in Education helps to peel away all that is extraneous to the experience or situation being explored leaving only the meaningful for examination.[1227] Dramatising an event can isolate it, making it simpler and more understandable.[1228] In real life a decision taken cannot be revised except in the long term. The DiE context creates a 'no penalty' area where learners can see how decisions taken can influence a situation and learn from this without having to suffer the consequences.[1229] In this 'no penalty' area the burden of future responsibility is taken away. Learners are enabled to examine and test out their ideas and attitudes without having to live with the consequences of the decisions they make during the course of the drama.[1230] Thus lived through experience and reflected upon experience can be combined to lead to greater understandings.[1231] Simulation exercises do not offer the possibility to work beyond the literal and thus offer very limited and one dimensional possibilities of examining experiences or situations.

Simulation activities rely on the presence of an audience or spectator who watches a presentation of the work. The preparation and staging of the work underline the idea that the drama is a product, a spectacle and that this is the most important part of the work. DiE is not about acting or re-telling stories.[1232] Unlike simulation activities it does not focus on the creation of a spectacle.[1233] It uses the process of creating drama as a means of learning and therefore it has no need for an external audience to give it meaning.[1234] Participants create the drama but are also audience to their own work in

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[1225] C. O' Sullivan. 'Drama or Mimesis' in *IDEA JOURNAL 1 (1),* 1997, 21.
[1226] J. Neelands. *Learning Through Imagined Experience.* Ed. Patrick Scott. (London: Hodder and Stoughton 1992), 9.
[1227] D. Heathcote. 'Training needs for the future' in *Drama in Education 1: The Annual Survey.* Ed. J. Hodgson and M. Bonham. (Pitman, 1972), 31.
[1228] C. O' Neill and A. Lambert. *Drama Structures. A practical handbook for teachers.* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1982).
[1229] D. Heathcote. *Collected Writings on Education and Drama.* Eds L. Johnson and C. O' Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984), 128.
[1230] *Ibid.:* 90.
[1231] G. Bolton. *Gavin Bolton: Selected Writings.* Eds D. Davis and C. Lawrence. (London: Longman, 1986).
[1232] D. Heathcote. *Collected Writings on Education and Drama.* Eds L. Johnson and C. O' Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984), 51.
[1233] C. O' Sullivan. 'Drama or Mimesis' *IDEA JOURNAL 1 (1),* 1997, 21.
[1234] G. Bolton. *Towards a theory of drama in education.* (London: Longman, 1979).

process.[1235] The participant part of the person and the spectator part have equal status. Built-in distancing devices enable them to be audience to their own work and to reflect on and discuss its meanings and issues raised.[1236] The spectator part allows participants to stand back and analyse what they are experiencing at any given moment. The participant part deals with the event in a practical manner. By becoming 'self-spectators' the participant is making things happen and is brought to an awareness of how he/she is making them happen. This exposes the learner to why things are happening and the possibility that they could be different. By placing participants in a position of being able to make a difference to the way things are, they are being offered a possibility to effect change. This helps facilitate a change in insight.[1237] Simulation exercises based on imitation will not promote changes in perception or insight.[1238]

In simulation activities learners are busy representing another's work or following the guidelines of role cards.[1239] The approach tends to be linear as learners follow the chronology of an event. Learners are thus caught up in the action and opportunities for gaining insights and extending knowledge are missed or severely limited as this approach offers little opportunity for reflection on the event or experience. By contrast DiE enables stories to be broken into a series of episodes and used to yield the learning experience required.[1240] The approach does not have to be linear as the sequence will be discovered in response to the developing demands of the work. The series of episodes builds a 'web of meaning',[1241] a constant shifting of perspectives and the gradual unfolding of a complex drama.[1242] Learners are brought simultaneously to experience and to reflect upon their experience.[1243] It is the experience arising out of the action which promotes learning.[1244] If, as in simulation activities, there is action without reflection, then the potential learning experience is reduced.

Simulation activities tend to be teacher directed. Although learners collaborate in preparing the presentation of their activities the content is rarely collaboratively created or negotiated. Learners have little opportunity to manipulate the material or to make the content their own.[1245] The emphasis

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[1235] C. O'Neill. *Drama Worlds: a framework for process drama.* Ed. L. Barnett. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995).
[1236] B.J. Wagner. *Dorothy Heathcote. Drama as a Learning Medium.* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999 Revised Edition),
[1237] G. Bolton. *Towards a theory of drama in education.* (London: Longman, 1979).
[1238] C. O' Sullivan. 'Drama or Mimesis' *IDEA JOURNAL 1* (1, 1997), 21.
[1239] G. Bolton. *Towards a theory of drama in education.* (London: Longman, 1979), 130-131.
[1240] C. O'Neill. *Drama Worlds: a framework for process drama.* Ed. L. Barnett. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995), 48.
[1241] *Ibid.:* 19.
[1242] C. O'Neill. *Drama Worlds: a framework for process drama.* Ed. L. Barnett. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995).
[1243] D. Heathcote. *Collected Writings on Education and Drama.* Eds L. Johnson and C. O' Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984), 106.
[1244] *Ibid.:* 209.
[1245] G. Bolton. *Towards a theory of drama in education.* (London: Longman, 1979), 130-131.

is on enactment and mimicry with little use of the imagination and limited exposure to new ideas, vocabulary or concepts. By contrast, DiE carries with it a strong emphasis on collaboration of learners with the teacher and also between learners. In fact, because it not teacher led, it could not exist effectively without the collaboration, the sharing of ideas and opinions of participants. Learners are scaffolded by the teacher into taking conscious control of their work.[1246] Thus, in contrast to simulation type work, they are facilitated to take charge of the drama, to lead it in different directions. All participants are encouraged to share their ideas and suggestions. The drama proceeds with the input of learner ideas and opinions but the teacher may interfere with the pace to 'slow down time' so that the learners have time to think about what is being discovered learnt.[1247] In this way opportunities are created and learners are scaffolded into analysing and reflecting much more deeply than they could have done on their own.[1248]

Simulation type activities can be useful in the foreign language class as a means of providing learners with opportunities to develop their communicative competence. However, these activities are generally short-lived and learners may become bored of them if they are over-used. In addition because learners have little input into their content, then once the initial novelty of using drama games and techniques has subsided, then so too may motivation. The staging of plays in the target language can have a motivating effect but in their use the teacher faces the problem of putting the spot-light on a few and of devoting valuable classroom time to the rehearsals. Even if a text is found or devised that involves all of the learners in the production, some will have larger parts to play than others. The temptation for the teacher to give the more able speakers of the target language these parts is understandable but this, in turn, may reinforce the notion of some being better than others with consequent de-motivating effects. The practice of learning previously scripted lines and rehearsing tirelessly in order to arrive at a polished performance, may involve some degree of fun for the participants but does not maximise the learning potential that a Drama in Education approach can offer, in contrast. Rather than slavishly follow a pre-determined script as happens in much traditional drama teaching, or playing role-play or drama games which is often typical of much practice in the language classroom, Drama in education as a teaching and learning approach in mainstream education, capitalises on the learners' imagination and problem solving abilities by presenting them with engaging and challenging scenarios, mysteries, problems and dilemmas to solve. These fun-filled situations involve the learners in collaborating with one another, in sharing and pooling their information and knowledge, in speculating, predicting and hypothesising about possible solutions and alternative scenarios, in imagining other possibilities, interacting with characters as presented in the unfolding mystery or story in order to find out what they k now or how they can help us, in taking on

[1246] C. O' Sullivan. 'Drama or Mimesis' *IDEA JOURNAL 1* (1, 1997), 22.
[1247] B.J. Wagner. *Dorothy Heathcote. Drama as a Learning Medium*. (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999 Revised Edition), 10.
[1248] *Ibid.*

roles of characters in the story (drama), and rather than follow a pre-existing dialogue or situation that someone else has created, making up our own ideas and experimenting with them in the newly co-created and developing story (i.e., the drama). These, and a host of other cognitive, affective, social and personal skills are developed, nurtured and facilitated through the use of a Drama in education approach to teaching and learning. It offers infinitely more than the narrow diet of role play, games, and the staging of occasional school plays which typify its use in education to date. It can best be described as a way to intrinsically motivate, enthuse, challenge and inspire all learners, irrespective of their interest or otherwise in theatre arts which constitutes a very different experience.

6.2.3 An example in practice

As argued earlier Drama in Education motivates learners as it starts from their needs and interests, makes links with the world outside the classroom and supports and encourages learners to manipulate the content and the form to make it their own. It offers a variety of credible contexts in which to situate learning and to motivate learners to communicate their meanings. For example, with a class interested in space travel, the teacher may engage their attention in a language class by using the target language to introduce a story about the launch of a space ship to explore the planet Mars but which seems to have landed elsewhere. After the initial narration, the teacher could go into role (see appendix 1) as one of the astronauts on board and through a fictional satellite link, be questioned by the learners (in role as scientists at the base station in Nassau) about what she sees outside the ship on the surface of the planet. Following some questions, the teacher in role as the astronaut could add tension to the interaction by saying that she sees some figures walking towards the ship who look like .... (and then out of role, the teacher can explain that the transmission has failed and the link is broken). The teacher in shadow role (see appendix 1) as a member of the scientists' team in Nassau, asks the learners what they think we should do to help. This can be done as a whole class discussion, in pairs or in small groups, or as a writing activity, and later shared with the whole class. Depending on the suggestions offered and the overall consensus of the group, the learners can either decide to set about organising a rescue mission to this new planet (being aware of the obvious dangers), or attempt to establish radio or tele-visual contact with the space ship, only to be greeted by an alien figure who demands a ransom for the release of the astronauts (or, invites the group to the planet, explaining that they are humans who were lost on another mission years ago, and have made some amazing discoveries on this planet that will be important for the future of earth ...). Many intervening tasks involving the four language skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening can be developed to expand learners' skills, such as meeting the Director of the Nassau Space Centre (teacher in role) to persuade her to allow you to go on this new mission, or writing goodbye notes to your family and friends, informing them that you are going on a mission and don't know when you will be home. Or reading some extracts from a secret file about a previous mission that went wrong where the space ship was never heard again, except for a strange final transmission describing the same planet that was

described on this occasion (these extracts will be prepared by the teacher depending on the learners' levels of linguistic competence). It is important to note that although the language level and associated vocabulary may be beyond the level of the learners, the use of the target language in a known context to this age group of learners (i.e. space adventures and sci-fi) will greatly assist in providing highly important contextual clues and cues to the learners, in the same way as occurs in L1.

As has been shown thus far in the chapter, Drama in Education can provide opportunities for maximising learner exposure to the target language and for creating motivating contexts to promote learner production of the target language. It will be seen that both Drama in Education (DiE) and a communicative approach (CLT) to language teaching and learning support an active learner-centred approach that takes learner needs and interests as its starting point. Both foster learning and support intrinsic motivation by contextualising learning and enabling learners to see it as being personally relevant and meaningful. Both promote the development of learner autonomy by promoting reflection on the learning situation and scaffolding learners into taking responsibility for their learning. Both approaches are supported by research into how we learn and how the brain functions. This next section will examine how this research can be used to help create optimum learning conditions in our classrooms and how Drama in Education and a communicative approach can collaboratively support this.

6.3.1 Creating optimum learning conditions

People do not learn in the same way as one another. Some learn more easily when visual senses are stimulated, others learn more easily through movement, others through sound and so on. Most require a combination of approaches in order to best enable the brain to interact with the information received.[1249] Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences has identified eight faculties or intelligences that we use to facilitate our learning and understanding.[1250] These intelligences include linguistic, logical-mathematical and also bodily kinaesthetic (using the body to solve problems or to make things), spatial, musical, interpersonal (understanding other individuals) and intra-personal intelligence (understanding ourselves). Not only can individuals learn in each of these different ways but the relative strength of these different intelligences varies across individuals.[1251] Gardner holds that there is not a single dimension called intelligence on which individuals can be rank-ordered.[1252] There are significant differences between individuals both in their intellectual strengths and

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[1249] M. Silberman. *Active Learning. 101 Strategies to Teach Any Subject.* (Allyn and Bacon, 1996), 5.
[1250] H. Gardner. *Intelligence reframed: Multiple intelligences for the 21st Century.* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).
[1251] H. Gardner. *Multiple Intelligences: the theory in practice.* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).
[1252] H. Gardner. *Intelligence reframed: Multiple intelligences for the 21st Century.* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

weaknesses and in their preferred style of learning.[1253] This argument is supported by Piaget who holds that individuals' learning styles are influenced by different rates of maturation, different stores of experience and different histories of social interaction.[1254]

The theory of Multiple Intelligences (M.I.) is closely aligned with constructivist and socio-cultural theories of education already alluded to in earlier chapters, which support the creation of an active learning environment to stimulate the academic and social development of the learner. Drama and arts-related techniques are well suited to developing traditional academic skills as they facilitate a Multiple Intelligences, active learning approach to teaching and learning.[1255] Both Drama in Education and a communicative approach use a range of teaching and learning strategies in a multi-sensory way and facilitate different modes of expression. They draw on and support the interaction of multiple intelligences to best facilitate learners' understanding and learning. They work with what is known about how we learn and how the brain works to create a classroom environment that supports and motivates learners.

In the last thirty years there has been a burgeoning of new research into how we learn and how the brain functions. This ongoing research in neuroscience has been applied to developing new models of learning, for example, Neuro Linguistic Programming[1256], Structured Cognitive Modifiability[1257] and Accelerated Learning. These models of learning are holistic and developmental. They highlight the critical role of feeling in learning, focusing on personal growth and on developing learning skills.[1258] Findings on how people learn can be used to develop optimum learning conditions in our classrooms. Norman[1259] highlights key implications of this research for teaching and learning and these will now be discussed and connections made with language teaching and learning and with a DiE approach to teaching and learning.

Learning happens best in a positive atmosphere where learners are relaxed and at ease.[1260] Higher order thinking is inhibited by stress. When the learner is stressed, anxious or feeling under threat then the blood flow to the reptilian brain, which is concerned with survival, is increased as attention becomes focused on surviving.[1261] The implications of this for classroom teaching are that learners must feel supported and encouraged. Norman argues that this may best be achieved through a

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[1253] H. Gardner. *Multiple Intelligences: the theory in practice.* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).
[1254] J. Piaget. *The Origins of Intelligence in Children.* (New York: Norton, 1963).
[1255] RAND Corporation. *Research in the Arts, 24.* Accessed on www.rand.org August 1st 2008.
[1256] L. Bandler and J. Grinder. *Frogs into Princes. Neuro Linguistic Programming.* 1979.
[1257] R. Feuerstein. 'Cognitive Modifiability in Adolescence: Cognitive Structure and the Effects of intervention'. *Journal of Special Education 15.* No. 2. Summer 1981: 269-87.
[1258] J. Norman. Brain Right Drama. In *Drama. The Journal of National Drama.* Summer, 1999, 10.
[1259] *Ibid.:* 11.
[1260] *Ibid.*
[1261] E. Jensen. *The Learning Brain.* (CA. USA: Turning Point, 1994).

collaborative approach where learners are facilitated to have a sense of ownership in the learning.[1262] As discussed in Chapter 4, Little[1263], Dam[1264] and Ushioda[1265] are also of this view and hold that a collaborative approach to learning which encourages and supports learners to take responsibility for their learning will best motivate learners. This links with Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, as examined in Chapter 2, which holds that language learners' motives, needs, attitudes and emotional states can subconsciously act as a mental block to acquiring language.[1266] Krashen argues that when learners are relaxed and motivated then the affective filter will be lowered thus allowing a greater amount of L2 input to be converted into acquired knowledge.[1267] The use of DiE in the classroom helps to foster collaboration and learner autonomy in a relaxed, yet focused, classroom atmosphere.[1268] As discussed in Chapter 2, these factors help acquisition processes by lowering the affective filter, relaxing the learners and motivating them to use the target language in a meaningful way.[1269] The lower filter will enable a greater proportion of L2 input to be converted into acquired knowledge. A DiE approach and a communicative approach to teaching and learning both create a positive classroom atmosphere and aim to scaffold learners into taking responsibility for their learning. Both approaches support and encourage learners, making them feel at ease in their learning. This will be further discussed in the next section.

6.3.2 Making learning personal

The place of emotion and feeling is critical. Learning is driven by emotions as the limbic or middle brain gives us a feeling for what is real and important.[1270] Our emotions direct where our attention is focused and what we will remember. We cannot learn what we don't believe to be relevant, personal and meaningful, as feeling responses are linked to memory and the making of new neural connections.[1271] As discussed in Chapter 4, language learners learn best when they are intrinsically motivated, when they are interested in the content and can see its relevance to their needs, interests and prior knowledge.[1272] DiE helps to create contexts for learning that are interesting, relevant and useful, in short, motivating.[1273] It takes as its starting point learners' needs and interests, involves learners in the decision making process and strives to make links between the classroom and life

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[1262] J. Norman. Brain Right Drama. In *Drama. The Journal of National Drama.* Summer, 1999, 11.
[1263] D. Little. *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991).
[1264] L. Dam. *Learner Autonomy 3: From Theory to Classroom Practice.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1995).
[1265] E. Ushioda. *Learner Autonomy 5: The Role of Motivation.* Ed. D. Little. (Dublin: Authentik, 1996).
[1266] S. Krashen. *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications.* (London: Longman, 1985), 3.
[1267] *Ibid.*
[1268] J. Neelands. *Learning Through Imagined Experience.* Ed. Patrick Scott. (London: Hodder and Stoughton 1992).
[1269] S. Krashen. *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications.* (London: Longman, 1985), 3.
[1270] J. Norman. 'Brain Right Drama' in *Drama. The Journal of National Drama.* Summer, 1999, 11.
[1271] E. Jensen. *The Learning Brain.* (CA. USA: Turning Point, 1994).
[1272] E. Ushioda. *Learner Autonomy 5: The Role of Motivation.* Ed. D. Little. (Dublin: Authentik, 1996).
[1273] C. O' Neill and A. Lambert. *Drama Structures. A practical handbook for teachers.* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1982).

outside.[1274] A DiE approach and a communicative approach are both underpinned by the aim to intrinsically motivate learners by actively involving them in their learning to make it personal and meaningful.

The brain is designed for survival, not instruction.[1275] It responds poorly to sequential teaching. It is not capable of sorting information which is not contextualised. It works best at sorting out patterns and meanings.[1276] The implications are that learning which is thematic, contextualised and based on problem-solving is better.[1277] A communicative approach recognises this and thus advocates a cyclical, theme based approach to language learning.[1278] As discussed in Chapter 2, a language item is never presented in isolation, it is learnt in context under a theme and learners are offered as much opportunity as possible for contextualised language input and output through an integrated four skills approach.[1279] Learners are encouraged and scaffolded into deducing rules and meanings and using a problem-solving approach to their language learning.[1280] DiE also uses a theme approach based on learners' needs and interests to contextualise learning and to scaffold learners into problem-solving.[1281] It uses a range of strategies to enable learners to view situations from a variety of perspectives to help them develop and express their ideas.[1282] Both approaches use a contextualised, theme-based approach which support and encourage learners to problem solve.

The brain is poorly designed to take on new ideas for which it has no neural connections.[1283] Nothing is stored in the memory. Learning which has relevance linked to experience and context enables connections to be made.[1284] Thus, the teacher must make connections and encourage his/her learners to make links between new learning and previous knowledge.[1285] A communicative approach to language learning holds that new learning should be connected to previous knowledge and that learners should be scaffolded into using their existing knowledge and experience to deduce meanings and to make sense of the new information.[1286] Drama in Education works from what learners already

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[1274] D. Heathcote. *Collected Writings on Education and Drama*. Eds L. Johnson and C. O' Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984).
[1275] J. Norman. 'Brain Right Drama' in *Drama. The Journal of National Drama.* Summer, 1999, 11.
[1276] E. Jensen. *The Learning Brain.* (CA. USA: Turning Point, 1994).
[1277] J. Norman. 'Brain Right Drama' in *Drama. The Journal of National Drama.* Summer, 1999.
[1278] W.T. Littlewood. *Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction. (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981. 16th printing, 1995).
[1279] Christopher Brumfit. *Communicative Methodology in Language Teaching: the roles of fluency and accuracy*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
[1280] Joe Shiels. *Communication in the Modern Languages Classroom.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1988).
[1281] N. Morgan and J. Saxton. *Teaching Drama ... a mind of many wonders.* (Portsmouth N.H.: Heinemann, 1987).
[1282] J. Neelands. *Learning Through Imagined Experience.* Ed. Patrick Scott. (London: Hodder and Stoughton 1992),
[1283] E. Jensen. *The Learning Brain.* (CA. USA: Turning Point, 1994).
[1284] J. Norman. 'Brain Right Drama' in *Drama. The Journal of National Drama.* Summer, 1999.
[1285] *Ibid.*
[1286] Joe Shiels. *Communication in the Modern Languages Classroom.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1988).

know and from their previous experiences, scaffolding them into new learning and encouraging them to reflect, deduce and make connections.[1287] Both approaches use a contextualised approach linked to learners' interests and experiences so that connections can be made with new learning. It will be argued in the next section that in this way both ignite and maintain intrinsic motivation and thus support developing learner autonomy.

The brain operates in cycles and rhythms affected by, for example, physical and emotional factors, the duration of learning and the focus of learning.[1288] For most learners a concentrated span of learning should be of no more than twenty minutes duration. Thus, teaching styles which offer variety, focus, action and reflection are best suited to the way the brain works.[1289] A communicative approach to language teaching and learning encompasses an active, involved approach to learning where learners work on a diversity of tasks around a central theme.[1290] In this way learners are offered variety, stimulation, action, focus and opportunities to reflect and take responsibility for their learning.[1291] Drama in Education also has as its basis an active, involved approach to learning. It can thus compliment and support a communicative approach by offering interesting, motivating contexts which help to link classroom learning with the world outside to positive effect. This will be further argued and illustrated in the following section.

6.4.1 The use of Drama in Education in the language class

Drama in Education is similar to a communicative approach to language teaching and learning in that it emphasises learning over teaching. It works on the premise that all the knowledge, skills and drama needed for it to work are there before the teacher even enters the room.[1292] However, as highlighted in section 6.2 of this chapter, this does not mean that the teacher has merely to facilitate creative play and self-expression for learner development.[1293] Learning through DiE is neither arbitrary nor random and requires careful planning.[1294]

When using Drama in Education it is important for the teacher to know why he/she is doing what he/she is doing and how to do it.[1295] The lesson must be structured not just for the transmission of

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[1287] N. Morgan and J. Saxton. *Teaching Drama ... a mind of many wonders.* (Portsmouth N.H.: Heinemann, 1987).
[1288] E. Jensen. *The Learning Brain.* (CA. USA: Turning Point, 1994).
[1289] J. Norman. 'Brain Right Drama' in *Drama. The Journal of National Drama.* Summer, 1999.
[1290] J. Shiels. *Communication in the Modern Languages Classroom.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1988).
[1291] *Ibid.*
[1292] D. Heathcote. *Collected Writings on Education and Drama.* Eds L. Johnson and C. O' Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984).
[1293] G. Bolton. *Selected Writings on Drama in Education.* Eds. D. Davis and C. Lawrence. (London and New York, 1986).
[1294] P. Bowell and B.S. Heap *Planning Process Drama.* (London: David Fulton Publishers, 2001), 15.
[1295] N. Morgan and J. Saxton. *Teaching Drama ... A mind of many wonders.* (Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes (Publishers) Ltd. 1989), ix.

information but to promote a shared learning experience.[1296] Like Heathcote,[1297] Morgan and Saxton hold that the teacher who uses elements of theatre has a better chance of achieving his/her learning objectives.[1298] The elements are identified by Heathcote as a focus, a tension and the spectra.[1299] Morgan and Saxton[1300] and Bolton[1301] add symbolisation to the list. These elements will be defined in greater detail below and this will be followed by a brief consideration of their use in the language class.

Focus

Heathcote defines focus as being a particular moment in time selected to capture the essence of a broad human situation to its implications.[1302] Morgan and Saxton call this the dramatic focus and add that there must also be an educational focus which is expressed as learning objectives for the lesson.[1303] Thus, they hold that the dramatic focus and the educational focus work together. Focus, they argue, is the key to good teaching practice and always answers the question 'Why am I asking my learners to do this?[1304]

Tension

Heathcote defines tension as the pressure of response which lies at the core of dramatic action. Morgan and Saxton describe it as 'mental excitement'. It may be injected through challenge given by the teacher through her instructions outside the drama and/or through her role inside the drama. It may be achieved through challenge, surprise, complications, limiting time, limiting space, constraints, the unknown, responsibility, evaluation or blocking of a plan, desire or idea.

Spectra/contrast

Heathcote defines the spectra as being sound and silence, movement and stillness, darkness and brilliant light.[1305] Bowell and Heap hold that drama hinges upon these sets of contrasts.[1306] They argue

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[1296] C. O'Neill in Foreword in N. Morgan and J. Saxton. *Teaching Drama ... A mind of many wonders.* (Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes (Publishers) Ltd. 1989), v.
[1297] D. Heathcote. 'Training needs for the future' in D*rama in Education 1: The Annual Survey.* Ed. J. Hodgson and M. Bonham. (Pitman, 1972), 31.
[1298] N. Morgan and J. Saxton. *Teaching Drama ... A mind of many wonders.* (Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes (Publishers) Ltd. 1989), 6.
[1299] D. Heathcote. *Collected Writings on Education and Drama.* Eds L. Johnson and C. O' Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984).
[1300] N. Morgan and J. Saxton. *Teaching Drama ... A mind of many wonders.* (Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes (Publishers) Ltd. 1989), 3-5.
[1301] G. Bolton. Towards a Theory of Drama in Education. (London: Longman, 1984).
[1302] D. Heathcote. Collected Writings on Education and Drama. Eds L. Johnson and C. O' Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984).
[1303] N. Morgan and J. Saxton. Teaching Drama ... A mind of many wonders. (Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes (Publishers) Ltd. 1989), 3-5.
[1304] *Ibid.*
[1305] D. Heathcote. 'Training needs for the future' in D*rama in Education 1: The Annual Survey.* Ed. J. Hodgson and M. Bonham. (Pitman, 1972), 31.

that they may be used in every possible combination and gradation to help learners to believe in the relevance of the work and to go from the ordinary outer form to the significant inner meanings.[1307]

Symbolisation

For Bolton symbolisation is when an action or an object holds many meanings simultaneously and depends on its concreteness to stir deep feelings.[1308] Morgan and Saxton, putting a classroom focus on it, hold that it refers to the way a teacher draws attention to the symbol to generate a collective meaning while also enabling the individual to endow it with his/her individual meaning.[1309]

Wagner holds that Heathcote uses these elements in every classroom drama: trapping a group into a particular moment, developing tension and exploiting the spectra.[1310] It is suggested that the elements of theatre used in a DiE context in the foreign language class may be very useful in promoting the communicative aim of developing learners' language competence. It is relatively easy to identify a direct parallel to the concept of focus corresponding as it does to the learning objectives that every lesson plan should have. It is also defined as a particular moment in time selected for examination to help achieve the learning objectives. The average language class may not frequently select and examine a particular moment in time to yield learning objectives. However, the language teacher too has to be able answer the question 'Why am I asking my learners to do this?' Parallels can be drawn as the language teacher has to select content, material and tasks to further learning objectives. The examination of a situation in a DiE context in the foreign language class will offer motivating opportunities for learners to express themselves in the target language and to receive the contributions of others. However, the productive tension of the drama situation can be employed to good effect in the foreign language class. It can offer a welcome opportunity to inject excitement or impetus into activities to help maintain learner interest and motivation. It will be discussed in more detail later in terms of its potential role in the language class in generating language and offering valuable chances to create a language acquisition rich environment.

The first two sets of contrasts, sound and silence, and movement and stillness are commonly used in the communicative language class as the teacher uses a variety of tasks, activities, language skills and pace to involve and motivate learners. The last set of contrasts, darkness and brilliant light, may seem to be a little extraordinary in the average language classroom setting however they also have a

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[1306] P. Bowell and B.S. Heap. *Planning Process Drama.* (London: David Fulton Publishers, 2001), 10-11.
[1307] *Ibid.*
[1308] G. Bolton. *Towards a Theory of Drama in Education.* (London: Longman, 1984).
[1309] N. Morgan and J. Saxton. *Teaching Drama ... A mind of many wonders.* (Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes (Publishers) Ltd. 1989), 3-5.
[1310] B. J. Wagner. *Dorothy Heathcote: Drama as a Learning Medium.* (Washington D.C.: National Education Association, 1976) quoted in N. Morgan and J. Saxton. *Teaching Drama ... A mind of many wonders.* (Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes (Publishers) Ltd. 1989), 2.

metaphorical meaning whereby teachers set up learning episodes where students are scaffolded into different experiences involving varying degrees of prior knowledge or information, and thus the concept of brilliant light can relate to the situation where learners bring different perspectives, ideas and suggestions to the same situation in order to open it up and explore it fully. In such an environment there are no right answers, only possibilities, and this can be a very empowering experience for learners in the language class. The use of contrasts in DiE helps learners to believe in the relevance and significance of the work, and their use with DiE in the language class would be welcomed by any teacher who wishes to maximise learners' intrinsic motivation in this way. For example, working under the theme of immigration, learners read authentic magazine articles and watch videoed news reports on the growing tensions among immigrant populations in the Parisian suburbs. Learners then work collaboratively in small groups. Each group is given the task of discussing the situation from a different point of view, for example, an eighteen year old son of immigrant workers who was born and raised in France, a fifty three year old immigrant man, a fourteen year old girl born and raised in France by her Moroccan parents, her parents, a seventeen year old French girl who lives in the suburbs, and so on. The object of the discussion is to create a still image or tableau (see appendix 1) of a situation in which a scene from that person's daily lives is shown. Tableaux are then presented and discussed with a view to getting a better understanding of the human stories behind the tensions. This will help to bring learners to a realisation of the intricacy of the situation. Journal entries written by learners from the point of view of one of the imagined people could follow to deepen the examination of the situations and to integrate another language skill.

Symbolisation is not a tool that is generally used for language learning however, it could be used in the language class where DiE is being employed to launch the drama or to add meaning or indeed tension. It could also offer learners an alternative way of expressing their thoughts and opinions and would thus be very useful in helping to involve all regardless of their language powers. For example, while working under the theme of the environment learners could be led into the drama by teacher in role as a leader who after a global environmental disaster is bringing a group of survivors from Earth to another planet in search of life. Before they go they fill a time capsule to leave for anyone who may visit Earth. Learners are encouraged to each put a biro cap into an envelope as a symbol of something representing an aspect of the Earth's environment that they will miss, for example, it could represent a photograph of a beautiful sunrise on Dublin Bay or a big old oak tree in Autumn. A note is written by each explaining the significance of the symbol and this is also put in the envelope.

6.4.2.1 Using the stages of a well constructed drama in the language class

The elements of drama constitute a valuable means of inviting a group into a particular moment, developing interest, impetus, and motivation to communicate. Their use is widely accepted

(Heathcote[1311]; Bolton[1312]; Morgan and Saxton[1313]; Bowell and Heap[1314]) as being intrinsic to the creation of the DiE context. In addition Morgan and Saxton advise teachers to follow the structure of a play when planning lessons, outlining the four stages of a 'well-constructed' drama as being exposition, rising action/complication, climax/crisis and denouement.[1315] It will be argued that this model grafts effectively onto a communicative language class plan to support and strengthen learner interest and motivation, to provide authentic opportunities for interaction through the target language, and to help foster learner autonomy and develop intercultural competence and language awareness. Each of the four stages will be discussed below and their use in the language class outlined.

6.4.2.2 Exposition

In a play this is the part at the beginning which tells the audience what happened previously. In drama it consists of teacher and class sharing what they already know, agreeing on the rules, clarifying understanding, working in dramatic exercise, practising certain skills and/or exploring the context through dramatic play. It is the part of the lesson where the teacher finds or confirms her dramatic focus. In the language classroom this exposition phase corresponds with pre-task activities where the teacher aims to gain learner attention, diagnose gaps in learning and to pre-teach necessary vocabulary and structures. Revising and pre-teaching structures and vocabulary necessary for successful communication of learners' meanings helps to build learner confidence and to encourage them to use the target language for communicative purpose. It is an important phase in the support of developing learner autonomy as it motivates and scaffolds learners into successfully accomplishing tasks ahead. It also helps lower learners' affective filter by laying the foundations to create an anxiety free environment for communication and learning to take place. For example, where the object is to examine the themes from a short story or poem in the target language previously read by the class, the teacher may wish to lead learners in a quick revision of the plot. This can also afford an opportunity to diagnose gaps in vocabulary and structures needed for further discussions. The class is divided into small groups. Each group is given a bundle of cards each of which has a vocabulary item, adjective or expression from the short story printed on it. The task is for each group to put their cards in the order in which they occur in the story. This enables learners to discuss and to guess meanings from the context and to help one another to understand. Each group then takes its turn to stick their cards across the white board, weaving them through the other cards as necessary until the story has been

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[1311] D. Heathcote. *Collected Writings on Education and Drama.* Eds L. Johnson and C. O' Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984).
[1312] G. Bolton. *Towards a Theory of Drama in Education.* (London: Longman, 1984).
[1313] N. Morgan and J. Saxton. *Teaching Drama ... A mind of many wonders.* (Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes (Publishers) Ltd. 1989.
[1314] P. Bowell and B.S. Heap. *Planning Process Drama.* (London: David Fulton Publishers, 2001),
[1315] N. Morgan and J. Saxton. *Teaching Drama ... A mind of many wonders.* (Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes (Publishers) Ltd. 1989), 6.

reconstructed. Learners are, in this way furnished with vocabulary they may need for the next activity which may, for example, be hot seating (see appendix 1). The teacher takes the role of one of the characters from the story/poem and groups work collaboratively to prepare and pose questions to the character in order to gain better insights into motivations behind his/her actions.

6.4.2.3 Rising action/complication

In a play this is the part where the protagonists and the problem are introduced. In Drama in Education the teacher is concerned with developing learners' ability to examine situations and problems from a diversity of angles. Learners are encouraged and facilitated to think 'from inside the responsibility of a situation rather than to think it over and about it'.[1316] To foster this and to enable learners to develop and explore their ideas, a range of strategies may be used. Strategies are based on performance forms and help facilitate adjustments to space, time and contrasts.[1317] They are used to bring the drama to life and to facilitate a working forward and backward in time. In the foreign language class this will correspond with the task phase where learners are given opportunities to use and build upon items pre-taught and revised in the pre-task phase. Viewing the problem or situation from a number of perspectives and working backward and forward in time will furnish learners with motivating opportunities for language input and output. It also helps expand learners' intercultural competence as they develop their abilities to see things from a diversity of perspectives. The perspectives examined will be decided by the group. This helps to support the learners' sense of ownership over their learning, thus increasing their commitment to it.[1318] It also offers the possibility of maximising learner exposure to the target language in an integrated four skills approach under a chosen theme. The dynamic, collaborative, active learning approach will help support and maintain learner interest and motivation, and thus foster greater learner autonomy. For example, learners may be led to engage in a 'line of life' activity (see appendix 1) to examine their stance on an issue. In response to statements read aloud by the teacher, learners position themselves, according to their opinions or attitudes, along an imaginary line where one end represents 'very much agree' and the other represents 'absolutely disagree', with all the gradations between. Thus, working under the theme of freedom and choice through the fairy story 'Cinderella', the teacher may call out statements such as 'Cinderella was a feminist', 'The step sisters were victims of society', and so on. The object is to allow learners to physically respond to utterances in the target language and to motivate subsequent discussion. Other strategies could be used to open the discussion further. For example, learners could be led to consider the consequences of Cinderella going to see the Prince the morning after the ball before he comes looking for her by employing the technique of 'conscience alley' (see appendix 1).

[1316] D. Heathcote. *Collected Writings on Education and Drama.* Eds L. Johnson and C. O' Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984), 142.
[1317] P. Bowell and B.S. Heap. *Planning Process Drama.* (London: David Fulton Publishers, 2001), 9.
[1318] *Ibid.*

6.4.2.4 Climax/crisis

This is the part of a play where tension is increased to crisis point by the action. The teacher cannot plan for crisis, she can only watch out for the moment that will have significance for all the participants and be appropriate to the content of the drama. In the language class one usually strives to avoid any crisis point. However, if using DiE as a means of developing learners' communicative competence then this will correspond with a continuation of the task phase adding extra interest to the drama created and offering further motivation for learners to communicate. It will help to foster and maintain learner autonomy as learners collaborate to examine the situation in order to bring it to a successful resolution. Examining a situation from a number of perspectives and sharing insights gained from these will help foster and support developing intercultural competence. For example, after the fairy godmother's visit, Cinderella arrives at the palace in all her splendour to find that the doorman will not allow her in. Learners in their small groups have to collaborate to come up with convincing arguments which are then presented to the teacher in role as doorman. Injecting tension into a task can bring the learners to a point where they are using the target language quite comfortably.

6.4.2.5 Denouement

This is the part of the play where the plot is resolved. In drama learners must be given an opportunity to bring their understanding to the feeling engendered by the climax. For example, having launched the drama with the use of 'line of life' so that learners could examine their stance, it could then close with 'line of life' again so that learners can examine to what extent their opinions and points of view have changed or not, and why. The final feeling must be of satisfaction both for the teacher and the participants. In the language classroom this will correspond with the post-task phase where issues raised and language issues of interest noted during the preceding activities are reflected upon, discussed and further worked upon. This can help foster Leaving and Junior Certificate aims to develop language awareness and to enhance learners' experience of the nature and functions of language. It can serve as an opportunity for focusing on form as learners are now aware of what they need to know to communicate their meanings more effectively. It will encourage a feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction as learners reflect on what they have learned and see that this may be built upon.

Careful planning is essential to the success of DiE. There will be two plays in operation simultaneously: the play for the teacher and the play for the learners.[1319] While participants experience the affective and generally enjoyable process of living as characters in a fictitious situation, the teacher is concerned with harnessing the experience to draw meaning from both the context and the

[1319] G. Bolton. *Selected Writings on Drama in Education.* Eds. D. Davis and C. Lawrence. (London and New York, 1986),21.

content, and thus to promote learning. Without teacher intervention learner engagement with the drama situation is likely to remain at a superficial level and learning potential to remain untapped. Bolton notes that when left to their own devices learners, especially young learners, will structure for sequence, 'for the 'what-happens-next' of a story'.[1320] Teacher intervention is needed to aid reflection and thus to promote deeper learning.[1321] The teacher's role is to find ways to enable participants to connect with the content and to develop responses to it by actively engaging with it and reflecting on it.[1322]

6.5 Learning through reflection

Morgan and Saxton identify two frames under which drama operates: the expressive frame which is the outer manifestation, and the meaning frame which is the inner understanding.[1323] They argue that drama can only realise its full power and potential 'when the inner world of meaning is harnessed to the outer world of expressive action.'[1324] They are mutually interdependent. Bolton calls this the 'second dimension' of drama where the learner moves from the affective knowledge fostered through engagement with the fiction to the understanding of a universal concept.[1325] In other words learners' own experience is harnessed to come to an understanding of the experience of others. The teacher leads learners to reflect on the aspects of the drama experience which are part of the universal lot of humanity, to show learners the universal which is inherent in the particular.[1326] For example, in the foreign language classroom as a pre-task or post-task activity on the subject of homelessness learners may be led through Drama in Education (DiE) to depict, explore and reflect on a situation where they or other teenagers might feel excluded or marginalised. This may then be used as a preparation for exploring a particular moment in a homeless person's day, to see the universal in the particular, to use one's own experience to understand the experience of another. This offers a good foundation for the development of learners' intercultural competence which Willems defines as developing a reflective and critical mind to induce learners to think about the rules and paradigms by which they live.[1327]

[1320] G. Bolton. *Selected Writings on Drama in Education.* Eds. D. Davis and C. Lawrence. (London and New York, 1986), 183.
[1321] D. Heathcote. *Collected Writings on Education and Drama.* Eds L. Johnson and C. O' Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984), 12.
[1322] P. Bowell and B.S. Heap *Planning Process Drama.* (London: David Fulton Publishers, 2001), 7.
[1323] N. Morgan and J. Saxton. *Teaching Drama ... a mind of many wonders.* (Portsmouth N.H.: Heinemann, 1987), 21.
[1324] *Ibid*
[1325] G. Bolton. *Selected Writings on Drama in Education.* Eds. D. Davis and C. Lawrence. (London and New York, 1986), 21.
[1326] B.J. Wagner. Dorothy Heathcote. *Drama as a Learning Medium.* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999 Revised Edition), 10.
[1327] Gerard M. Willems. 'Culture in Language, Learning and Teaching: Requirements for the creation of a context of negotiation' in *Issues in Cross-cultural Communications.* Ed. G.M.N. Willems. (Nijmegan: Hogeschool Gelderland Press, 1996), 71.

Heathcote and Bolton propose that DiE doesn't just draw learners' attention to cultural implications but teaches them how to look for these.[1328] The learners are emotionally engaged in the subject through the drama but because the context is make-believe, a distance is maintained. This enables them to be participant-observers, to view the situation under examination from a variety of perspectives and to reflect on these. Fleming argues that DiE offers a means of exploring and examining experience in ways which are denied to us in real life.[1329] There is a process of de-familiarisation as scenes are looked at afresh through the conventions of drama (see appendix 1). Complexities are revealed through simplification as aspects of a situation are thrown into relief so that they can be scrutinised and thus enable learners to examine things as they are rather than how they might be.[1330] In this way learners are brought to realise that there are many ways of looking at the world[1331] which can be very liberating and motivating. They examine their's and others' ways of looking at it, and realise there is no norm. As Fleming puts it, DiE works by allowing learners 'to put behaviour under a microscope', reflecting on what they learnt and articulating it for others.[1332] These skills are transferable and can help to open learners' minds, broaden their outlook and increase their general knowledge. Thus they can be used to tackle tendencies towards racism as learners learn to examine their own and others' culture and come to realise that all culture is relative, there is no norm. Thus DiE helps equip learners to become better inter-cultural communicators.

In DiE, as in a communicative language class, as discussed in Chapter 3, a theme of significance to the needs and interests of the group is selected in advance to support the learning objectives for the lesson.[1333] The choice of theme is important as it creates the focus or impetus.[1334] It aims to help the learners to see situations from a different perspective and so to develop new understandings.[1335] It is defined in terms of the human dimension within it as DiE is always concerned with matters of human significance.[1336] In the language class the emphasis is also on selecting a theme appropriate to learner interests and needs.[1337] A theme can be chosen which is appropriate for the launch of the DiE context and a successful language learning context. Where DiE is used in the foreign language class then the

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[1328] Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton. 'Teaching Culture through Drama', in *Language, Learning in Intercultural Perspective: Approaches through Drama and Ethnography*. Eds. M. Byram and M. Fleming. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 161.
[1329] Michael Fleming, 'Cultural Awareness and Dramatic Art Forms', in *Language, Learning in Intercultural Perspective: Approaches through Drama and Ethnography*. Eds. M. Byram and M. Fleming. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 149.
[1330] *Ibid.*: 154.
[1331] *Ibid.*
[1332] *Ibid.*: 149.
[1333] Diane Larsen-Freeman. *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
[1334] P. Bowell and B.S. Heap. *Planning Process Drama.* (London: David Fulton Publishers, 2001), 10-11.
[1335] T. Jackson. *Learning Through Theatre: new perspectives on theatre in education.* Second edition. (London: Routledge, 1993), 44.
[1336] P. Bowell and B.S. Heap. *Planning Process Drama.* (London: David Fulton Publishers, 2001), 10-11.
[1337] Joe Shiels. *Communication in the Modern Languages Classroom.* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1988).

human dimension may be defined in a learning outcome or aim, for example, 'Learners will examine situations in which teenagers may feel excluded or marginalised and will relate these to the situation of a homeless person'. The language learning component may also be stated in a learning outcome, for example, 'Learners will describe orally and in writing situations in which teenagers and the homeless can feel excluded or marginalised.' These outcomes will then be further sub-divided into specific learning objectives in which each step of the process to achieving the learning outcomes is itemised. Here the language learning objectives will be to the fore with Drama in Education used as a means of achieving these objectives, for example,

- 'In groups of five, learners will represent and describe orally situations in which teenagers may feel excluded or marginalised using tableaux[1338] and thought-tracking[1339].'
- 'Learners will list adjectives and phrases describing these situations and feelings of those involved collaboratively through the use of role-on-the-wall' [1340] (see appendix 1).
- 'Learners will make comparisons between these instances of exclusion and the situation of a homeless person while listening to a recording of a homeless person describing the circumstances that led to their being on the street.'

Although Drama in Education is apparently loose and fluid, it requires careful planning, discipline and constraint for its successful execution.[1341] The teacher must structure the learning situation to create potential areas of learning and challenges in which learners can become involved.[1342] This too is in common with the communicative language classroom which has a relaxed atmosphere but needs careful planning to maintain this by ensuring that the content is relevant and interesting and the tasks authentic and motivating. In DiE the internal structure of the work must be thoroughly planned and careful consideration given to how best to bridge each part of the learning with the next development.[1343] Planning must always be done 'from an inside experience approach rather than from an external tasks approach.'[1344] Therefore the action will not necessarily be linear in development. As outlined in Chapter 3, a communicative approach embraces a cyclical approach where language items are, for example, introduced through one of the language skills, then practised using other skills, and may at a later stage be built upon and expanded. Each task must be carefully considered to ensure that it links with other tasks set, by preparing for them or building on what was covered in them. For example, in the objectives listed above, the use of tableaux and thought tracking will encourage

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[1338] See appendix 1 for description and explanation.
[1339] See appendix 1 for description and explanation.
[1340] See appendix 1 for description and explanation.
[1341] J. Neelands. *Learning Through Imagined Experience.* Ed. Patrick Scott. (London: Hodder and Stoughton 1992), 4.
[1342] C. O' Neill and A. Lambert . *Drama Structures. A practical handbook for teachers.* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1982), 21.
[1343] D. Heathcote. *Collected Writings on Education and Drama.* Eds L. Johnson and C. O' Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984), 118.
[1344] *Ibid.:* 101.

learners to pool together the vocabulary and structures needed to describe exclusion. This serves as a preparation for the writing task which follows, which in turn scaffolds learners into the listening task.

The non-linear approach to constructing a drama in DiE means that teacher intervention to highlight or explain a grammar point will not ruin the continuity of the experience being created. Furthermore, the drama context will furnish a meaningful context for the introduction and practice of the new item. In DiE the focus must be equally on the quality of the experience for the group and the relevance of the activities to the teaching objectives,[1345] and this supports the creation of a quality language learning experience with maximum opportunities for target language comprehensible input[1346] and pushed output[1347] as discussed in Chapter 2. The learning that ensues will not primarily derive from inputs of new material by the teacher but through working with what the group already knows to 'hot forge'[1348] it into new and other forms in order to structure that understanding or awareness.

6.6 Creating motivating contexts to empower learners

DiE works to intrinsically motivate learners by using content, materials and activities that are authentic and inherently interesting to learners and it is therefore very useful in the foreign language class. As seen in Chapter 4, the language teacher seeks and uses learners' suggestions on content and activities to ensure that they are of interest and relevance. In DiE the teacher encourages and accepts the participants' ideas and decisions and works them into the drama so learners can see their own choices being worked out in action.[1349] There must be a withdrawal of judgement on the part of the teacher who can take a stance but does not set it up as the 'right one'.[1350] As teacher and learners work in an imagined or fictitious situation there is no right solution, only an appropriate one for the context.[1351] For example, in the tableaux referred to above about homelessness each group will represent their chosen situation and decide on the thoughts to be expressed through thought-tracking (see appendix 1) as they see appropriate, and anomalies therein will usually become evident to the group through reflection and discussion which are inherent practices in Drama in Education. The target language is thus used in a meaningful way to express participants' opinions and ideas. The use of authentic materials supports and is supported by DiE in the foreign language classroom. For example, in the instances given above the authentic recording of a homeless person supports the DiE

[1345] D. Heathcote. *Collected Writings on Education and Drama.* Eds L. Johnson and C. O' Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984), 103.
[1346] M. Swain. 'Communicative competence: some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development', in *Input in Second language Acquisition.* Eds. S. Gass and C. Madden (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1985).
[1347] *Ibid.*
[1348] D. Heathcote. *Collected Writings on Education and Drama.* Eds L. Johnson and C. O' Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984), 112.
[1349] *Ibid.*: 209.
[1350] *Ibid.*: 48.
[1351] N. Morgan and J. Saxton. *Teaching Drama ... A mind of many wonders.* (Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes (Publishers) Ltd. 1989), ix.

aim of enabling learners to examine and reflect upon the isolation of the homeless as well as the language learning objective of developing aural skills by drawing comparisons between the situation of a potentially isolated teenager and that of a homeless person. The use of authentic materials furthers the basic tenet of a communicative approach and of DiE to work from learners' interests and culture, making connections between classroom learning and the world outside.

In keeping with the advice offered in Chapter 4, the drama is launched or introduced by the teacher but it is the participants who decide the direction that it will take. In fact, the dramatic world cannot come into being unless participants acknowledge their collusion in the creation of that world.[1352] It is dependent on learners and teacher collaborating to create, explore, reflect on and discuss drama contexts chosen. Communication is at its heart. Language learning is inextricably linked to the process of using the target language in a variety of contexts, to communicate in various situations to various types of people.[1353] The capacity to use the target language with a flexibility that allows learners to express themselves as little or as much as they wish can only be satisfactorily developed through using the target language for real communication.[1354] The drama context is dependent upon learners expressing themselves and it provides a framework to motivate and scaffold them into expressing their meanings through the target language and to receive the meanings of others. Through the creation of motivating contexts to encourage learners to express themselves, DiE can help learners to convert their linguistic knowledge into effective communication. As discussed in Chapter 3, a basic assumption of a communicative approach is that learners will be able to transfer skills and knowledge developed in the classroom to appropriate use in the outside world.[1355] In the lesson example given above the learners are drawn in and motivated by being given the opportunity to represent and express their feelings about teenage isolation. The aims, objectives and tasks are planned in advance but the situations depicted and the thoughts expressed are entirely based on learner input. The launch of the dramatic context must be fed by learner interests and needs because if they are not interested in the situation then they will not collaborate to examine it. Selecting an appropriate stimulus for the drama process is essential.

As already mentioned, there is no script in DiE, O' Neill identifies the 'pre-text' as the source or impulse of the drama process.[1356] Bowell and Heap refer to it as the 'frame' and argue that that

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[1352] C. O'Neill. *A Framework for Process Drama*. (London: Heinneman, 1995), 58.
[1353] Janice Yalden. *Principles of Course Design for Language Teaching*. (Cambridge: Cambridge \University Press, 1987).
[1354] W.T. Littlewood. *Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981. 16th printing, 1995), 91.
[1355] David Nunan, *The Learner-Centred Curriculum*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
[1356] C. O'Neill. *Drama Worlds: a framework for process drama*. Ed. L. Barnett. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995) xv.

planning an effective frame is crucial.[1357] The frame or pre-text is the meaning of the text which exists before the event, hinting at previous events and foreshadowing future ones. It provides the necessary dramatic tension and motivation to drive the drama forward. It must be simple and minimal and is chosen by the teacher in accordance with lesson learning objectives to activate what O'Neill calls 'the weaving' of the text.[1358] It may, for example, be a word, a gesture, an idea, an image or a location, a picture, a newspaper article, a story, a note, anything that grabs the attention of the participants. Frame is thus the perspective from which participants enter the drama and the action necessary for the drama to progress forward to conclusions.[1359] Its role is to provide tension and meaning for participants. Another function of the frame is to protect the participants into the experience.[1360] A framework needs to be selected which will allow all to participate in safety. This is known as the distancing frame. If the experience is too close to participants' personal experience it can be upsetting. Similarly, it can impede reflection as a certain amount of distance and objectivity is necessary for effective reflection to occur.

The pre-text or framing device is very useful in the foreign language class as it allows the dramatic world to come into existence with immediacy, promoting yet moderating unpredictability. It switches on expectation and binds the group in anticipation.[1361] It enables the attention of the learners to be hooked and to be built upon through the inherent interest of the potential action assured by the pretext. The pre-text frames learners in a firm relationship to the potential action launching them into the investigation of a situation, a problem or a conflict by adopting roles and living through it.[1362] It supports and encourages language learners by implying roles and defining the limits of the dramatic world. The point of view which the role has about what is happening in the drama is vital as it gives participants something to talk about.[1363] The drama is theirs and for it to progress they must contribute their thoughts, opinions and ideas. For example, through the 'teacher in role' device, learners are framed as members of an amateur detective society at one of their meetings. They are meeting to assist in the investigation of a possible crime scene. A person has gone missing and the group has to consider how and why. The scene at which the person was last known to have been is recreated and participants, in role, examine it and take notes. They then, in small groups, create a description of the person and possible reasons for their leaving. Following discussions in role, where all are encouraged

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[1357] P. Bowell and B.S. Heap. *Planning Process Drama.* (London: David Fulton Publishers, 2001), 11.
[1358] C. O'Neill. *Drama Worlds: a framework for process drama.* Ed. L. Barnett. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995) xv.
[1359] D. Heathcote. *Collected Writings on Education and Drama.* Eds L. Johnson and C. O' Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984), 162.
[1360] D. Heathcote. *Collected Writings on Education and Drama.* Eds L. Johnson and C. O' Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984).
[1361] C. O'Neill. *Drama Worlds: a framework for process drama.* Ed. L. Barnett. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995).
[1362] *Ibid.*
[1363] P. Bowell and B.S. Heap. *Planning Process Drama.* (London: David Fulton Publishers, 2001), 13.

to contribute, the group in collaboration with the teacher, now out of role, decide on the next direction the drama will take. This fosters learner autonomy, as discussed in Chapter 4, by promoting a sense of personal control and independence in the learning process.[1364] Their thoughts and feelings fuel the expression.[1365] This will enable learners to perceive their learning as being personally relevant and meaningful, thereby sustaining motivational thinking and intrinsic motivation.[1366]

In addition, energy and conviction can develop through the role adopted and this can widen the emotional register and the type of language required. This can provide motivating contexts in which to extend learner competencies and to encourage or push them to communicate. Thus, DiE provides a context for the three learning functions of pushed output as outlined by Swain[1367] and discussed in Chapter 2:

- to facilitate learners to notice the gap between what they want to express and what they can;
- to enable them to test their hypotheses about how the target language works;
- to consciously reflect on their target language use and thereby to control and organise their linguistic knowledge.

Thus, it is essential at the planning stage to provide the dramatic tension necessary to drive the drama forward and to generate talk.[1368]

6.7 Effective communication relies on content and form

DiE relies on effective communication of ideas for its creation and development. A communicative approach aims for learners to learn to communicate in the target language by using it to communicate. As argued in Chapter 3, a communicative approach puts the emphasis not on how much grammar the learners know but on what they can do with what they know, how they can use it to communicate their meanings.[1369] However, this does not mean that a focus on grammar is unimportant and as seen in Chapter 3, if acquisition is to take place then learners need to pay some degree of attention to language forms.[1370] Learners who are focusing on meaning may not be able to attend to form at the

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[1364] E. Ushioda. *Learner Autonomy 5: The Role of Motivation*. Ed. D. Little. (Dublin: Authentik, 1996), 19.
[1365] N. Morgan and J. Saxton. *Teaching Drama ... a mind of many wonders*. (Portsmouth N.H.: Heinemann, 1989), 21.
[1366] R.L. Oxford. *Language Learning Strategies: what every teacher should know*. (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1990), 21.
[1367] M. Swain. 'Three functions of output in second language learning', in *Principle and Practice in Applied linguistics*. Eds. G. Cook and B. Seidlhofer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 126.
[1368] P. Bowell and B.S. Heap. *Planning Process Drama*. (London: David Fulton Publishers, 2001), 13.
[1369] W.T. Littlewood. *Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981. 16th printing, 1995).
[1370] M. Sharwood Smith. 'Input enhancement in instructed SLA: theoretical bases', in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* Vol 15 (1993), 165-79.

same time.[1371] When learners are under pressure to communicate without time to maximise their existing knowledge of the L2, then they are more likely to produce errors than if they had time to prepare for their production.[1372] DiE can serve to support a focus on form and developing language awareness through its built-in opportunities for reflection. Participants have roles as members of the group but also as characters in the drama. This has a distancing effect. In DiE learners must be brought simultaneously to experience and to reflect upon their experience.[1373] Similarly, in language learning learners must be brought to communicate but also to reflect upon their language use. The distancing devices and, as discussed previously, the non-linear nature of DiE allow learners the time and space to focus on language forms, to prepare their contributions beforehand, and /or to focus on them afterwards.[1374]

In the lesson objectives outlined above, for example, the tableaux and thought-tracking activities are planned to help learners to focus on and prepare the vocabulary and structures necessary to complete the writing task that follows. After viewing the tableaux learners and teacher may engage in a reflection and discussion of what they saw and this can help to develop insights into the relationship between context and language and to foster an awareness of different registers.[1375] This also provides an opportunity to foster language awareness to help participants to come to a better understanding of different types and forms of communication and interaction and the effects of these.[1376] It can create the space for learners to compare what they have observed in target language input with what they are producing based on their current interlanguage system.[1377] In other words, it allows learners to notice the gap between what they are able to express and what they would like to express, and this, as proposed in Chapter 4, has a motivational effect.[1378] DiE can promote language awareness, as outlined in Chapter 2, by enabling learners to increase their knowledge of rule application and misapplication and to develop an understanding of contrasts between the L1 and the L2.[1379] This will support

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[1371] M. Swain. 'Communicative competence: Some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development', in *Input in Second Language Acquisition*. Eds. S. Gass and C. Madden. (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1985).
[1372] T. Pica. 'Second language learning through interaction: Multiple perspectives' in V. Regan (ed) *Contemporary Approaches to Second Language Acquisition in Social Contexts*. (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1998), 13.
[1373] D. Heathcote. *Collected Writings on Education and Drama*. Eds. L. Johnson and C. O'Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984), 106.
[1374] M. Fleming. *The Art of Drama Teaching*. (London: Fulton 1997).
[1375] J. Neelands. *Learning Through Imagined Experience*. Ed. Patrick Scott. (London: Hodder and Stoughton 1992), 20.
[1376] D. Heathcote. *Collected Writings on Education and Drama*. Eds L. Johnson and C. O' Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984), 196.
[1377] R. Schmidt and S. Frota. 'Developing basic conversational ability in a second language: a case study of an adult learner' in *Talking to Learn: Conversation in Second Language Acquisition*. Ed. R.R. Day (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1986), 237-322.
[1378] P.M. lightbown and N. Spada. *How Languages are Learned*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 135.
[1379] S.M. Gass. 'Input and Interaction', in *The Handbook of Second language Acquisition*. Eds. C. Doughty and M. Long (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 241.

learners' ability to take responsibility for their learning, applying active, meaningful strategies to developing their communicative competence. DiE thus fosters the development of autonomy, as discussed in Chapter 4 by supporting the development of autonomy in language learning as an essential support to the development of autonomy in language use.[1380]

DiE also offers a diagnostic function allowing teachers opportunities to observe where there are gaps in learners' linguistic repertoire and to see the stage at which learners are in their language development. The teacher may then, as discussed in Chapter 2, lead the learners to focus on the linguistic structures needed to bridge the gap and Pienemann proposes that this can speed up the acquisition process.[1381] In fact, because learners can see what they need to know and why, they may exercise their growing autonomy and search for the missing knowledge for themselves. The writing task as outlined above, consolidates what has been learned previously as well as offering opportunities for further focus on form as learners collaborate with peers and/or teacher and use reference materials to prepare and produce the role-on-the wall. This supports learner confidence and motivation with an increased sense of progression, as language forms focused on earlier and material previously produced, is used and improved upon to advance the drama. DiE supports the cyclical approach to language learning espoused by a communicative approach, as discussed in Chapter 3, by allowing language items to be used and re-used in different contexts in an integrated four skills approach.

6.8 Skills and knowledge

As previously discussed in this chapter, DiE can develop from any situation or context that hooks into the interest of the participants. It can therefore provide a variety of motivating contexts and fresh activities to sustain learner interest while reinforcing new language items. Language practice activities can become repetitive and boring but DiE can give learners the practice they need to routinise skills using an integrated four skills approach to maintain interest. For example, if learners need practice using the simple past or past continuous tenses then they could work around a journal entry where a homeless person describes a day from their youth. This could be followed by an audio recording of a former teacher of the homeless person talking about what they were like whilst at school, with learners taking notes in order to complete a gap-fill exercise. The next task might involve learners discussing and collaborately writing about how the homeless person spent yesterday based on 'clues' from the person's pocket. All of these tasks focus on the past tenses and together involve an integrated approach to the use of the four language skills to help bring learners from controlled to automatic use of these tenses. Thus it may be seen that DiE can support a communicative aim of enabling learners to

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[1380] D. Little. *In Learner Autonomy, Teacher Autonomy: Future Directions*. Eds. B. Sinclair, I. McGrath and T. Lamb. (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 16.

[1381] M. Pienemann. 'Determining the influence of instruction on L2 speech processing' in *AILA Review, Vol 5* (Issue 1, 1988): 40-72.

focus on the message they want to convey rather than on how to express it.[1382] It can also sustain learners' intrinsic motivation, as discussed in Chapter 4, by allowing learners to see the tasks as interim goals leading to the attainment of a longer term goal.[1383] It enables learners to see the development of their language skills and their mastery of the target language and thus to perceive the learning process as a source of satisfaction and pleasure. As identified in Chapter 4, this is vital for engaging intrinsic motivation and developing learner autonomy. It supports learners willingness to use the target language independently through motivating contexts and their ability to use it independently by helping to provide the necessary scaffolding. As discussed in Chapter 4, Little argues that learner autonomy is only possible to the extent that learners have both the willingness and the ability to act independently. DiE can help them to develop the motivation, confidence, knowledge and skills necessary to become more autonomous.

Similar to a drama on the television or a new film, the classroom planned drama will promote the release of varying and conflicting attitudes and responses to the presented characters and situations within the group. A series of structured and unstructured interactions between participants and their ideas gives the group increased opportunities for both experiencing and expressing a wide range of attitudes and opinions.[1384] For example, in the lesson that may follow the one outlined above there may be interpretation and possible disagreement among learners about the situations represented by the tableaux. This offers the language learner motivating opportunities for increased target language input and output as they receive the opinions of others and express their own. It supports a communicative approach, as discussed in Chapter 3, by linking language learning inextricably to language use.[1385] In addition it presents opportunities for learners to receive valuable positive and negative feedback scaffolding them into testing their hypotheses about how the target language system works. In this way DiE meets the requirements, as argued in Chapter 2, to stimulate language learning: positive evidence (input), negative evidence (feedback) and output (production).[1386] The concreteness of the pictures represented by the tableaux offer a motivating stimulus for learners to express their opinions as well as a framework to help learners understand the contributions of others. In addition, the collaborative nature of the work means that learners are supported in their efforts to

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[1382] R. Towell and R. Hawkins. *Approaches to Second Language Acquisition.* (Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters, 1994), 250.
[1383] E. Ushioda. *Learner Autonomy 5: The Role of Motivation.* Ed. David Little. (Dublin: Authentik, 1996), 19.
[1384] D. Heathcote. *Collected Writings on Education and Drama.* Eds L. Johnson and C. O' Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984), 71.
[1385] Christopher Brumfit. 'Communicative language teaching: an educational perspective' in *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching.* Eds. C.J. Brumfit and K. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979. Second Edition, 1981), 189.
[1386] M.H. Long. 'The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition' in *Handbook of Second language Acquisition.* Eds. W.C. Ritchie and T.K. Bhatia. (San Diego: Academic Press, 1996), 451-2.

express themselves and to understand others.[1387] Learners interact and when there is a break-down in the communication of a message due to language difficulties, then those involved must try to repair it through negotiation of meaning. As they are collaborating to create the drama situation there is a motivation to keep the lines of communication open. As outlined in Chapter 2, in order to make their meaning understood by others, learners need to adapt and modify what they are saying until others show signs of understanding. Thus, through interactional modifications there is a fine tuning of L2 input so that it becomes better suited to other learners' current level of language development.[1388] Interactional modifications used include repetitions and paraphrase, simplification, comprehension checks, clarification checks and use of gesture. As discussed in Chapter 2, this maximises potential for acquisition as the input becomes more comprehensible and thereby processible while still containing new linguistic elements.[1389] Thus, DiE promotes learner interaction and collaboration to help create and support conditions for promoting language acquisition.[1390]

6.9 Autonomous learning

Neelands holds that DiE operates on a view of learning which recognises the centrality of language to all human activity.[1391] Bowell and Heap refer to talk as being 'the currency' of DiE.[1392] Thus, they argue that a key element in the planning of DiE is the creation of a climate in which meaningful talk can be generated. DiE is a very useful tool in the foreign language class as it provides a powerful motivation to speech giving learners a voice and encouraging them to use it. This speech is meaningful to them as it is embedded in context and situation: it is their own personal response and has 'a crucial organising function'[1393] in the drama. Autonomy is enhanced as learners are actively involved in productive use of the target language to express their own meanings rather than reproducing models from the textbook.[1394] Participants are provided with accessible, concrete examples to explore human nature and experiences and to express their own experience.[1395] Developing autonomy is further enhanced as learners are helped to develop their ability to use the

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[1387] R. Donato. 'Collective scaffolding in second language learning' in *Vygotskyan Approaches to Second Language Research*. Eds. J.P. Lantolf and G. Appel (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 1994), 44.
[1388] T. Pica. 'Classroom interaction, participation and comprehension: Redefining relationships.' System Vol 19 (1991): 437- 452.
[1389] D. Larsen-Freeman and M.H. Long. *An Introduction to second language acquisition research*. (Harlow: Longman, 1991), 144.
[1390] M.H. Long. 'The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition' in *Handbook of Second language Acquisition*. Eds. W.C. Ritchie and T.K. Bhatia. (San Diego: Academic Press, 1996), 451-2.
[1391] J. Neelands. *Learning Through Imagined Experience*. Ed. Patrick Scott. (London: Hodder and Stoughton 1992), 9.
[1392] P. Bowell and B.S. Heap. *Planning Process Drama*. (London: David Fulton Publishers, 2001), 13.
[1393] C. O' Neill and A. Lambert. *Drama Structures. A practical handbook for teachers*. (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1982), 20.
[1394] D. Nunan. 'Towards autonomous learning: some theoretical, empirical and practical issues' in *Taking Control: Autonomy in Language Learning*. Eds. R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or and H.D. Pierson. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 20.
[1395] J. Neelands. *Learning Through Imagined Experience*. Ed. Patrick Scott. (London: Hodder and Stoughton 1992), 4.

target language independently. The rich contexts created by DiE support and motivate learners in their comprehension of input and efforts at output both of which are essential to the development of communicative competence.[1396] The social context gives meaning to the language and to the language learning process. Gaps in their inter-language are bridged by the context created by DiE, learners' world knowledge, and their extra-linguistic competence, both of which are also activated and encouraged by DiE. A means is provided to base new learning in what learners already know and to use this to help foster new learning, thus promoting a communicative approach as discussed in Chapter 3.[1397]

6.10 Authenticity and a Drama in Education approach

Through the DiE experience learners see that previous knowledge, skills and experiences are relevant to and helpful to their language learning. This supports learners' sense of self and this, as argued in Chapter 2 creates the affective environment that is best suited to language acquisition.[1398] As discussed in Chapter 3, foreign language teaching must be concerned with reality.[1399] Authenticity is central to a DiE approach. The authenticity of task, of content and of interaction provides motivating learning contexts. This enables learners to see the relevance of their language learning. Participants work with the authentic content of the situation being examined and they interact in the target language about the real world and things that matter to them. This links language learning directly with language use and with learners' previous knowledge and experience, with other school subjects and with life outside the classroom, and this will foster and support intrinsic motivation.[1400]

6.11 Socio-linguistic competence

To become effective communicators learners need more than practice of speaking in different contexts. As argued in Chapter 3, they also need to develop skills to judge the success of the communication through feedback received and to remedy failure through a different choice of language.[1401] Communicative competence has its origins in the need to emphasise the importance of

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[1396] M. Swain. 'Communicative competence: some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development' in *Input in Second Language Acquisition.* Eds. S. Gass and C. Madden (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1985).

[1397] Michael P. Breen and Christopher N. Candlin. 'The Essentials of a Communicative Curriculum in Language Teaching' in *Applied Linguistics* Vol. 1, (No. 2, Summer 1980): 93.

[1398] S. Krashen. *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications.* (London: Longman, 1985), 3.

[1399] W.T. Littlewood. *Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981. 16thnprinting, 1995), 91.

[1400] D. Little. 'Co-operation and collaborative learning tasks as pathways towards autonomous interdependence' in *Learner Autonomy 7: Challenges to research and practice.* Eds. P. Benson and P. & S. Toogood (Dublin: Authentik, 2002), 29-40.

[1401] Christopher Brumfit. *Communicative Methodology in Language Teaching: The roles of fluency and accuracy.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

knowing the socio-cultural appropriateness as well as the correct grammar.[1402] As discussed in Chapter 2, learners need not just knowledge of the grammar of a language but also the ability to use it in socially and culturally accepted ways.[1403] They need to be able to analyse the contexts to identify what will effect what is said and how it will be heard. In other words, they need to develop socio-linguistic competence.[1404] As may be seen from examples given of DiE in the language class, Drama in Education enables the creation of an infinite variety of social-contexts within which participants can experience, identify and develop the different functions and uses of language.[1405] Vocal, active responses to fictional situations are stimulated by the drama and participants are encouraged to find and use appropriate responses as the drama progresses.[1406] The built-in distancing devices enable learners to observe and reflect on their own and others' use of language to see their appropriacy. As discussed previously, DiE can provide opportunities for learners to experiment with the language in a 'no penalty' zone building their linguistic and pragmatic knowledge, learning appropriateness of form and of meaning, in other words, developing their socio-linguistic competence.

6.12 A summary of links

As argued in this chapter links between CLT and DiE are strong as the two approaches are learner centred, rooted in active learning, with communication and reflection underpinning them. The following offers a summary of connections made between the two approaches.

- Communication is central to both

Communicative language learning involves learning to communicate in the target language by making efforts to communicate through the target language. Communication is also at the heart of the drama process. The creation and progression of a drama depends on learners communicating their meanings. Drama in Education provides learners with opportunities to develop their communicative competence by creating motivating contexts to encourage use of the target language for meaningful communication.

- Meaning making is integral to both

When learners are involved in exchanges that are meaningful to them they may be more concerned with ensuring that their message has been transmitted. By allowing learners meaningful opportunities

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[1402] C. –L. Dautry. 'Objectives in Language Teaching and Learning'. In *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Language Teaching and Learning.* Ed. M. Byram (London: Routledge, 2000), 454.
[1403] M. Canale and M. Swain. 'Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing.' *Applied linguistics 1,* (1980): 1-47.
[1404] C.S. Blyth. 'Sociolinguistic Competence' in *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Language Teaching and Learning. Ed.* M. Byram (London: Routledge, 2000), 554.
[1405] J. Neelands. *Learning Through Imagined Experience.* Ed. Patrick Scott. (London: Hodder and Stoughton 1992), 10.
[1406] *Ibid.:* 4.

for using the target language DiE may encourage the use of interaction modifications and the negotiation of meaning between interlocutors. Thus it may facilitate the production of comprehensible input to provide an acquisition rich environment.

- Both use learners' existing knowledge as a starting point

Both CLT and DiE work by integrating new learning with learners' knowledge and experience to date. They give learners opportunities to engage with their learning in order to build new meanings and understandings. The use of DiE in the communicative language class enables a wide range of learner experiences and knowledge to be brought to the language class and built upon. Thus a context is created where the whole person and his/her contributions is validated and shown to be connected to the language class. Learners come to realise that they will not be valued for their language learning skills alone. They can bring their whole personality to the language class.

- Authentic, relevant materials and activities are essential to both

To engage the interest and meet the needs of learners, both approaches advise that the themes, materials, pace and activities used be decided on in negotiation with the learners. Both approaches advocate using materials and activities which allow the learner to see language learning as a vital, dynamic process which will enable them to further their interests and experience of life. DiE can support the use of materials which are culturally and linguistically authentic. This can further the perception of the relevance of the learning process and maintain a motivating belief in the usefulness of the subject. Communicative language learning and DiE work from learners' interests and culture and make connections between classroom learning and the world outside.

- A collaborative approach is fundamental to both

The communicative language class is collaborative with the teacher acting as a facilitator for learning. In essence communication and negotiation of meaning are collaborative, drama is also collaborative as participants acknowledge their collusion in the creation of the drama world. The progression of the drama is negotiated by the group and achieved by the collaborative efforts of all. The use of DiE in the language class facilitates and supports a spirit of collaboration as learners must communicate with one another to develop their drama. Meaning is constructed collaboratively and language is at the heart of the interaction.

- An encouraging atmosphere is indispensable to both

Language learning is dependent on a classroom atmosphere which is encouraging and non-threatening. DiE helps to create an energising, motivating, informal atmosphere which stimulates and supports learner contributions. Learners may gain competence in matching appropriate language to appropriate situations. They can try out language appropriate to new situations within a protected

environment. The focus is on the task, on the communication of the message, and not on the individual nor on any mistakes that may be made. The role adopted protects the individual from the consequences of inaccuracy.

- Both focus on learning rather than on teaching

Both approaches support and encourage the development of learner autonomy. Learner independence is fostered as learners are encouraged and supported to be involved in their learning. In CLT and in DiE learners are facilitated to make choices about themes and tasks with which they will engage. DiE helps to promote the use of choice in the language class as the progression of the drama world created depends on their choices. This helps to ensure that learning is meaningful and that motivational agendas are harnessed. The language class may thus be perceived as a place where interests can be pursued and built upon. It may be seen to feed and be fed by the world outside.

- Both are underpinned by learner reflection

Reflection is central to both CLT and DiE, reflection on what to learn, what to communicate, how to communicate, reflection on the language to be used, reflection on the language used. In drama learners are led to reflect on aspects of the drama experience which are part of the universal experience of humanity: to use one's own experience to understand the experience of another. Active reflection on the learning process out of role enables learners to set sub-goals and devise strategies for gaining competence. It allows learners the time and space to prepare their contributions beforehand. It also allows them opportunities to reflect on the gaps, noticed during the creation of the drama, between what they want to express and what they can, when trying to communicate their messages. This may provide a motivation for learners to consider how best to address these thereby controlling and organising their linguistic knowledge.

- Motivating contexts are central to both

Real communication operates under constraints of one sort or another. In every communicative act we must take account of role and status, emotions, moods and attitudes, shared knowledge, and situation. Learners need to explore the impact of context on the type of language used. DiE provides scope for the creation of constraints and context. It creates a thought-provoking representation of reality affording learners the opportunity to play with language in context and to reflect on the influence of context on the target language.

- Development of the four language skills through CLT and DiE

Learners need to communicate their thoughts in order to further their drama. DiE can thus effectively support an integrated approach to the development of the four language skills by providing a motivating and convincing context. The language used is varied and spontaneous, rarely formulaic or

predictable. Because there is no set agenda learners can contribute to the extent, and with the level of language with which they feel comfortable. The teacher, working as part of the group, can use his/her role to repeat and if necessary remodel what has been said to ensure that all can understand and feel empowered to contribute. The context offers possibilities for a great variety of linguistic styles. The learners may be motivated to speak, read, write and listen because the opportunities have stemmed from the dramatic context which they have created.

- Developing intercultural competence through CLT and DiE

A communicative approach involves the fostering of intercultural competence, developing a reflective and critical mind to induce learners to think about the rules and paradigms by which they and others live in order to better communicate. Drama in Education can help develop the skills to promote intercultural competence. It brings learners through a process of defamiliarisation where scenes are looked at afresh through the conventions of drama. This encourages and supports learners to reflect on their actions and on the actions of others and to better understand the relativity of cultures.

- Both provide and encourage feedback on communication

DiE can provide learners with valuable opportunities for self-assessment as well as receiving positive and negative feedback on their communication efforts from peers. The context created by DiE motivates participants to use the target language and thus to test their hypotheses about how the target language works. Successful communication of a message allows learners to have instant feedback on their progress. Similarly, the learners can perceive where the gaps in their learning lie, and seeing the relevance of effective communication, be motivated to bridge these gaps. A powerful motivation is created for learners to use the language they already have, to learn new structures and lexis, to improve their pronunciation and intonation in order to better communicate their message. This will enhance learner satisfaction and advance feelings of competence.

6.13 Concluding comments

The challenge for the language teacher is to develop the drama towards achieving the teaching-learning objectives without denying or negating learners' contributions. The learners' needs must be put before the teacher's plans.[1407] The teacher must receive and help to develop ideas as well as challenging them.[1408] Selective use of open ended questions will enable contributions to be further reflected upon and analysed in more detail. Heathcote suggests that above all the teacher must create and preserve attitudes of receptivity, non-value judgments and artistic integrity.[1409] In the foreign

[1407] D. Heathcote. *Collected Writings on Education and Drama.* Eds L. Johnson and C. O' Neill (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1984), 58.
[1408] *Ibid.:* 19.
[1409] *Ibid.:* 68.

language class the levels of artistic integrity adhered to may depend on the objectives of the teacher and the interests of the class at any given time. The main focus will be on creating a classroom atmosphere where learners are not inhibited, where they are given the necessary supports to communicate their messages effectively and to effectively receive the messages of others.

As has been demonstrated in this chapter the links between a communicative and a Drama in Education approach in the language classroom are very strong and appear to convincingly and fruitfully enrich each other. DiE is presented as an approach which may help to realise and put into practice the theoretical tenets of effective language teaching and learning practice which have been discussed in previous chapters.

As this study is concerned with examining not only the theoretical and possible practical underpinnings of effective language teaching and learning practices, the following chapter will outline the planning and implementation of a practitioner based research study into the nature and scope of teaching methods currently employed by practising language teachers and student language teachers in an effort to assess whether a communicative approach is being realised in language classrooms in Irish second level schools and to what extent.

Chapter 7
Research Design and Methodology

7.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the planning, methodology and implementation of the research project which was designed to explore the use of Drama in Education in the teaching and learning of modern foreign languages (MFL) in Irish second level schools. This study is longitudinal by nature and design. The researcher was aware of a limited number of other studies in the field which accessed small scale sample sizes over a relatively short duration (see, for example, Kao and O'Neill 1998[1410]) and whose impact on the development of practice in this specific field has been marginal at best. This study sought to examine and research, over an extended period, the experiences, attitudes and opinions of student second level language teachers undergoing a period of initial teacher education via the year long Post-Graduate Diploma in Education programme (formerly known as the Higher Diploma in Education). Over a six year research period, across a number of student cohorts, it was hoped to conclusively identify, examine and explore emerging themes, issues and patterns pertaining to student teachers' own experiences of language learning in school and their receptivity to and use of an innovative teaching and learning approach facilitated by Drama in Education. As the researcher has been involved in initial teacher education for thirteen years and, as a reflective practitioner is committed to exploring and reviewing her own practice, it was deemed practicable and feasible to attempt such a large scale study in the researcher's own institution, in order to arrive at some conclusive findings which might lend weight to the growing body of evidence in this developing field. The chapter will discuss aspects of educational research and general research methods before examining in detail the instruments for data collection to be used in this study. Reference will also be made to the aims of the project and the nature of the drama based training workshops with student language teachers.

7.2.1 Educational Research

Educational research is critical enquiry that aims to inform educational judgments and decisions in order to improve educational action.[1411] This has the broader agenda of changing education and schooling.[1412] The two basic methodological paradigms used for educational research are positivism, the quantitative scientific approach, and interpretivism, the qualitative approach. The

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[1410] S-M. Kao and C. O'Neill. *Words into Worlds. Learning a Second Language Through Process Drama.* (Stamford, Conneticut and London, England: 1998).
[1411] M. Bassey. *Case study research in educational settings.* (Buckingham: OUP, 1999), 39.
[1412] *Ibid.*

quantitative/qualitative debates are essential to consider when conducting research.[1413] The choice of research design must be appropriate to the subject being investigated and the nature of the research question[1414]. The paradigm of research used will shape the research to be undertaken and direct the researcher in terms of how they will proceed, how they will gather data and how that data will be interpreted. The following three sections explore the features of quantitative and qualitative research, and argue for a mixing of elements from the two paradigms.

7.2.2 Quantitative Research

Traditionally, research has been regarded as scientific. This mode is systematic and the results exact, for example, acid turns blue litmus paper red.[1415] Knowledge is accumulated by means of conscientious observation and verification, and theories are arrived at by means of testing and deduction. This method of research is referred to as positivist and is usually associated with the quantitative domain. It is based on the premise that all genuine knowledge is based on sense experience and can only be advanced by means of observation and experiment.[1416] Its most distinctive feature is its empirical character where only that which is observable can be considered valid knowledge.[1417] Quantitative research is generally implemented in the form of surveys and experiments, with findings represented as numbers, tables and statistics. As Bell[1418] puts it quantitative researchers 'collect facts and study the relationship of one set of facts to another'. Findings or results often test a theory or hypothesis. A set of procedures is followed which show how the findings have been arrived at and are sufficiently clear for fellow-scientists to repeat them and thereby to test the results.[1419] In quantitative research individuality is typically ignored. Quantitative researchers concern themselves with the issue of replication on the grounds that replication adds credibility. The more times a process is carried out with similar results, the more reliable the procedure is deemed to be.[1420] In this way generalisation and replication are inter-related.[1421] It is a very objective form of working which allows the researcher to prove or disprove phenomena and support their findings through statistics and data. Moral judgements are deemed unscientific. Thus, neutrality, or ridding of bias, is advocated in order to achieve objectivity. Quantitative researchers

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[1413] L. Cohen, L. Mannion, and K. Morrison, *Research Methods in Education*. 5th edition. (London: Routledge Falmer, 2000).
[1414] Patton, M.Q. Qualitative *Evaluation and Research Methods.* (London: Sage, 1990).
[1415] Ophardt, Ophardt, C.E. (2003) 'Acids and Bases'. In *Virtual ChemBook.* Elmhurst College. http://www.elmhurst.edu/~chm/vchembook/180acidsbases.html [accessed 12th August, 2007].
[1416] L. Cohen, L. Mannion, and K. Morrison, *Research Methods in Education*. 5th edition. (London: Routledge Falmer, 2000).
[1417] *Ibid.*
[1418] J. Bell. *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science.* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987), 4.
[1419] L. Cohen, L. Manion, & K. Morrison *Research Methods in Education.* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2001), 15.
[1420] A. O'Brien 'Restoring our Dramatic Past' in *Researching Drama and Arts Education: Paradigms & Possibilities.* Ed. P. Taylor (London: Falmer Press, 1996), 11.
[1421] A. Bryman, A. *Quantity and Quality in Social Research.* (London: Routledge, 1995).

maintain that we can predict outcomes and change how findings may result if we can establish scientifically what causes lead to issues arising.[1422] In order for predictive claims be made, researchers in this paradigm must isolate, categorise and specify causal links between phenomena.[1423]

Quantitative investigators look for 'distinguishing characteristics, elemental properties and empirical boundaries and tend to measure how much and how often'.[1424] Findings can be generalised to a large population and direct comparisons made so long as valid sampling and significance techniques have been used. The advantages of quantitative research are that variables can be identified and relationships measured. This facilitates comparison and replication. Reliability and validity may be determined more objectively than with the qualitative technique because of the use of mathematical models, statistical tables and graphs.[1425] Thus, quantitative research benefits the researcher as its commitment to using scientific methods to record and generate facts gives the data a sense of objectivity making it appear legitimate and valid.[1426] Questions arise however, concerning whether quantitative research in its bid to claim objectivity and validity de-humanises its subjects.[1427] Bryman[1428] holds that quantitative research designs are characterised by the assumption that human behaviour can be explained by what may be termed social facts which can be investigated by methodologies. Advocates of quantitative methods are accused of disregarding the experiential on the grounds that conceivable measurement does not yield an experience of life 'for life cannot be weighed and measured on a physical scale'.[1429] Quantitative research treats the social world like the natural world – as if it were a hard, external and objective reality.[1430] It could be argued that by exclusively defining research subjects in clinical, numerical and scientific ways, quantitative research strips subjects of the richness and diversity they embody as humans. The researcher must grapple with these issues in determining which research approach he/she will pursue.[1431]

7.2.3 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research differs from quantitative research as instead of viewing the world from a scientific perspective, it focuses on viewing the world from the perspective of the people being affected by the research. This form of study is concerned much more with people, attitudes and behaviour patterns. It works from the premise that since researchers inhabit the world that they are

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[1422] L. Cohen, L. and L. Manion. *Research Methods in Education.(*London: Routledge, 1994), 9-19.
[1423] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[1424] J. Horna. (1994) *The Study of Leisure. (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 121.
[1425] A. Bryman, A. Quantity and Quality in Social Research. (London: Routledge, 1995).
[1426] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[1427] L. Cohen, L. Manion, & K. Morrison *Research Methods in Education. (*London: Routledge Falmer, 2001).
[1428] N.K. Denzin, and Y.S. Lincoln *Collecting and Interpreting. (2003), 16.*
[1429] Nesfield-Cookson cited in L. Cohen, L. Manion, & K. Morrison, *Research Methods in Education. (*London: Routledge Falmer, 2001),17
[1430] L. Cohen, L. Mannion, and K. Morrison, *Research Methods in Education.* 5th edition. (London: Routledge Falmer, 2000), 7.
[1431] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

researching their influence may not be neutral.[1432] Researchers assuming a qualitative perspective seek insight as opposed to statistical analysis.[1433] Its advocates hold that science can have a mechanistic and reductionist view of nature which does not allow for notions of individuality, choice, freedom and moral responsibility.[1434] A key advantage of qualitative research is that it can generate significant insights with regard to human motives, feelings and experiences. It can yield rich and personal data.[1435] It may thus be particularly suited to research carried out in educational contexts since it can capture the quality of learning as opposed to measuring it purely empirically.[1436]

Qualitative research unlike quantitative research does not have a neat, linear, structure. Rather than setting out a pre-determined list of expected outcomes, qualitative research allows for work which is organic and evolves. In fact, Taylor[1437] argues that it seems narrow-minded to reject work on the grounds that the outcomes evolved rather than being pre-determined. This does not mean that the research lacks rigour.[1438] The researchers work with themes or orientations, rather than detailed sets of pre-conceived questions. They engage in a process of progress focusing, which involves filtering in and out the elements which they consider to be superfluous or significant. The expectation is that more specific focal points will then emerge out of the exploration of the general themes or issues.[1439] The qualitative researcher therefore, must engage in 'filtering' and 'funnelling' or sorting data into categories to make sense of their research[1440] (Dey, 1993). Taylor holds that qualitative research is no less objective than quantitative research.[1441] He argues that it should not matter that the data is not analysed in terms of charts and figures, as a fuller and more human-centred picture can be obtained through a detailed account. Trustworthiness in qualitative approaches is traditionally supported by ensuring that the researcher's observations are credible.[1442] Alasuutari[1443] holds that through qualitative research hypotheses can be generated for testing and corroboration in subsequent analyses with statistical methods in order to present the results with better generalisability.

[1432] Cohen, L. Manion, L, Morrison, K. *Research Methods in Education.* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2001), 315.
[1433] J. Bell. *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science.* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987).
[1434] Cohen, L. Manion, L, Morrison, K. *Research Methods in Education.* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2001), 17.
[1435] *Ibid.*
[1436] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[1437] P. Taylor. *Researching Drama and Arts Education: Paradigms and Possibilities (1996.)*
[1438] A. Bryman. *Quantity and Quality in Social Research.* (London: Routledge, 1995).
[1439] *Ibid.*
[1440] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[1441] P. Taylor (Ed) *Researching Drama and Arts Education: Paradigms and Possibilities.* (Institute of Drama Education Research: Falmer Press, 1996), 14.
[1442] *Ibid.*
[1443] P. Alasuutari. *Researching Culture: Qualitative Method and Cultural Studies.* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), 143.

The qualitative researcher attempts to understand behaviour, motivations and interactions, which need to be examined in context. While quantitative methodologies facilitate the production of generalisations, qualitative research endorses individuality. Accordingly, the main disadvantage with this approach is that the findings cannot be extended to wider populations with the same degree of certainty as quantitative analyses. This is because the findings are not typically tested to discover whether they are statistically significant or due to chance.

7.2.4 Mixed Methods Research

Traditionally researchers have positioned themselves exclusively to one side of the qualitative/quantitative divide.[1444] The tendency has been to suggest that if a particular method is used predominantly in quantitative research for example, then it must belong to that tradition and therefore has no place in qualitative practice.[1445] However, more recent literature on the topic of research traditions cautions the researcher about viewing qualitative and quantitative research as stereotypically distinct, separate paradigms with their own set of exclusive characteristics[1446] Wolcott[1447] argues that putting the two in opposition does a great disservice as it detracts from the contribution which can be made by each, including what each can contribute to the other.

Both approaches have strengths and weaknesses, but using a combination can help focus on their relevant strengths. Qualitative data can support and explicate the meaning of quantitative research.[1448] Bell[1449] argues that classifying an approach does not mean that once an approach has been selected, the researcher may not move from the methods normally associated with that style. Qualitative researchers draw on quantitative techniques, and vice versa.[1450] Loxley[1451] has a similar view on the stereotypical division of qualitative and quantitative research arguing that there is no simple answer, for example, to what constitutes qualitative research, and to what does not fit into that category.

Hornbrook[1452] arguing from a scientific, positivist point of view argues that for years the Drama in Education community have viewed with suspicion the theory of empiricism in their subject. Since the classroom is an organic structure, consisting of diverse elements and unpredictable outcomes, quantitative research may limit the scope of the answers one finds to complex academic matters.

[1444] M. Hammersley. *What's wrong with ethnography?* (London: Routledge, 1992)
[1445] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[1446] H.F. Wolcott. *Writing up Qualitative Research. (*Newbury Park, California: Sage, 2001).
[1447] *Ibid.:* 40.
[1448] T. E. Jayaratne. 'The value of quantitative methodology for feminist research' in *Social Research: philosophy, politics and practice.* Ed. M Hammersley (London: Sage. Prentice Hall, 1993), 17.
[1449] J. Bell, (1987) *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science.* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press,1987),4.
[1450] *Ibid.*
[1451] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[1452] D. Hornbrook, *Education & Dramatic Art*. 2nd Edition. (London: Routledge).

However, using a quantitative approach when researching drama in education may reduce drama to dead survey statistics that fail to acknowledge the human and artistic interactions that are an integral part of drama and give it its value in the first place. A purely quantitative approach could not fully depict the range of learning that occurs in Drama in Education.[1453] Qualitative approaches offer Drama in Education research an opportunity to provide a fuller picture of what it has to offer. It allows for outcomes which are not set out in a predetermined list but evolve through an organic process where the participants explore, question and investigate. However, it is recognised among arts researchers that policy makers often prefer quantitative rather than qualitative studies[1454] and presenting hard facts and data can have a strong impact. Numbers are all too often seen to be more credible than descriptions of people and their work.[1455]

The view of qualitative and quantitative research approaches as paradigms which are separate entities that cannot be mixed together has effectively been challenged by researchers such as Loxley who posits that a mixed-methods approach can lead to superior findings.[1456] Cohen and Mannion argue for the importance of researchers recognising that qualitative and quantitative methods of research can compliment each other as numbers and meanings can be combined to enrich research.[1457] Quantitative methods provide superficial but reliable facts, whereas qualitative methods provide more in-depth but poorly representative results. Therefore, a combination draws effectively on their respective strengths. It was thus proposed that elements of both traditions, a mixed-methods approach, be used in this research study to reflect and represent qualitative and quantitative experience and opinions of language teachers, student language teachers and language learners in the Irish Educational system, and also to explore the use of DiE in the teaching and learning of MLF in Irish second level schools.The following table (Table 7.1) provides a summary of the methods used and serves to illustrate the mixed methods approach adopted. As the study is concerned with charting the experiences of a large number of language teachers, student language teachers and language learners a qualitative approach was deemed most effective in eliciting this data. This approach was further supported through employing a series of qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews and participant observation in order to further probe and explore respondents' initial data, and work towards creating thick descriptions of both teachers' and learners' experiences of different teaching and learning methods in the language classroom. These will be explored in greater detail in the subsequent sections.

[1453] P. Taylor, Ed. *Researching Drama and Arts Education: Paradigms and Possibilities.* (Institute of Drama Education Research: Falmer Press, 1996), 11.
[1454] *Ibid.*
[1455] *Ibid.*
[1456] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[1457] Cohen, L., Manion, L., Morrison, K. *Research Methods in Education.* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2001).

Research Instrument	Cohort	Dates	Number issued	Aim
Questionnaire (Second Level Experiences)	Student Language Teachers	2001 to 2007	240	To form an overview of approaches to the teaching and learning of languages during the student teachers' second-level school days.
Questionnaire (Expectations)	Student Language Teachers	2001 to 2007	240	To ascertain student teachers' expectations of a language methodology course and their expressed priority interests/needs.
Non-Participant Observation in Schools	Student Language Teachers	2001 to 2007	30	To observe student teachers teach in second level classrooms and their learners learn.
Research Statements (Pre-Training)	Student Language Teachers	2001 to 2007	240	To form an overview of student teachers' expectations of DiE workshops before workshops begin.
Participant Observation (During Training)	Student Language Teachers	2001 to 2007	240	To record researcher observations and note participant reactions, opinions and attitudes expressed.
Questionnaire (Post Training)	Student Language Teachers	2001 to 2007	240	To elicit student teachers' responses to the workshops, and to ascertain opinions on suitability of DiE for language teaching and learning.
Interviews (Post Training)	Student Language Teachers	2001 to 2007	30	To ascertain the extent to which student teachers are using DiE with their classes, with whom and for what purposes.
Questionnaire (DiE in Schools)	Language Learners	2001 to 2007	175	To establish 2nd level language learners' responses to the use of DiE.
Questionnaire (Language)	Practising Language Teachers	2005 and 2007	120	To elicit teachers' perceived levels of support and knowledge of guidelines to implement DES recommendations, and their opinions on level of support offered by LC and JC programmes to use target language independently.
Questionnaire (Drama)	Practising Language Teachers	2006	150	To form an overview of teachers' familiarity with DiE, frequency of use of DiE with year groups, which techniques are deemed most useful, circumstances to discourage use, prior training in DiE.
Interviews	Practising Teachers	2007	10	To establish the extent to which they were using DiE in their language classes.

Table 7.1 A summary of research methods used

7.3.1 Aims of the project

This project aims to explore the use of DiE in the teaching and learning of MFL in Irish second level schools. In particular the project explores the use of DiE to support and implement a communicative approach to the teaching and learning of modern foreign languages in Irish second level schools.

This project will examine:

- practising teachers' perceptions of the support and training they receive in the use of active learning methodologies for the teaching and learning of MFL;
- student teachers' recollections of learning modern foreign languages to investigate how they remembered and perceived them to be taught and learned in Irish Second Level schools;
- what student teachers considered important to know for the teaching and learning of MFL at the beginning of their teaching practice programme;
- the extent to which DiE is used by practising language teachers;
- student teachers' pre-conceived ideas about DiE;
- student teachers' opinions on the use of DiE for the teaching and learning of mfl;
- why student teachers used or did not use DiE in their classrooms;
- second level language learners' opinions on the use of DiE in the language class;
- language teachers' attitudes to the use DiE some years after their initial training and the extent, if any, to which they use it.

7.3.2 Research sample profile

My research group included

- 300 student language teachers studying for a Post Graduate Diploma in Education (cohorts from 2001 to 2007);
- 148 practising language teachers from all over Ireland (surveyed between 2005 and 2007);
- 174 second level language learners (surveyed between 2001 and 2007).

Student language teachers all hold a primary degree at least in their chosen language or languages. They complete their graduate teaching diploma in one academic year and are then qualified to teach languages in Irish second level schools. They each have a professional placement in a second level school in the greater Dublin area where they teach under the guidance and supervision of a professional placement supervisor from the university and of a co-operating member of staff in the school. The majority of the student language teachers participating in the study were female in their early to mid-twenties with a minority in their late twenties. They had varying levels of experience as teachers before entering the course, some had none and others had a year or more. They had no previous experience of Drama in Education although a very small minority have been involved in amateur drama and theatre. They all completed their second level education in Ireland.

Practising teachers from all over Ireland also took part in the study. They taught in a variety of second level contexts, in a variety of settings and had varying levels of experience. They were a mixture of males and females.

The participating student teachers distributed questionnaires to their learners about their perceptions of the use of DiE in the language class. They included a cross section of male and female language learners from junior and senior cycles. However, because student teachers are generally assigned the junior classes the majority of respondents were from the junior cycle and from Transition year classes. The learners were all from second level schools in the greater Dublin area and represented a cross-section of second level schools.

7.3.3 Project outline

The project aims to explore the use of DiE to support and implement a communicative approach to the teaching and learning of modern foreign languages in Irish second level schools. It was deemed necessary to investigate the extent and level of awareness of and attitudes towards active learning approaches among practising and student language teachers in Irish second level schools. A number of appropriate data collection tools were used to access this information over a number of years in order to arrive at a valid consensus of opinion on these issues. Each year student teachers attending the methodology course in a Dublin university were invited to participate in the project and to contribute the following information:

- their experiences of being a language learner in second level school;
- their expectations of the language methodology course;
- to participate in and evaluate training workshops in the use of DiE as an active learning approach in a communicative language class;
- to use some or all these of the DiE approaches in their classroom teaching;
- to elicit from their pupils their responses to the use of a DiE approach in the language class;
- to facilitate the researcher's observations of their practice in classrooms;
- to complete an end of year evaluation of the DiE training programme;
- to participate in semi-structured interviews at the end of the year recounting their experiences of the use of DiE as an aid to achieving communicative competence;
- to participate in follow-up telephone interviews at least two years after the initial training in DiE had been completed in order to assess the extent of the use of DiE in their language classrooms

Surveys of practicing language teachers were conducted in 2005, 2006, and 2007 to act as a baseline measure of teachers' attitudes towards the levels of support and guidelines offered in relation to the development of their learners' communicative competence through active learning methods.

A key feature of the project was the training provided to the student language teachers during their graduate education programme. This consisted of introducing the student teachers to the following techniques (see appendix 1):

- line of life
- role on the wall
- teacher in role
- hot seating
- conscience alley
- drama games
- drama warm ups
- modeling/sculpting
- tableau/freeze-frame
- thought tracking
- forum theatre
- mantle of the expert
- role plays
- improvisations
- mime to learn vocabulary
- reading and writing in role

All techniques were explored practically and student teachers were provided with supporting lesson plan materials and ideas. In total eight hours of training was provided with follow-up support and advice available from the researcher through out the academic year.

7.4.1 Research instruments

The purpose of research is to extend knowledge but there can be no research without a question. The question provides focus for the researcher and the approach employed is determined by the question.[1458] It is not known exactly what is out there because we have imperfect knowledge. The research design needs to be mapped out, from deciding on the initial questions, to the manner in which the research study will be executed and its conclusions communicated. Qualitative researchers have a plan but recognise that it might change. The research plan is a general outline of the study; more detailed why-questions emerge through analysis of the material. The researcher must be open to engaging with questions which may arise from the theory and practice involved in the research process. Frequently, the preliminary why-questions turn out to be insignificant or impossible to answer. Data may point in several different directions, or questions that arise may change the path of the research with regard to what comes to light. Thorough assessment often provides new insights, or suggests new questions or even different paths to follow.[1459]

[1458] Cohen, L. Manion, L, Morrison, K. *Research Methods in Education.* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2001).
[1459] P. Alasuutari, *Researching Culture: Qualitative Method and Cultural Studies.* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), 134.

The design of this project will be emergent. In a fixed design, the researcher approaches the research at the outset with a fixed set of criteria by which they will assess their data. Emergent design allows for ideas that emerge to be addressed. It allows for flexibility. There is not a fixed design but meanings which emerge during the research process are recorded by the researcher and subsequently included in the design. Emergent design may appear risky in contrast to the tight structure offered by fixed design but fresh insights can be revealed in emergent design which makes it a worthwhile venture.[1460] The following data collection tools were employed in this mixed methods, emergent design study.

7.4.2 Literature review

In preparation for the research study a review of the national and international literature in the relevant areas of the research was undertaken. A literature review is a report of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers, a critique of the status of knowledge of a carefully defined topic.[1461] The literary review explains the context and background of the study and enables the researcher to know what research has already been conducted in their field.[1462] It takes a critical look at the existing research that is significant to the work being carried out by the researcher, enabling him/her to gain further insights into the topic and to give an overall view of the theoretical base of the study.[1463] The literature review can clarify the research question by identifying gaps or highlighting old issues in a new light and suggesting areas of further research.[1464] This will, in turn, help refine the research design.

The researcher carried out a literature review in the areas of language acquisition, language learning theories, language teaching methodologies and approaches, learner autonomy, culture and language learning, social interactionism, constructivism, critical pedagogy, language teaching policies and Drama in Education. In each area relevant researches were summarised, the contents evaluated and the relationships between different works defined with a view to enabling the researcher identify themes and draw the findings together to gain further insight into her particular study. A variety of resources including primary and secondary materials were examined including subject syllabi, professional journals, Department of Education (DES) reports, conference proceedings, published dissertations and electronic resources. Reviews of the significant literature are presented in relevant chapters and sections, with cross-referencing as and when appropriate.

[1460] Cohen, L. Manion, L, Morrison, K. *Research Methods in Education.* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2001).
[1461] J.H. McMillan, and S. Schumacher, *Research in Education.* 4th edition (New York: Longman, 1997), 119.
[1462] J. Bell, *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science.* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987), 36.
[1463] Cohen, L. Manion, L, Morrison, K. *Research Methods in Education.* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2001).
[1464] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

7.4.3 Questionnaires

Questionnaires allow respondents time to consider their opinions in their own informal environment, devoid of pressure, and can therefore potentially yield considered and more thorough answers. Loxley[1465] suggests that the questionnaire is like an extension of the researcher, acting as a proxy. It is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher. The systematic gathering of data through questionnaires is probably the most commonly used method of inquiry.[1466] It is easy to administer, and with careful construction the questions can elicit attitudes as well as factual information.[1467] In style, the questionnaire is a quantitative method of data collection, structured to collect standardised data. The data yielded is comparatively straightforward to analyse either through the simple counting of boxes or through the content analysis of written responses.[1468]

Similar to other data collection methods, the quality of the data received and its subsequent interpretation depends on how well the questionnaire is constructed. When using questionnaires researchers must firstly ask themselves why they are using questionnaires and what they want to find out. Questions must be designed to elicit the information necessary to answer the research question.[1469] Because they involve impersonal interaction, questions must be phrased so that their intent is clear without additional interpretation or explanation. Care must be taken to avoid ambiguity, imprecision and assumption. Words that mean one thing to the researcher may mean something different to others, so it is important to consider what questions might mean to different persons.[1470] Respondents must be able to understand the questions in the way that the researcher intends and answer in the form called for by the question.[1471] Bell [1472] and Robson[1473] advise that care be taken over questions which ask for information that the respondents may not know or may not have readily to hand. If respondents have to search for information, they may decide to abandon the entire questionnaire.

Types of question include open (where the expected response is a word, a phrase or an extended comment); a list (where a list of items is offered, any of which may be selected); a category (the response is one only of a given set of categories. For example, if age categories are provided, the

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[1465] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods. (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[1466] *Ibid.*
[1467] A. N. Oppenheim. *Questionnaire Design, Interviewing and Attitude Measurement*. London: Pinter, 1992.
[1468] *Ibid.*
[1469] C. Robson. *Real World Research*. (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2003).
[1470] J. Bell *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987).
[1471] C. Robson. *Real World Research*. (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2003).
[1472] J. Bell *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987).
[1473] C. Robson. *Real World Research*. (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2003).

respondent can only fit into one category); ranking (the respondent is required to place something in rank order. Number '1' usually indicates the highest priority); quantity (the response is a number giving the amount of some characteristic).[1474] (Questionnaires can be made up of open-ended or closed questions or a mixture of both. The open ended questions will allow respondents to express their views and attitudes while fixed-alternative questions will curtail respondents to answer from the preset choices given. Robson[1475] recommends that both open-ended and closed questions should be included as the use of open-ended questions adds a qualitative flavour to this part of the research. It is often considered that the 'gems' of information will be found in the open-ended responses.[1476] Respondents must be willing to answer the questions asked[1477], and thus the layout and presentation of a questionnaire is important to secure a good response.[1478] The questionnaire must be attractive to look at, brief, easy to understand and reasonably quick to complete. Instructions should be clear and easy to understand and may be written in capitals or italics to make them more prominent.[1479] All questionnaires should be drafted using clear understandable language but this is especially important for questionnaires to be administered to children, in addition to the use of a simple format.[1480] The questionnaire must be designed at their level of understanding with appropriate language and sentence structure so as to facilitate their reading and comprehension skills.[1481] It must look accessible, attractive and interesting with clarity of wording and simplicity of design being essential.[1482]

The manner in which the question is phrased can predetermine the answer, thus leading questions and presuming questions should always be avoided.[1483] Too many open-ended questions can lead to deciphering long descriptions, whereas an over emphasis on closed questions, although providing answers, may omit the reasoning behind these. To acquire an in-depth result and accumulate a variety of possible new questions, a balance is prudent.[1484] The questions can be fine tuned after piloting. To be able to explore the efficacy of the questionnaires from a number of different dimensions, and to eliminate bias and ensure reliability, all questionnaires should be piloted. Any suggested amendments should be incorporated into the final instrument.

[1474] J. Bell *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science.* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987).
[1475] C. Robson. *Real World Research.* (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 245-246.
[1476] Cohen, L. Manion, L, Morrison, K. *Research Methods in Education.* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2001).
[1477] C. Robson. *Real World Research.* (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2003).
[1478] Cohen, L. Manion, L, Morrison, K. *Research Methods in Education.* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2001).
[1479] J. Bell *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science.* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987) 62-63.
[1480] C. Robson. *Real World Research.* (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2003).
[1481] *Ibid.*
[1482] Cohen, L. Manion, L, Morrison, K. *Research Methods in Education.* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2001).
[1483] J. Bell *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science.* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987).
[1484] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Questionnaires enable relatively inexpensive mass coverage of potential respondents and complete standardisation of the instructions to which the participants are exposed. Unless the respondents are met face to face, an accompanying letter will be necessary to explain the purpose of the questionnaire. The wording will also need attention, as a letter that is 'too brusque or too ingratiating' may have an adverse effect on responses.[1485] There is always the danger that only a small proportion of respondents will return the questionnaire. Bell advises giving a precise day and date for the return of the questionnaires as otherwise it becomes too easy for respondents to put them to one side and forget about them.[1486]

For the purposes of this study, two baseline questionnaires were distributed to a random selection of language teachers in 50 second level schools through out the country. The purpose of the first questionnaire was to examine teachers' perceptions of support and training for the use of active learning methodologies in their classrooms (see form C in appendix 2). For validity purposes this questionnaire was administered in 2005 and again in 2007 to different schools. The second baseline questionnaire was used to explore whether Drama in Education is used by MFL teachers (see form D in appendix 2). This questionnaire was administered in 2006. A covering letter was included with each questionnaire explaining the nature of the study and conveying gratitude in anticipation of their co-operation (see appendix 2). Teachers were asked to have the questionnaire ready by a specific date. A teacher in each school was asked to distribute and gather the completed questionnaires before posting them to the researcher.

Another questionnaire was compiled to ascertain student teacher attitudes and opinions on what they considered important to know as a language teacher (see form B appendix 3). This questionnaire was distributed to each cohort of student teachers at the beginning of each academic year (2001-2007). The researcher distributed and collected the questionnaires personally. Having baseline information on student teacher attitudes and opinions on language teaching at the earliest possible stage additionally served as a needs-analysis exercise, enabling the researcher to decide on the design of the language methodology course but also giving insights into what student teachers perceived to be important to them as language teachers at the beginning of their teaching career. A second questionnaire was distributed to student teachers at the beginning of the academic year to examine their recollections of learning modern languages (see Form A in appendix 3). This questionnaire served to allow the researcher to form an overview of how student teachers remember and perceive MFL as being taught and learned in Irish second level schools. This questionnaire was distributed to each cohort of student teachers (2001-2007).

[1485] J. Bell. *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science.* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987), 66.
[1486] *Ibid.*

Before participating in the DiE workshop process student teachers were asked to complete a short written exercise outlining their personal reactions to participating in a drama workshop (see pre-workshop questionnaire in appendix 3). One provided statement started with 'I am looking forward to…'. The other started with 'I am apprehensive about…'. Participants could choose to complete one or both statements. A random selection of responses were shared with the group, and served both to relax those who were apprehensive – recognising that other people felt the same way was a source of consolation. The statements that expressed what participants were looking forward to helped to keep the atmosphere positive. On a research level the completion of these statements sought to reveal participants' pre-conceived notions about what DiE entails.

After the workshop process participants were asked to complete a questionnaire to give their reactions to DiE as a tool for teaching second languages (see post-workshop questionnaire in appendix 3). These questionnaires were triangulated through researcher notes made as a participant observer during the workshops and also through interviews with a sample of self-selecting student teachers who had participated in the workshops.

A final set of questionnaires was issued to second level language learners who had participated in DiE activities with their class teacher (see form F in appendix 4). The class teachers were student teachers on professional placement who were attending the researchers' language methodology workshops in the university. The questionnaires were distributed and collected by the class teacher. The aim was to explore learners' opinions on the use of DiE in the language class.

7.4.4 Interviews

The interview, involving questioning or discussing issues with people, is a flexible and adaptable way of finding information.[1487] Face to face interviews offer the possibility of modifying one's line of enquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives in a way that questionnaires cannot.[1488] They can be a very useful technique for collecting data, which would likely not be accessible using techniques such as observation or questionnaires[1489] Questionnaire responses must be taken at face value, but interview responses can be developed and clarified. A skilful interviewer can follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings, which the questionnaire can never do.[1490] They can be combined successfully with questionnaires to 'put the flesh on the bones of questionnaire responses'.[1491]

[1487] C. Robson. *Real World Research.* (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 229-30.
[1488] *Ibid.*
[1489] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods. (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[1490] J. Bell. *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science.* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987).
[1491] *Ibid.:* 73.

The purpose of interviewing is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective.[1492] The interview can be a key research method in subtly revealing the interviewee's particular perspective or 'angle of repose' on a particular situation.[1493] To find out about an individual's personal and subjective experiences, perceptions and emotions, interviewing may well be the best approach.[1494] Questionnaires tend to explore patterns of responses rather than individual responses and thus interviews allow for greater depth.[1495] The dialogical nature of the method will allow the researcher to seek clarification, ask probing questions, or compare experiences and thoughts, to help gain new insights and develop more sophisticated interpretations.[1496] During interviews notes can be made on non-verbal behaviour and on questions where there is frequent pausing or changing of mind. These would not become evident in questionnaires[1497]

Robson[1498] acknowledges, however, that interviewing is time-consuming for both interviewer and interviewee and there can be a lengthy process of writing up interview transcripts afterwards. The spoken and written word has always a degree of ambiguity, no matter how carefully we report or code the answers.[1499] The quality and quantity of the data may be influenced by the researcher's interviewing skills.[1500] Data analysis may be more difficult than with other methods.[1501] Although complete objectivity is the aim, interviews are prone to subjectivity and bias.[1502] Some of the factors that contribute to biasing data from an interview include the eagerness of the interviewee to please the interviewer, a tendency of the interviewer to seek answers that support his/her pre-conceived notions, or a vague antagonism that sometimes arises in an interview situation.[1503] This bias has to be recognised and controlled by the interviewer in order not to 'lead' the interview.[1504] Despite being the one who asks the questions it can be argued that the interviewer plays a part in contributing to the data that is gathered in the interview.[1505] However, Loxley[1506] suggests that data that is gathered in the

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[1492] M.Q. Patton. Qualitative *Evaluation and Research Methods.* (London: Sage.1990), 278
[1493] Philip Taylor, Ed. (1996) *Researching Drama and Arts Education: Paradigms and Possibilities.* (Institute of Drama Education Research: Falmer Press 1996), 45.
[1494] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods. (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[1495] *Ibid.*
[1496] *Ibid.*
[1497] *Ibid.*
[1498] C. Robson. *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers.* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 229.
[1499] A. Oakley. 'Interviewing Women: A Contradiction in Terms' in *Doing Feminist Research. Ed.* H. Roberts, (London: Routledge, 1981).
[1500] *Ibid.*
[1501] C. Robson. *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 230-231.
[1502] Cohen, L. Manion, L, Morrison, K. *Research Methods in Education.* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2001), 282.
[1503] J. Bell. *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science.* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987), 73
[1504] J. Bell, *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science.* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987), 70.
[1505] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods. (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

interview is arrived at through meanings, which are jointly constructed, by the interviewer and the interviewee. In addition, physical signs such as body language can often influence the information provided in the face-to-face interview.[1507] The interview is a rather complex data collection tool that must not be assumed to be value free.

Regardless of paradigm or perspective, interviews are no different to any other research method in that they do not, and cannot, provide a definite reality.[1508] In addition Loxley[1509] cautions that the data yielded by interviews is about what interviewees say they do, did, think, believe, and so on and it is not necessarily what they actually and really do, did, think or believe. Thus, interview data consists of 'interpretations or re-interpretations, or even presentations or constructions'.[1510] This, of course is not an issue if 'it is the personal, subjective and idiosyncratic that is the focus.'[1511] The researcher will need to establish the trust of the interviewees which is an essential prerequisite to the collection of 'truthful' accounts.[1512]

Robson[1513] categorises interviews according to the degree of structure given on a scale of formality ranging from the structured interview to semi-structured to the unstructured. In the planning stages of the interview, the researcher will choose a particular structure for the interview deciding on a structured, semi-structured or unstructured approach. The choice usually indicates the degree of control the interviewer wishes to have over the process. The structured interview will have a fixed plan where the content and order of the questions is pre-determined, all interviewees are asked the same series of questions and there is a limited set of response categories. Nothing is left to chance with structured interviews and they are usually the choice when specific information in a particular form is required.[1514] This method is convenient for analysing data. A semi-structured interview allows for more flexibility depending on how the interviewer perceives the interview is progressing. Similar questions are asked of each participant but there may be a variety in the order, and predetermined questions may be altered or omitted as the occasion demands. A semi-structured format is sometimes chosen to allow for scope for diversion, for the interviewee to express his/her views but Loxley[1515] cautions that the interviewer must bear in mind that the interviewee may not feel it appropriate to

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[1506] Schwandt, 1997, cited in A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods. (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[1507] A. Oakley. 'Interviewing Women: A Contradiction in Terms' in *Doing Feminist Research.* Ed. H. Roberts (London: Routledge, 1981).
[1508] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[1509] *Ibid.:* 6.
[1510] *Ibid.*
[1511] *Ibid.:* 18.
[1512] *Ibid.:* 12.
[1513] C. Robson. *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers*. Oxford: Backwell, 1993), 230-231.
[1514] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[1515] *Ibid.*

deviate. The unstructured interview, as its name suggests, has objectives but does not have a plan of questions. Information is elicited in a more informal way. Unstructured interviewing can provide a greater breadth of data than with other methods, given its qualitative nature. The problem with this method is that the interviewees can be in control, increasing the burden of work for the researcher when analysing the data.[1516] The structure chosen will depend on many variables including the objectives of the interview, the interviewee, the type of information required and time constraints.[1517] Semi-structured and unstructured interviews are most widely used in flexible, qualitative designs.[1518]

The onus is on the researcher to ensure that interviewing and being interviewed for a research project is a positive experience.[1519] In this study[1520] Bell's protocols of interviewing were adhered to, in order to promote a positive experience and 'so as not to queer the pitch for other researchers'[1521] by disillusioning respondents with the whole notion of research participation. Bassey's[1522] advice to researchers was similarly adhered to and the data was collected from people in ways that respected their initial ownership of that data as well as their dignity and privacy. Thus, the purpose of the research and the use of the data was explained in advance. Participants' permission to audio record the interview was sought, and a time limit for the interview was agreed upon and maintained. In planning to use interviews, I was cognisant of the fact that power issues are at play. I am or have been the interviewees' lecturer and am a more experienced teacher. To limit the effect of power differences I used the reciprocity strategy, supplying information about myself to the interviewees.[1523] Time was spent at the outset putting the interviewees at ease, and I indicated that there are no right or wrong answers. To support interviewees and to ensure that language did not become a barrier, parallel ways of asking the same question were adopted.[1524] I was empathetic to the interviewees and confidentiality was respected.[1525]

As demonstrated in table 7.1, this was designed as a longitudinal study which included monitoring student language teachers' experiences of and attitudes to traditional and innovative teaching and learning methods in language classes and thus assessed data from each cohort of student language teachers attending an Irish university from 2001-2007. Interviews were conducted with student teachers to examine why they used and did not use DiE in their classrooms. These interviews took

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[156] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[157] E. Kane. *Doing your own Research* (Dublin: Marion Boyans Publications, 1993).
[158] C. Robson. *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 230-231.
[159] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[150] J. Bell, *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science.* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987), 101.
[151] *Ibid.*
[152] M. Bassey, M (1999) *Case study research in educational settings.* (Buckingham:OUP, 1999), 74.
[153] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[154] *Ibid.*
[155] *Ibid.*

place after the drama training process had concluded at the end of each academic year. They were devised using a semi-structured design and included open and closed questioning. The progress of the interview was carefully monitored and adjustments or adaptations to the questions were made according to the nature of the responses of the participant.[1526] After the researcher explained the purpose of the interviews to the whole group, randomly self-selecting volunteers from the student group were scheduled for interview.

Follow-up interviews (see appendix 6) took place with a cross section of former student teachers at least two years after their participation in the drama based work-shopping process. The purpose was to investigate their attitudes to DiE in the second language classroom and to assess the extent to which they were still applying this methodology.

The interview format was semi-structured. Cognisance was taken of bias, subjectivity and power issues, and interviews were audio-recorded for accuracy and back-up referral during analysis. The researcher conducted the transcriptions and analysis of the data shortly after the interviews. Analysis of data was ongoing; involving the stages of transcription, coding, categorising, reinterpreting and making sense of notes while including a justification for interpretations.[1527]

7.4.5 Observational methods

Observation as the name suggests is the gathering of visual data in situ.[1528] Observed incidents are less predictable, there is a sense of anticipation and wonder and a freshness to this form of data collection that is often denied in other forms.[1529] There are two forms of observation: participant observation and non-participant observation. In participant observation the researcher, as a member of the group, observes the behaviour, actions and reactions of the group.[1530] In non-participant observation the researcher is not a member of the group and it could be likened to 'professional eavesdropping'.[1531]

The main advantage of observation is its directness. It studies behaviour and events as they unfold enabling the researcher to make appropriate notes about the relevant features.[1532] It provides the opportunity to document activities, behaviour and physical aspects without having to depend upon

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[1526] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[1527] J.W. Creswell. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches.* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), 196.
[1528] L. Cohen, L. Manion, K. Morrison. *Research Methods in Education.* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2001), 305.
[1529] *Ibid.:* 305.
[1530] C. Robson. *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers.* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 230-231.
[1531] *Ibid.*
[1532] L. Cohen, L. Manion, K. Morrison. *Research Methods in Education.* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2001), 188.

people's willingness and ability to respond to questions. This directness compliments other methods that do not always give a true picture of people's behaviour and activities. However, the researcher has to question the extent to which an observer affects the situation under observation. Robson[1533] advises that this can be overcome through covert observation, by making sure the observed are unaware of being observed, yet warns of the related ethical problems. It is essential that neither the observation nor the resulting report harms the people observed. Ethical problems are likewise encountered when it comes to using the acquired data. All perceptual processes involving the taking in of information by observation are subject to bias. To address this the researcher adhered to Woolcot's[1534] advice to report on what she actually saw and heard and only on what she inferred when care was taken to qualify these observations. A heightened sensitivity to the problem of subjectivity and the need for justification of one's claims can lead to objectivity.[1535]

Recording is essential if observation is to be credible. Gathering information through observation may be done formally or informally. Informal gathering allows freedom in what information is gathered and how it is recorded. This includes note taking and diary keeping. Researchers select and create categories based on what is occurring at the time of observation. The researcher is open to emergent ideas as an unstructured observation will be hypothesis-generating rather than hypothesis-testing.[1536] The use of structured observation knows what it is looking for and observation categories are worked out in advance. Hypotheses are decided and observational data is used to confirm or refute these hypotheses.[1537] Although the formal approach may be more reliable it does not provide the completeness that an informal approach allows.[1538] To counteract this Robson[1539] encourages researchers to use a more 'pick and mix' approach and use elements of both types of observation. During this research study this is the approach this researcher took. During the participant and non-participant observations certain observation categories were decided in advance but the researcher was also open to emergent ideas. Observations thus incorporated a continuum of hypothesis testing and hypothesis generation.

As noted, this research study used both forms of observation (see appendix 5). Kane[1540] holds that participant observation is a technique to use when one wishes to learn from people's actions what they do, as opposed to what they say they do. As a participant observer the researcher, as part of the group,

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[1533] C. Robson. *Real World Research.* 2nd Edition. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 191.
[1534] H.F. Wolcott. *Writing up Qualitative Research. (*Newbury Park, California: Sage, 2001), 32.
[1535] C. Robson. *Real World Research.* 2nd Edition. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 191.
[1536] L. Cohen, L. Manion, & K. Morrison, (2001) *Research Methods in Education.* London: Routledge Falmer, 2001), 305.
[1537] *Ibid.*
[1538] *Ibid.*
[1539] C. Robson. *Real World Research.* 2nd Edition. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 191.
[1540] E. Kane. *Doing your own Research* (Dublin:Marion Boyans Publications, 1993), 53.

was able to get an 'insiders' perspective on how well student teachers were engaged in the drama. The researcher facilitated the drama workshops and observations made were recorded where possible during the sessions and mostly after the workshops. Being aware that one runs the risk of bias and subjectivity when making sense of the data observed,[1541] the researcher ensured that observations made were triangulated through post-workshop interviews with random self-selecting volunteers.

As non-participant observer the researcher sat at the back of the classroom away from the learners unobtrusively recording her observations of classroom teaching and learning. The learners are familiar with the researcher's presence in the classroom which meant that as non-participant observer she could be unobtrusive. The researcher recorded observations on the impact of the use of DiE and both the learners' and the student teachers' reactions to the use of DiE. Observations made were triangulated through post-observation discussions with the student teachers to check my interpretations against those of participants[1542]

7.4.6 Research diary

Kane advises the researcher to record and organise information properly as salient information may otherwise go unrecorded.[1543] Robson[1544] recommends that the researcher, from the first day of planning, keeps a full and complete record of all the various activities in connection with the project in the form of a research journal. This good practice will save time when writing up the project.

This researcher kept a research journal to document opinions and personal reflections on research proceedings. In this way it served as a means of externalising thought.[1545] The journal was used to record objectives, hypotheses, observations, notable dialogue and critical incidents. It was used to look for themes and recurring issues, which emerged throughout the research process. The researcher included introspective entries to help facilitate and express her reflections on the research process, findings and interpretations. The journal helped to organise the research but also to offer a means of triangulation and a way to counteract any bias.

7.5 Triangulation

The researcher will wish to verify and strengthen the validity of the research results to ensure that reliable inferences are drawn, and this may be achieved through triangulation. Creswell cites

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[1541] C. Robson. *Real World Research.* 2nd Edition. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 314.
[1542] J.W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches.* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), 196.
[1543] E. Kane. *Doing your own Research* (Dublin: Marion Boyans Publications, 1993), 121.
[1544] C. Robson. *Real World Research.* 2nd Edition. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 314.
[1545] *Ibid.*

triangulation as the principal strategy for ensuring strength of evidence.[1546] Triangulation involves the use of two or more methods of data collection and examining data through different strategies in an attempt to corroborate findings.[1547] Each method yields information that only it can obtain, but it also reinforces the other methods.[1548] In addition, triangulation helps to limit the bias of one method by the use of others[1549] A variety of proofs increases the evidence, strengthens the argument, counteracts bias and guards against flaws. Triangulation is particularly useful in research of human behaviour and qualitative research as a means of demonstrating concurrent validity[1550]

Applying a diversity of methods provides a richer and more complete comprehension of the subject matter. Triangulation is expected to support a finding by showing that independent measures agree with it, or at least don't contradict it.[1551] Patton[1552] warns that there is no magic in triangulation. He cautions the researcher against expecting the findings generated by different methods to automatically come together to produce some a nicely integrated whole. Nonetheless, triangulation is a vital tool for the researcher. Firstly, it reduces the certainty of finding the 'right answer' which might be the case if only one method were used. Secondly, triangulation can enhance interpretability, for example, if statistical analysis is supported by a qualitative narrative account.[1553]

In this research, as demonstrated in table 7.2, a variety of sources of data collection were employed in order to give greater credibility to the study by verifying and strengthening the validity of the research results. Data was triangulated through use of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Statistical analysis was supported by qualitative accounts. Questionnaires were administered to student teachers, learners and practising teachers. Student teachers and practising teachers were interviewed. Observations and thick descriptions were noted in a reflective journal. There were several different participatory groups: the researcher's findings (field notes and observations); the student teachers' responses (questionnaires, interviews and observations); former students' responses (interviews); practising teachers' responses (questionnaires); language learners' responses (questionnaires). The responses of the different participatory groups helped to eliminate bias. The variety of viewpoints created a more complete and objective picture of the use of DiE in the language classroom.

[1546] J.W. Creswell. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches.* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), 196.
[1547] L. Cohen, L. Mannion, K. and Morrison. *Research Methods in Education*. 5th edition. (London: Routledge Falmer, 2000), 112.
[1548] E. Kane. *Doing your own Research* (Dublin:Marion Boyans Publications, 1993), 121.
[1549] L. Cohen, L. Mannion, K. and Morrison. *Research Methods in Education*. 5th edition. (London: Routledge Falmer, 2000).
[1550] *Ibid.*
[1551] M.B. Miles and A.M. Huberman, 'Drawing Valid Meaning from Qualitative Data: Towards a shared craft' in *Education Researcher*, 13 (May, 1984), 20-30.
[1552] Patton, M.Q. (1990) Qualitative *Evaluation and Research Methods.* (London: Sage, 1990), 331
[1553] C. Robson. (1993) *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers.* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).

Hopkins (1993:145[1554]) offers a brief summary of the various techniques used in educational research in the table below.

Technique	Advantage(s)	Disadvantage(s)
Field notes	simple; ongoing; personal;	subjective; needs practice
Audiotape recording	versatile; accurate; provide ample data	transcription difficult; time consuming; often inhibiting
Pupil diaries	provides pupils' perspective	subjective
Interviews and discussions	can be teacher-pupil, observer-pupil, pupil-pupil	time-consuming
Videotape recorder	visual and comprehensive	awkward ; expensive; can be distracting
Questionnaires	highly specific; easy to administer; comparative	time-consuming to analyze; problem of 'right'answers
Sociometry	easy to administer; provides guide to action	can threaten isolated pupils
Documentary evidence	illuminative	difficult to obtain; time consuming
Slide/tape,video stills Photography	illuminative; promotes discussion	difficult to obtain;expensive
Case Study	accurate; representative; Uses range of techniques	time-consuming

Table 7.2 Taxonomy of classroom research techniques

7.6 Validity

The validity of a research project refers to the reliability and credibility of the findings upon which a research claim is made. Bell[1555] states that 'reliability is the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions.'[1556] Cohen et al. hold that reliability is a synonym for consistency and replicability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents.[1557] Every classroom, every teacher, every set of learners is different and so it is

[1554] D. Hopkins. *A Teacher's Guide to Classroom Research* (2nd Edition). (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993), 145.
[1555] J. Bell, *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science.* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987), 103.
[1556] L. Cohen, L. Manion and K. Morrison. *Research Methods in Education.* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2001).
[1557] *Ibid.: 117.*

impossible to ensure constant conditions. However, to address this, Denscombe's[1558] advice to include sufficient detail was adhered to in order to show that although every case is different, this study offers an insight, an example of 'a broader class of things'[1559]

The researcher took great care to ensure the reliability of this study. Researchers must be aware of their biases as their assessment of data is likely to reflect their interests and the use they want to make of it. The researcher may become aware of her perceptual biases through reflexive critique which involves examining one's values.[1560] Firstly, I will clarify my bias. I am an advocate for the use of active, collaborative learning that encourages the development of learner autonomy. I am also an advocate for the use of DiE as a means of helping learners develop their communicative competence. My bias comes from observations made during almost twenty years of classroom teaching and thirteen years working with student teachers. I am also biased because I want this research to succeed and to be of use in improving the teaching and learning of languages. There is a danger that I may over-urge the process. However, from the outset I believed in the value of a negative result. As already stated I used a mixture of qualitative and quantitative research to promote reliability. There was a triangulation of data sources and methodologies. I used several participatory groups to eliminate bias. I was aware that in qualitative research the lens through which the data is presented can be obscured by subjectivity with a tendency to underplay and possibly disregard data that does not fit.[1561] I strove to present a broad and accurate picture.

7.7 Ethical considerations

A healthy balance must be maintained between 'the demands placed on the researcher to pursue the truth, and the inherent rights of the participant'.[1562] In any research enquiry, the researcher must be clear about the agreement he/she enters into with the participants. The quality and quantity of the data collected is indeed important but the way in which it is obtained is equally important. It is vital to provide clear information regarding the research you are doing and why you are doing it.[1563] All research should be based on informed consent. Everyone who participates in a research study is entitled to confidentiality. The researcher must ensure that children involved are provided with a safe environment in which to contribute their points of view. Researchers should be aware of their responsibility to and their relationship with participants.

[1558] M. Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide for Small-scale Social Research Projects. (*Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998), 36.
[1559] *Ibid.*
[1560] L. Cohen, L. Manion and K. Morrison. *Research Methods in Education.* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2001), 228.
[1561] M. Denscombe, M. *The Good Research Guide for Small-scale Social Research Projects.* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998), 222.
[1562] L. Cohen, L. Manion and K. Morrison. *Research Methods fin Education.* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2001).
[1563] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

In order to maintain the integrity of this research, ethical practices were used to set up and conduct the project. Before information was requested from a participant they were informed about the purpose of the research and assured that disclosure of data would not refer directly to them. Consent was sought. Volunteers and those invited for interview were assured of confidentiality and advised that they could reject the use of tape recorders. A guarantee was given to the teachers participating in the questionnaire that neither they nor their school would be identified in the findings.

7.8 The pilot study

A pilot phase was undertaken to enable the researcher to test for clarity, to ensure comprehension and to allow for inclusion of personal feedback.[1564] The pilot phase helped to test if questions in the questionnaires made sense and if the response ranks were clear.[1565] Devising a questionnaire, piloting it, refining it and redrafting it in its final issue is a time consuming task.[1566] However, the pre-work of sorting, categorising and sequencing questions speeded up the processing of the data.[1567] The questionnaires were piloted with groups similar to the ones that formed the population of the project[1568]

Questionnaires to be issued to practising teachers were piloted with five teacher colleagues. A number of changes were made following their feedback. Some questions were omitted, others were added; response ranks were altered, as was the order of the questions. Finally the questionnaires were drafted and are referred to as form C, and form D in the study (see appendix 2).

Another questionnaire was compiled to ascertain student teacher attitudes and opinions on what they considered important to know about as a language teacher (see form B appendix 3). This was piloted with 10 student language teachers from another university. The researcher distributed the draft questionnaire to the student teachers and encouraged questions and comments on any areas of misunderstanding. The response was quite favourable and in light of the comments some minor revisions were made. The questionnaire was redrafted and hereafter is referred to as form B (see form B appendix 3). A second questionnaire distributed to student teachers at the beginning of the academic year dealt with what student teachers remembered about learning languages when they were in secondary school. It was piloted with student teachers from another university and amendments made following feedback (see form A in appendix 3).

[1564] A. Loxley. *Introduction to Educational Research Methods.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[1565] *Ibid.*
[1566] L. Cohen, L. Manion and K. Morrison. *Research Methods in Education.* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2001).
[1567] *Ibid.*
[1568] J. Bell, *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science.* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987), 128.

Before participating in the DiE workshop process student teachers were asked to complete short statements identifying their personal reaction to participating in a drama workshop (see pre-workshop questionnaire in appendix 3). This approach was piloted with a group of student teachers from another university who were participating in DiE workshops for language teachers led by the researcher. The pilot exercise showed it to be an effective research instrument.

After the workshop process participants were asked to complete a questionnaire to give their reactions to DiE as a tool for teaching second languages (see post-workshop questionnaire in appendix 3). This questionnaire was piloted with a group of student language teachers from another university after their participation in a DiE workshop. Following their advice that participants do not want to spend time expressing their reflections after a workshop the questionnaire was changed to include mainly ranking questions with just 2 open questions at the end (see post-workshop questionnaire in appendix 3).

A questionnaire was issued to second level language learners after they had participated in DiE activities with their class teachers (see form F in appendix 4). This was piloted through discussion with class teachers and a selection of learners from junior and senior cycles. Amendments suggested were included in the final draft.

A series of workshops for student language teachers to demonstrate how DiE can be used in the second level language class was designed and then piloted with student language teachers from another university. Feedback given enabled the material to be developed to the meet the needs and interests of student language teachers. The post workshop interview was also piloted with volunteers from this group. Following advice given, minor revisions were made.

7.9 Concluding comments

Emerging theoretical claims from the research should be applicable to most second languages. Teachers may be able to transfer the research findings to their own specific teaching and learning contexts. It is hoped that emerging critical theory may help in the researcher's own practice as well as in the professional development of teachers at both pre- and in-service levels.

As this study was conducted over a number of years in order to increase the validity and reliability of its findings, the ensuing data will be presented summatively in the following chapter, and for ease of reading and access the results will be discussed and analysed together.

Chapter Eight

Presentation, analysis and discussion of results

8.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the analysis results of the quantitative and qualitative data collection. The following sources were accessed to provide data:

- Student language teachers
- Non-participant and participant researcher observation
- Second-level language learners
- Practising, qualified language teachers

This was a longitudinal study and data were collected over a period of six years, therefore the data will be presented in summative form identifying themes, trends, patterns and issues collectively. However, reference will also be made to individual cohorts as deemed relevant. The chapter will begin with a baseline assessment gathered from student language teachers participating in a Language Methodology course as part of their Post Graduate Diploma in Education (formerly known as the Higher Diploma in Education) and will then offer their responses to the drama interventions. The next section will present and examine the data from their language learners in second level schools, and the final section will provide data from a survey of practising, qualified teachers.

8.2.1 Student language teachers' experiences of being language learners at second level

Two sets of data were selected as representative of the full data set from this questionnaire: two year-groups from the early days of the study 2001-2002 and 2002-2003; and two year-groups from the later days of the study 2005-2006 and 2006-2007. These were selected with a view to offering comparative data on whether students' experiences have either qualitatively or quantitatively changed over the duration. The objective of the questionnaire was to use student teachers' memories of their experiences of learning Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) at second-level school to form an overview of the approach that teachers used to facilitate the teaching and learning of languages during the student teachers' second-level school days. Cohort 1 (2001-2002; 2002-2003) comprised 80 student language teachers and cohort 2 (2005-2006; 2006-2007) similarly comprised 80 students.

As outlined in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 an approach to language teaching and learning that seeks to develop learners' independence in learning and in their use of the target language, as advocated by the MFL Junior and Leaving Certificate syllabuses, advises that learners be included in the decision-making process regarding their language learning. Learner autonomy can only be developed through

the practice of autonomy and learners need to be supported in its practice.[1569] As argued in Chapter 4 learners must be encouraged to understand their role as learners and to take responsibility for this role. To this end, learners need to play a part in the decision-making process regarding their learning.[1570] Interestingly 85% of the first cohort (2001-2002; 2002-2003) and 77% of the second cohort (2005-2006; 2006-2007) remember being given no choice in the content of the course covered, or in classroom activities (see fig.8.1). As one respondent indicated, 'Not given any choice. It never occurred to me at the time that I should have been' (R3 FA1).

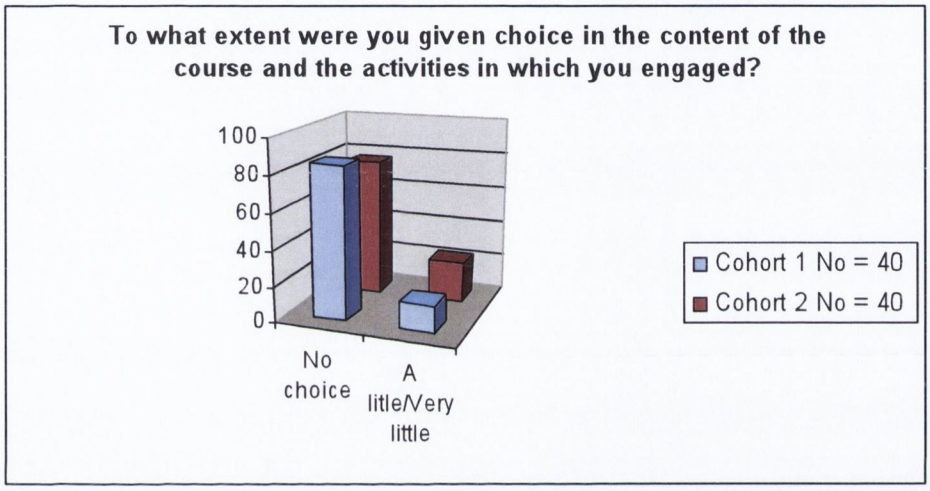

Figure 8.1 Extent of choice offered to learners

The remainder of each of the cohorts (15% and 23% respectively) remember being given just a little or very little choice. Although student teachers memories from the later cohort (2005-2006; 2006-2007) indicate a slight improvement (8%) in the provision of choice in MFL classrooms, the statistics suggest that there was very little collaboration between second language teachers and their learners with regard to the decision-making process in Irish second level schools. The majority of student teachers questioned were not given choice about the content or activities in their language classes at second level. The data reveals that these were overwhelmingly dictated by the teacher, the textbook and examination content. Typical responses included Respondent 10 F1: 'There was no choice in content and activities. This was always dictated by the teacher and the textbook' (R10 FA1), with a classmate adding 'There was a curriculum to follow and the teachers had a very set idea about how they were going to teach it, and weren't willing to be flexible' (R6 FA1). Respondents from both cohorts indicated that learners at Junior Certificate level were not involved in any decision making about their language learning and, where choice was offered, it was at Leaving Certificate level with

[1569] D. Little. *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 4.
[1570] W. Littlewood. 'Co-operation and collaborative learning tasks as pathways towards autonomous interdependence', in *Learner Autonomy 7: Challenges to research and practice.* Eds. P. Benson, P. & S. Toogood (Dublin: Authentik, 2002), 29-40.

regard to preparation for the examination, for example, areas that needed revising. These data suggest that the student teachers experienced language classrooms without choice and a teacher-centred approach which is at odds with a communicative approach to language teaching and learning, despite the fact that such an approach was supposed to be in use at the time when the respondents were in school.

As posited in Chapter 2 there is a consensus among theorists of language learning that language input is necessary for normal language learning to occur.[1571] An essential part of this language input is teacher talk – the provision of input through the teachers' use of the target language during the language class.[1572] Indeed, as argued in Chapter 3 the use of the target language for classroom management is a basic tenet of a communicative approach to language teaching and learning. However, when asked to comment on the use of the target language by their language teachers in second level a typical reply was 'French was always taught through the medium of English' (R3 FA1). 50% of student teachers from the first cohort and 67% from the second cohort remembered their MFL teachers as rarely or never using the target language for classroom management. This suggests that over 50% of second-language learners in a cross-section of classrooms around the country between 2001 and 2007 missed out on valuable language input opportunities as their teachers neglected to use the target language for classroom management. It also suggests that motivational factors to encourage language production, as discussed in Chapter 4, were diminished as the teacher set the mother tongue as the communicative norm.[1573] Student teachers' comments suggest that, when the target language was used, its use was linked to preparation for the oral examination at Leaving Certificate level: 'French was not used much in class, only in sixth year approaching the oral' (R21 FA1). It also brings to mind the Chief Inspectors' Reports[1574], as discussed in Chapter 5, which highlight that errors made in the aural examinations at Junior Certificate level could be avoided if learners were exposed to more target language through teacher talk. As one of the respondents put it 'There was a tiny bit of target language [used by teachers] in fifth and sixth [year] but if it was used from first year, I feel I would have benefited more' (R2 FA2).

[1571] See, for example, M.H. Long. 'The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition' in *Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*. Eds. W.C. Ritchie and T.K. Bhatia (San Diego: Academic Press, 1996), 451-2.

[1572] N. Pachler and K. Field. *Learning to Teach Modern Foreign Languages in the Secondary School. A Companion to School Experience.* 2nd edition. (London: Routledge Palmer, 2001).

[1573] Emma Ushioda. *Learner Autonomy 5: The Role of Motivation*. Ed. D. Little. (Dublin: Authentik, 1996).

[1574] Department of Education and Science. *Report: Inspection of modern languages: Observations and issues.* (Dublin: Department of Education and Science), 2004.

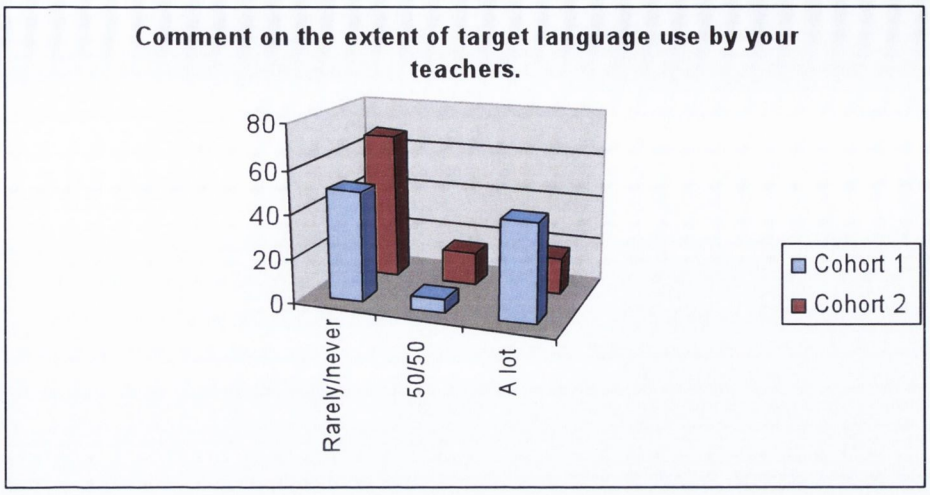

Figure 8.2 Extent of target language use by teachers

As also discussed in Chapter 2 language output, in addition to language input, is essential to the development of learners' communicative competence.[1575] Swain holds that production skills can only be developed by pushing learners to produce language through oral and written work.[1576] The effort of composing new utterances stimulates learners to form hypotheses about the target grammar, and then to try them out.[1577] Therefore, to facilitate the development of communicative competence, opportunities must be created to motivate learners to produce the target language. However, when student teachers were asked to discuss the extent to which opportunities had been created for them to produce the target language in second level school, 12% of cohort 1 remembered no such opportunities being created for them. As one respondent succinctly put it 'The word 'motivate' didn't enter into the equation' (R27 FA1). 60% remembered a small amount of motivating opportunities created to produce language, and only 18% remembered having a lot of motivating opportunities to produce the target language in class.

Interestingly the second cohort seemed to have had even fewer motivating opportunities for language production with 57.5% claiming that no such opportunities were presented, and 35% remembering only a small number of motivating opportunities to produce language. Where opportunities were presented it was for examination preparation: 'None created except through preparation for the oral exam' (R21 FA2). Only 2.5% could remember having had a lot of motivating opportunities for language production. If there had been more, then perhaps this respondent would have had a different

[1575] M. Swain. 'Communicative competence: some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development' in *Input in Second Language Acquisition*. Eds. S. Gass and C. Madden (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1985).
[1576] M. Swain and S. Lapkin. 'Problems in output and the cognitive processes they generate: a step towards second language learning' in *Applied Linguistics Vol. 16* (1995), 371-391.
[1577] M. Swain. 'Three functions of output in second language learning.' In *Principle and Practice in Applied Linguistics. Eds.* G. Cook and B. Seidlhofer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 126.

attitude to the target language on leaving school: 'Personally, I felt that I wasn't confident enough to speak the target language even after 5 years of studying in school. I was unsure whether I pronounced words correctly. I would have welcomed more opportunity to engage in conversation through German' (R5 FA1).

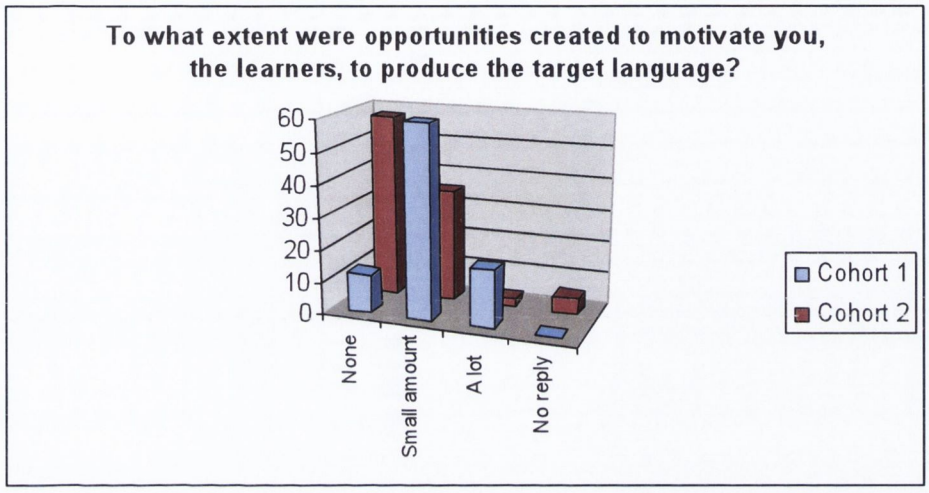

Figure 8.3 Motivation to produce target language

A communicative approach, with its emphasis on learning to communicate through communication, would suggest the necessity of a collaborative approach to provide opportunities for communication.[1578] Similarly, as discussed in Chapter 4 an approach that seeks to facilitate the development of learner autonomy implies a collaborative approach as learners learn independence by first being interdependent.[1579] When asked if they would describe their second level language classes as having been collaborative in approach, 60% of the first cohort and 80% of the second cohort answered 'never'. One respondent's comment was that the classes were 'more jug to mug' (R19 FA2), with a classmate adding 'Teacher controlled content and direction' (R21 FA2), supported by another who commented 'teacher taught and students listened' (R7 FA2). Not only was there very little collaboration between learners and their teacher but there were also very few opportunities created for learners to collaborate with one another. One respondent seems to sum up the belief of the language teachers when he/she writes that 'The teachers felt this led to unnecessary noise and the opportunity to have a chat with your friends in English' (R10 FA1). Contrasting her Irish language classes, which were collaborative, with her MFL classes, which were not, one respondent noted that 'working collaboratively helped us develop social skills and linguistic competence' (R9 FA2).

[1578] R. Mitchell. 'The communicative approach to language teaching: An introduction.' In *Teaching Modern Languages*. Ed. A. Swarbrick (London: Routledge/The Open University, 1994).
[1579] L.S. Vygotsky. *Thought and language*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), 104.

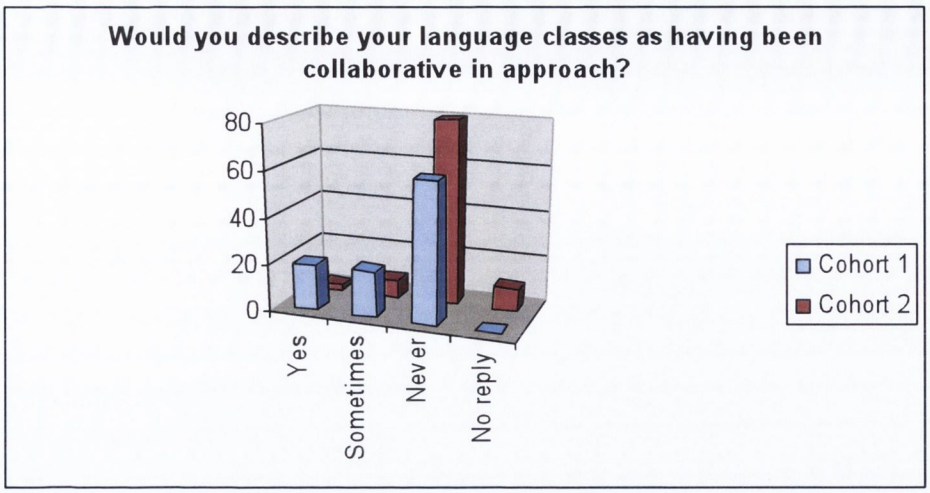

Figure 8.4 Were lessons collaborative in approach?

As discussed in Chapter 3 a communicative classroom strives to create opportunities for learners and their teacher to use the target language to express their meanings, in other words, to use it for real communication.[1580] This involves using the target language for day-to-day classroom transactions and for classroom management. It means that emphasis is not put on learning language as a mere cognitive exercise but as a means of communication.[1581] Items of vocabulary or a grammar rule are learnt to aid communication through the target language. When asked to comment on the emphasis put on communication through the target language in their language classes at school, 60% of the first cohort and 85% of the second cohort replied 'none'. One respondent commented: 'Communication generally took place through the medium of English' (R3 FA1). Another wrote 'None – we learned lists of grammar and vocabulary' (R6 FA2). This would indicate a largely structuralist approach to the teaching of MFL during the student teachers' school days. This is supported by data yielded from post-workshop interviews with student teachers (ref. 7.3.1.3) where all interviewees, in all year groups, stated that the majority of their teachers in second-level school taught the target language through English.

Indeed this is further supported by data yielded from asking student teachers about the approach used for the teaching and learning of grammar during their second level MFL classes. 56% of the first cohort and 80% of the second cohort indicated that a transmission and 'drill-like' approach was used. One respondent summarised the experience of many saying 'We used a grammar book, read the rules together and then did the exercises. We never really used the grammar to facilitate communication' (R19 FA1). The negative effect of this was perhaps captured by one respondent who wrote 'I only

[1580] R. Mitchell. 'The communicative approach to language teaching: An introduction.' In *Teaching Modern Languages*. Ed. A. Swarbrick (London: Routledge/The Open University, 1994).
[1581] N. Pachler and Kit Field. *Learning to Teach Foreign Languages in the Secondary School. A Companion to School Experience*. 2nd Edition. (London: RoutledgeFalmer, 2001), 84.

later realised that grammar wasn't a separate entity to the rest of the language course' (R37 FA1), and another who wrote 'Out of context the grammar was impossible for me' (R20 FA2). Only 18% of the first cohort and 2.5% of the second cohort remembered being encouraged to use an inductive, discovery approach to learning grammar. These figures are low in both cohorts but are extremely low in the cohort comprising the two later year-groups. The factors behind this would make a very interesting study at a future date.

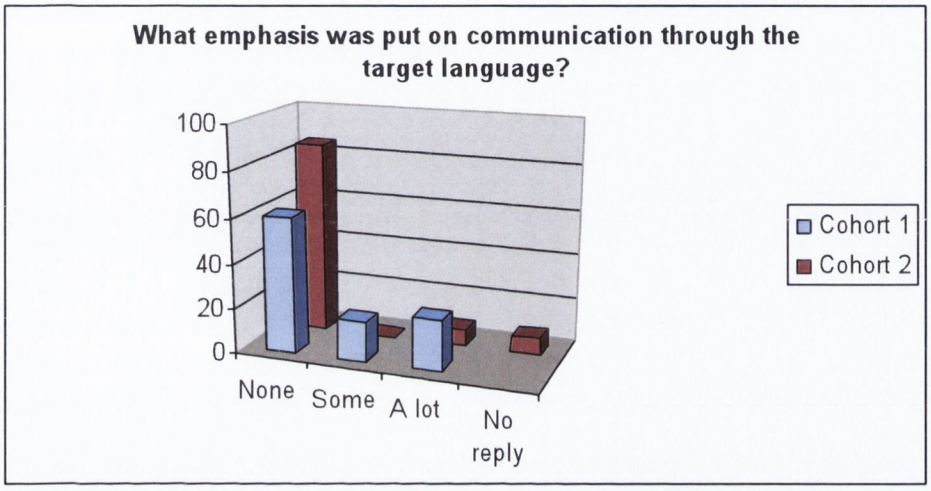

Figure 8.5 Emphasis put on communication through target language

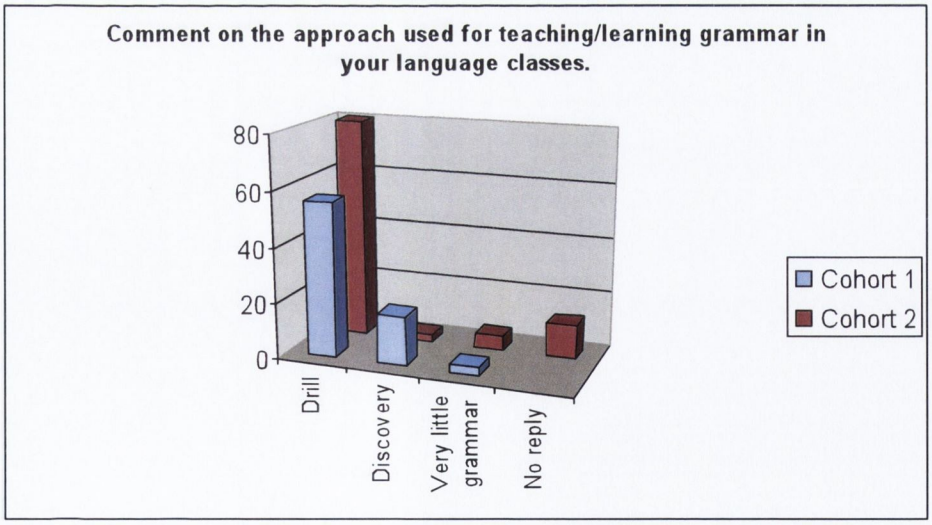

Figure 8.6 Approach used for teaching/learning grammar

Given the trend that is emerging from the previous data it is hardly surprising that when asked to what extent an integrated approach to the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) was used, 80% of the first cohort and 82.5% of the second cohort reported that an integrated approach to the development of the four skills was not used. Respondents remembered most emphasis being put

on reading and writing with less on listening and very little on oral work except in the run-up to the Leaving Certificate examination: 'Generally the emphasis was placed on reading and writing, followed by listening, with very little emphasis on speaking until 6th year' (R3 FA1). Again the state examinations loomed large in determining where the emphasis should be - 'Listening and speaking were only prepared quickly before mock exams or state exams' (R21 FA2). As discussed in Chapter 3 a communicative approach advocates an integrated approach to the development of the four skills with each serving to reinforce the other as well as creating a more naturalistic language learning environment.[1582] The language syllabuses are based on a communicative approach to the teaching and learning of languages and yet it would appear from the experiences of these 160 student teachers that this approach has not been closely followed in Irish second-level MFL classes between 2001 and 2007.

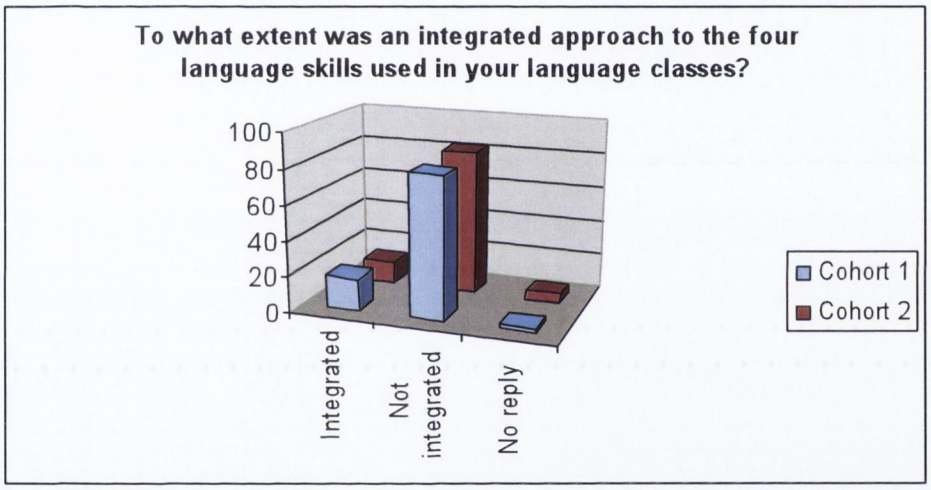

Figure 8.7 Extent to which language skills were integrated

Unsurprisingly, when asked what they enjoyed and didn't enjoy in their language classes in second level school, student teachers emphasised that they did not enjoy grammar drills, learning grammar out-of-context, the emphasis on examinations and the lack of learner involvement. What student teachers enjoyed about their language classes was perhaps best summarised by this respondent '...the feeling of confidence built by achieving communication through your new found skills, however small' (R2 FA1). All of these learners went on to study languages at degree level and as such are likely to represent the most motivated of language learners as indicated by this respondent who did not enjoy his/her language classes very much adding 'I found them boring and preferred to do things at home myself, i.e., watch TV5 (French language channel) and French films' (R28 FA2). However, the less motivated learner in this context was unlikely to supplement less than stimulating lessons in this way.

[1582] H. Douglas Brown. *Principles of Language Learning Teaching.* (White Plains, NY: Pearson Longman, 2007).

8.2.2 Needs Analysis

At the beginning of the academic year a questionnaire was issued to ascertain student teachers' expectations of a language methodology course and their expressed priority interests/needs. This questionnaire was issued to every new cohort of student teachers from 2001-2007. 190 questionnaires in total were returned representing a response rate of almost 80%. Fewer than half the respondents had previous experience in teaching a second language. This experience ranged from a few hours substitute-teaching in schools, to substituting for two years, to teaching English as a foreign language at home and abroad for a period of anything up to three years. Student teacher responses were given in response to open questions and an analysis of their replies yielded the categories in which they are placed. The data is presented summatively for all six cohorts as there was little or no determinable difference in patterns of responses from respondents.

Despite the fact, or perhaps because of the fact, that most of the respondents had not experienced a learner-centred, creative approach when they were learning MFL at second-level, 92% expressed a desire for ideas on how to make their teaching more innovative, motivating and learner-centred. Typical responses were 'I hope to learn how to make classes more interesting, new ideas, effective ways of teaching French' (R6 FB), and 'To learn new and innovative, interactive methods of encouraging pupils to speak, read, write and listen' (R34 FB). It was encouraging to see how many focused on the needs of their learners: 'how to make it exciting for the pupil' (R27 FB), 'how we should go about teaching [in ways] that will be most beneficial to the pupil' (R8 FB). This indicates receptivity to the notion of active, involved learning among a majority of student language teachers.

The remaining 8%, in expressing their expectations of the language methodology course, focused on lesson planning, meeting syllabus requirements, how to teach grammar or expressed their confusion on what to expect. These respondents, in the main, focused on teaching and made little reference to the learners or learning. Typical responses were 'To help me prepare class plans. How to make grammar more interesting' (R5 FB) and 'I suppose we will go through different aspects like grammar (how to teach it), tenses (how to explain which tense to use and when), lesson plans (R26 FB)'. Interestingly, none of this 8% had previous teaching experience. It may be because of this that they had not considered the need to involve and motivate learners.

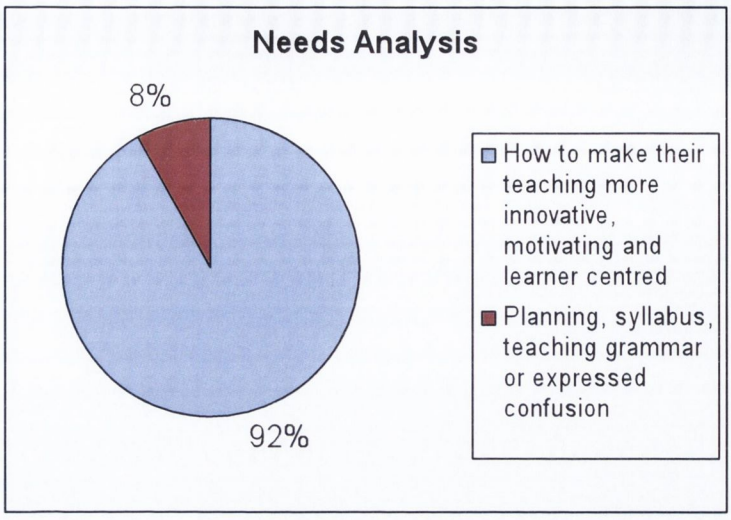

Figure 8.8 Needs analysis of student teachers

Respondents were also asked to list areas that they would particularly like to cover during a language methodology course. A qualitative analysis of their unprompted responses gave a clear ranking of preferences (table 8.1). Grammar ranked highest with 42% of respondents putting it as their first area of interest. Of these, 25% emphasised that they wanted to learn how to make grammar interesting and fun and this indicates their receptivity to approaches that are learner-centred. Learning how to develop and access creative activities and resources ranked second (35%), followed by 'how to encourage learners to use the target language communicatively' (30%). This indicates student teachers' desire to utilise attractive, interesting, motivating resources and activities. 'Adapting textbook use to interest learners' ranked fourth. Student teachers saw the text book as an aid to teaching and learning and not something to be followed slavishly. Typical responses were 'Uses of the textbook – adapting it to interesting, communicative activities' (R11 FB) and 'Ways of combining the textbook with interesting activities and exercises' (R25 FB).

Student teachers' responses ranked 'how to include learners of all abilities' at fifth place. A typical response was 'Using different resources and methods in order to teach and get the message through to all the pupils' (respondent's underlining) (R23 FB). This, combined with their strong interest in learning about creative activities and resources (ranked second), and the seventh highest ranking 'how to include group-work', shows an understanding that a variety of approaches, activities and resources are deemed important if the needs of all are to be met in the language class. Finally, the ranking of planning at number six demonstrates an appreciation of the need to plan and prepare language lessons to ensure their success.

Area	Rank
Grammar	1
Creative activities and resources	2
How to encourage learners to use the tl communicatively	3
Adapting textbook to interest learners	4
How to include learners of all abilities	5
Planning	6
How to include group work	7

Table 8.1 Areas student teachers would particularly like to cover

8.2.3 Non-participant observation

The researcher engaged in non-participant observation (see appendix 5) of a sample of student language teachers and their learners in their classrooms between the years 2001 and 2007. The cohort was comprised from a self-selecting cross section of student teachers from each year group totalling 30 student teachers. Each person was visited three times during the year (90 school visits). Across the year groups a consistent pattern emerged as follows. During the first term, up to the mid-term break, student teachers have to work hard to establish their presence in the classroom and to gain the confidence and respect of their learners. This is a very tiring time for the student teachers as they juggle teaching in the mornings with lectures in the afternoons and lesson-planning in the evenings. This is the period where student teachers were observed to be very traditional in their approach, despite their interest, as expressed in the needs analysis forms, in learning about and developing innovative approaches to teaching and learning. These observations were confirmed by student teachers' professional placement supervisors. Research journal entries indicate that student teachers often confess to mirroring the approach used when they themselves were at school because they are unsure that anything else will work. Thus, throughout their teaching practice but particularly in the early stages, they generally needed a lot of support in undertaking to use the target language for all classroom management as they feared that learners would not understand. It was also a challenge for them to convince learners who had not been accustomed to a maximum of target language being used by teachers that they would understand and learn better as a result of this exposure.

During this early first-term period, it emerged that student teachers needed to work hard on their pre-lesson planning to ensure that there was neither too little nor too much content. Sometimes insufficient content was covered, and journal entries indicate that this left their learners feeling bored and under-challenged with consequent discipline issues. Sometimes new material was introduced with inadequate links being made between presentation of new material and previous learning or knowledge. Sometimes student teachers tried to be too ambitious and introduced too much new

material thereby allowing insufficient time to scaffold learners into tasks or to practice and consolidate the new material. This, journal entries indicate, left learners feeling dissatisfied and insecure in their learning. It also raised discipline issues.

Journal entries show that frequently during this period student teachers were nervous about promoting an active learning approach. Consequently their lessons were often quite teacher-centred. There were few opportunities created for learners to produce language either orally or in written form. Learners were not sufficiently encouraged to deduce meanings or to make connections with previous learning. Pair work and group work were infrequently used. Journal entries consistently indicate that learners were predominately passive during such lessons apart from minor behaviour management issues. Post observation discussions with student teachers indicated that they worried about losing control of the group and thus having increased discipline issues or that they did not want to over-burden their learners with work and responsibility. Frequently they talked about having introduced pair work in the past but, being dissatisfied with the resultant confusion and noise, subsequently shied away from it.

Observations made showed that insufficient scaffolding and inadequate task setup were frequently at the root of this difficulty. When student teachers took on-board advice (given during post-observation discussions) that they should work to ensure that learners had everything they needed to complete a task successfully, student teachers found they could successfully allow their learners to become more involved in their learning. They were advised to scaffold learners into the task by ensuring they had practised and consolidated sufficiently the necessary language items and structures. They were advised to ensure that instructions given for tasks and activities were absolutely clear and that an example was given before learners embarked on the task themselves. Where this advice was accepted and experimented with, student teachers generally gained confidence in promoting active, involved learning in their classes and learners were more engaged. These observations were confirmed by professional placement supervisors and also thorough post observation discussions with the student teachers.

Journal entries also indicate that student teachers at this early stage did not introduce a sufficient variety of approach or of materials. They did not integrate the four skills and, as stated previously, generally used a teacher-centred approach which allowed little variety of interaction in classes. They tended to follow the textbook closely. With the support of their professional placement supervisors and colleagues and with increased exposure to alternative approaches through lecture content and their reading, they experimented and gradually gained the confidence to overcome these difficulties. Again this observation was confirmed by the student teachers and by their professional placement supervisors.

During visits after the mid-term and into the second term it was observed, by the researcher and by their professional placement supervisors, that student teachers became increasingly communicative in their approach, increasing their use of the target language considerably, with successful results, and increasing opportunities for learners to produce the target language. Lessons became far more learner-centred. Teachers employed an increasing variety of resources and activities with consequent less reliance on the dictations of the textbooks. There was greater integration of the four skills with consequent observed confidence in learners in their understanding and use of the target language. Increasingly student teachers became more confident and more innovative in their approach.

8.2.4.1 Survey of practising language teachers

Two surveys of practising language teachers were conducted during the extended research period. The first questionnaire 'Support in the Language Class' sought to ascertain classroom practitioners' opinions on whether or not they have been furnished with sufficient guidelines/training and support to facilitate the development of learner autonomy, to foster greater oral participation of learners, to implement a wide range of teaching methodologies and to experiment with different teaching methodologies. They were also asked to give their opinions on the extent to which the Junior and Leaving Certificate programmes support learners to use language independently in real, unpredictable situations.

The response rate was just under 50% and comprised 59 modern language teachers working in second level schools across the country. Returns secured a representational cross-section of types of schools. Questionnaires were issued in 2005 (24 responses) and again in 2007 (35 responses) to ensure data was up to date and also to allow for comparison. There were no significant differences in the responses given by the two groups therefore it was decided to treat returned questionnaires as one cohort rather than two separate cohorts.

A Drama in Education survey was administered in 2006. It sought to establish the drama activities with which practising language teachers are most familiar; how often they use drama activities with each year group; the drama activities that they find most useful; why they use drama activities; circumstances that might discourage them from using drama in the language class; whether they have received training in the use of drama in the language class and whether they would like (further) training in this area. It yielded eighty eight responses from modern language teachers working in second level schools across the country representing a response rate of 60%. Returns secured a representational cross-section of types of schools.

8.2.4.2 Support in the language class questionnaire

83% of the respondents believe language teachers have not been furnished with sufficient guidelines/training to facilitate the fostering of learner autonomy (fig. 8.9) and it was noted that 'There are no guidelines or training to foster learner autonomy' (R21 FC). A further 7% hold that they have received sufficient guidelines but insufficient training to allow them to implement these in their language classrooms. There is a belief that the Department of Education and Science (DES) has neglected this area. Typical responses include: 'Not at all. I think on-going training is needed' (R122 FC), 'I have not attended any in-services or courses provided by the Department [of Education and Science] yet, nor have I heard of any specifically targeted towards learner autonomy' (R12 FC), 'We have not. The DES must give us good in-service' (R14 FC).

Those who have completed the Post Graduate Diploma in Education or Higher Diploma in Education in recent years wrote that guidelines were furnished during the course but that it is difficult to implement these guidelines. 'During the H.Dip., plenty of guidelines were given on how to encourage learner autonomy. However, sometimes it can be difficult to implement these guidelines' (R6 FC). 'Higher Diploma programme is very pro this at the moment but when it comes to strategies in implementing it, it falls short' (R10 FC). There is a willingness among respondents to learn about how to foster learner autonomy but there appear to be insufficient opportunities for training.

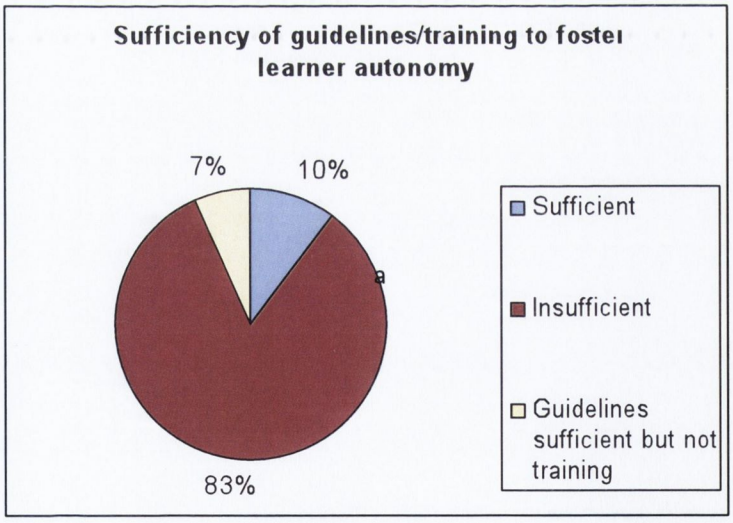

Figure 8.9 Sufficiency of guidelines/training to foster learner autonomy (n=59)

74% of respondents felt they had not been furnished with sufficient support to encourage greater oral participation among their learners (fig. 8.10). A typical response is 'Support from where? In the eight years I've been teaching in Ireland there has not been a single workshop/talk on this subject, to my knowledge' (R8 FC). Respondents believe they have been left to their own devices, the only support available is from colleagues and this is not seen as being sufficient: 'It takes great perseverance on the

part of the teacher – need more support at local level to make this the common approach by all the language teachers in a school' (R26 FC). Teachers are faced with discouraging obstacles and pressures that make facilitating oral participation difficult. The pressures cited were large class sizes: 'Class sizes must be reduced to make this possible' (R62 FC); state examinations that do not have an obligatory oral component, 'Also, when under pressure for state examinations there can be a tendency to focus on the written and reading aspects of a language' (R6 FC); lack of learner motivation, 'By 2nd year when students realise they won't have an oral until 6th year they don't really take the oral seriously' (R15 FC), textbooks that neglect the development of oral skills 'A lot of the textbooks focus mainly on the written language and neglect the oral side' (R9 FC), and colleagues who do not consistently encourage the oral participation of learners: 'Students not having much previous experience of the teacher using French in the classroom' (R18 FC). The nature of the format of the oral examination at Leaving Certificate level as well as the use of English to check comprehension of the aural component of the Junior Certificate are also cited as barriers to encouraging oral participation of learners: 'The oral exam. It is very contrived and students can gain good marks without adequate oral competency. English questions in the aural exam also lead to the non-use of the target language' (R3 FC).

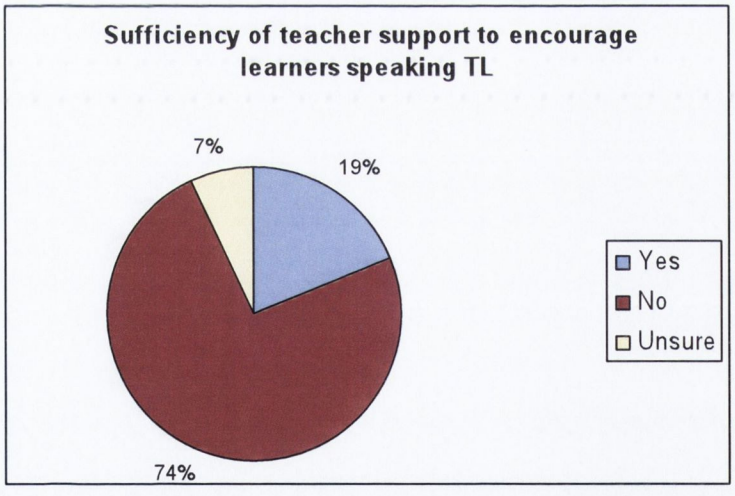

Figure 8.10 Sufficiency of support to encourage oral participation of learners (n=59)

82% of respondents believe that they have not been furnished with sufficient information to implement a wider range of teaching methodologies in the language classroom (fig 8.11). Again they express a need for more in-service: 'No. More in-service courses are definitely needed concerning teaching methods which at worst can result in 'chalk-and-talk' (R52 FC). Of the 18% who believe they have the necessary information, over 50% state that teaching conditions prevent them from implementing a wider range of methodologies. The obstacles they cite include workload: 'Wider range teaching methodologies need to be contextualised into the heavy burden of a typical 7-8 class

teaching day' (R19 FC); learner expectations: '... The use of alternative teaching methodologies becomes more arduous as children get older and more exam-focused' (R3 FC); the examination: '... I don't think the exam supports experimenting with different methodologies' (R26 FC), and time constraints: '...time constraints do not encourage this' (R10 FC).

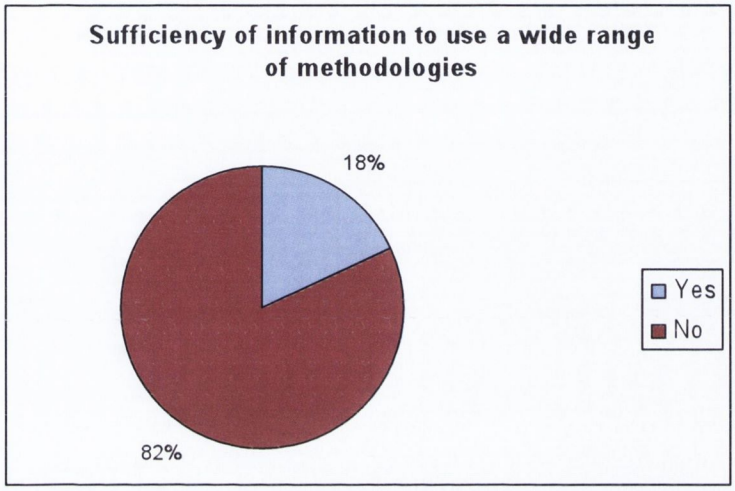

Figure 8.11 Sufficiency of information to use a wide range of methodologies (n=59)

15% of respondents feel very much supported to experiment with different teaching methodologies (fig. 8.12). They state that this support comes from colleagues and the school. 50% of this group qualify their feeling of support by stating that they feel no support comes from the DES: 'By the school very much, but on a wider scale, by the department and constraints of the examination, not a lot' (R9 FC). A further 15% of respondents feel quite supported to experiment with different teaching methodologies. Here again they state that the support comes from the school and colleagues.

48% of respondents feel somewhat or a little supported to experiment with different teaching methodologies. The obstacles cited are examination and time pressures: 'As the demands from parents increase I feel that covering the course work in an exam specific way needs to be covered in a more traditional way where possible' (R32 FC), and 'It takes a lot of time and preparation and I often wonder if it is (a) efficient (b) worth the effort. Other teachers stick to traditional teaching methods and perhaps do a better job' (R26 FC). 22% of respondents feel they are not at all supported to experiment with different teaching methodologies. Their comments indicate that this does not necessarily mean that they do not experiment but that they feel unsupported: 'I do actually experiment with different teaching methodologies but I don't feel remotely supported by any outside body! I'm very much in my own little world. There is next to no interaction with other teachers' (R8 FC).

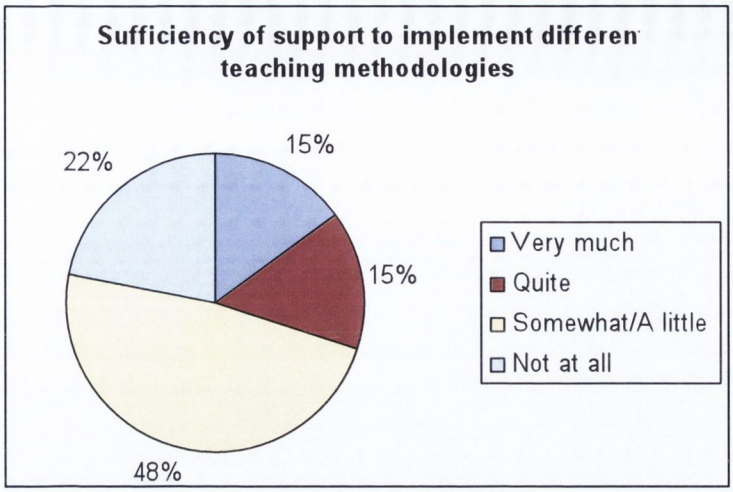

Figure 8.12 Sufficiency of support to implement different teaching methodologies (n=59)

An overwhelming 78% of respondents believe that the Junior and Leaving Certificate programmes do not support learners to use language independently in real, unpredictable situations (fig. 8.13). The negative back-wash effect of the language examinations ranks top of the reasons cited: 'Language teaching continues to be very traditional. It is driven by the exams' (R122 FC). Respondents claim that learners can achieve good grades in both Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations without being able to use the target language in real, unpredictable situations. They suggest that a formulaic approach to preparing for the examinations will achieve good grades: '... the Leaving Certificate oral examination is ... a set piece rattled off and masquerading as a conversation' (R82 FC). Some expressed the opinion that the grade attained in the examination was not indicative of learners' ability to use the target language independently in real, unpredictable situations, for example, 'I feel many students may leave school with a good grade in the exam but not with a grasp of the language that they could actually use in a real situation...' (R9 FC), and 'It is possible for a candidate at Junior Cert. to get a B and not be able to speak at all, even at Leaving Cert. quite reasonable grades can be achieved using a 'formula' approach' (R1 FC).

In addition respondents suggest that what happens in the language classroom is strongly influenced by what is examined and how. Thus, the absence of a compulsory oral examination at Junior Certificate level is highlighted as having a very negative effect on the development of oral competence; 'I don't know how the Inspectorate advocate use of the target language in the classroom and provide no oral exam to measure this. It's high time there was some form of oral exam at Junior Cert' (R11 FC). The use of English for answering aural questions is also cited as a barrier to promoting independent use of the target language as it necessitates a good deal of mother tongue use in the classroom; 'They are practised in class through English and this runs counter to all the guidelines on the use of target language' (R12 FC). In addition an over-emphasis on reading and writing is seen as a hurdle to the fostering of independent use of the language in real, unpredictable situations '... as majority is based

on the written word rather than oral work (which is how you communicate 99% of the time) it doesn't really prepare you very well' (R42 FC).

Learner perception and expectation of what should be covered in preparation for the examinations and how, is also a difficulty. Learners focus on what's needed to achieve the best grades in the examinations and teachers feel under pressure to do this also: 'While we are "experimenting" students go off to grind schools who rely on traditional teaching methods' (R262 FC). They see target language as an examination subject and not as a means of communication: 'Students are very dependent on books and don't really associate the subject with life outside the classroom' (R102 FC).

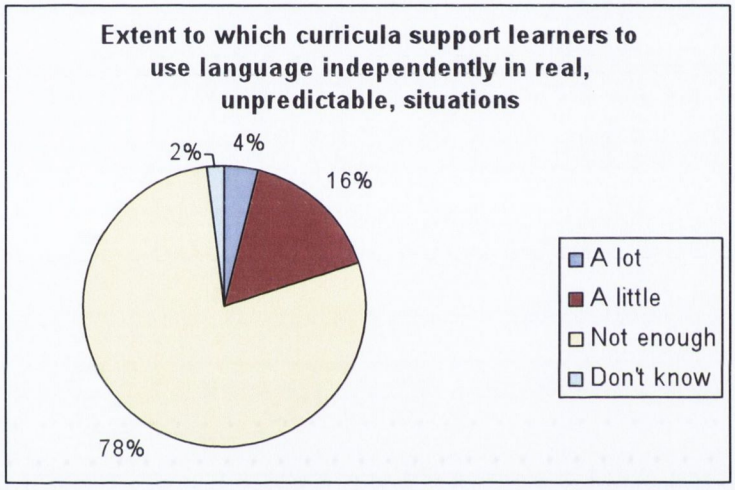

Figure 8.13 Extent to which syllabuses support learners to use language independently in real unpredictable situations (n=59)

8.2.4.3 Drama in the language class questionnaire

A questionnaire was issued to practising language teachers in schools throughout Ireland. The response yielded 88 completed questionnaires. The purpose of the questionnaire was to establish the Drama in Education (DiE) strategies with which practising language teachers are familiar. The completed questionnaires were analysed to get an overall understanding of the use of DiE in the language classes of Ireland. In addition, 34 of the completed questionnaires comprising 17 males (the total male respondents) and 17 females (to act as a balance) were analysed separately to see if the gender of the respondents yielded any significant difference in responses.

The data revealed that the drama strategy with which practising teachers are most familiar is role play. This yields no surprises as text books often use role play to practise transactional and interactional exchanges. Role plays are used as part of the oral examination in most Leaving Certificate languages except French. Practising language teachers are also familiar with the following strategies in descending rank order; 'Reading scripts', 'writing scripts', 'reading and writing in role', 'mime' and

'improvisations'. Quite basic DiE strategies such as 'tableau', 'thought-tracking' and 'line of life' ranked low. 'Mantle of the expert' was known by none of the respondents, 'conscience alley' was known by just one respondent. This data suggests that the respondents have a limited knowledge of DiE and that they are familiar only with a narrow range of drama strategies.

With which of the drama strategies listed are you familiar?

Drama strategy	%	Rank
Role play	(92%)	1
Reading scripts	(53%)	2
Writing scripts	(36%)	3
Reading/writing in role	(35%)	4
Drama games	(33%)	5
Improvisations	(31%)	6
Mime	(30%)	7
Staging plays	(20%)	8
Simulations	(19%)	9
Teacher in Role	(17%)	10
Drama warm ups	(16%)	=11
Hot seating	(16%)	=11
Tableau	(9%)	=12
Thought tracking	(9%)	=12
Line of life	(5%)	13
Role on the Wall	(3%)	14
Conscience Alley	(1%)	15

Table 8.2 Familiarity with drama strategies (n=88)

When a comparison was made between male and female respondents (table 8.3) the ranking orders did not show any major deviation from the general ranking except with 'mime,' which ranked number 2 for women respondents (54% of respondents) and number 7 for men (6% of respondents). However, overall, a greater number of the female respondents indicated familiarity with a wider range of drama activities.

With which of the drama strategies listed are you familiar?

Drama strategy	Male	Rank	Female	Rank
Role play	(88%)	1	(94%)	1
Reading scripts	(41%)	2	(53%)	3
Reading/writing in role	(35%)	3	(29%)	6
Simulations	(29%)	=4	(18%)	=8
Teacher in role	(29%)	=4	(18%)	=8
Drama games	(18%)	=5	(47%)	4
Improvisations	(18%)	=5	(35%)	5
Drama warm ups	(12%)	=6	(18%)	=8
Staging plays	(12%)	=6	(24%)	7
Mime	(6%)	=7	(54%)	2
Tableau	(6%)	=7	(6%)	=10
Forum theatre	(6%)	=7	(6%)	=10
Thought tracking	(6%)	=7	(6%)	=10
Hot seating	(6%)	=7	(12%)	9
Line of life	(0%)		(6%)	=10
Mantle of the expert	(0%)		(0%)	
Modelling/sculpting	(0%)		(0%)	
Writing scripts	(0%)		(35%)	5

Table 8.3 Familiarity with drama strategies (n=17 males and 17 females)

Drama activities are not often used in the language classes of respondents. When asked how often they used drama activities in their language classes 15% indicated never, 26% indicated seldom, 51% indicated occasionally, 3% often and 5% very often.

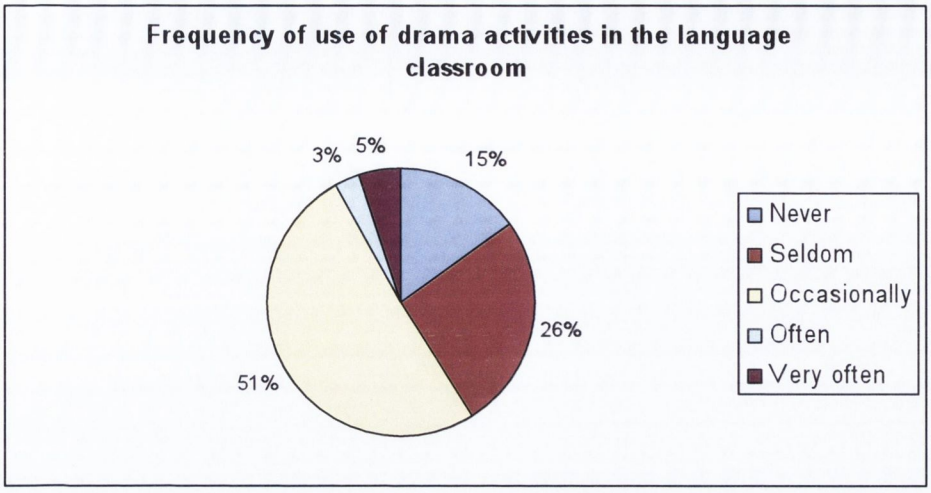

Figure 8.14 Frequency of use of drama activities in the language classroom (n=88)

When the male/female completed questionnaires were analysed it was found that a greater number of males (29%) than females (6%) never use drama activities in the language classroom. However, 6% of males use drama very often and none of the female respondents chose this category.

When asked which drama strategies they found most useful in their language classes, by far the most frequently used strategy was 'role play', which is used by 62% of respondents (table 8.4). This was also the strategy with which most respondents expressed familiarity (table 8.3). A review of the modern languages textbooks currently in use in Irish second level schools shows that this is the most widely-used drama strategy in textbooks at Senior and in particular at Junior Certificate level. The survey indicates that the next drama strategy most widely used by language teachers is 'drama games' and this is used by 18% of the repondents. 'Reading scripts' follows with 16% of the cohort finding it useful in their language classes. This researcher finds it unsurprising that this strategy ranks relatively high as it ties in with the tendency to concentrate on reading tasks expressed by practising teachers, and on student teachers' memories, expressed in questionnaires, of spending a lot of time on reading activities and also in student teacher interviews.

'Mime' is used by 13% of the cohort followed closely by 'writing scripts' used by 12%. Again the relatively high ranking of 'writing scripts' links with practising teachers' expressed tendency to concentrate on writing tasks and student teachers' memories of writing being given high priority at school.

When a comparison was made between male and female responses to this question it was found that the most popular strategies with males and females are 'role play' and 'drama games'. A wider range of strategies is used by female teachers but in the main it is traditional drama strategies that are employed with only 6% using 'hot seating' and 6% using 'line of life'. No one uses 'tableau',

'thought-tracking', 'role-on-the-wall', 'conscience alley', 'mantle of the expert' or 'modelling/sculpting'. The only DiE strategy used by the male cohort is 'teacher in role' and this is used by 12% of the cohort. Given the dearth of other strategies used by male teachers it is possible that what they mean by 'teacher in role' is the teacher taking part in role plays.

Drama activities found to be most useful	%	Rank
Role play	62	1
Drama games	18	2
Reading scripts	16	3
Mime	13	4
Writing scripts	12	5
Staging plays	9	=6
Reading/writing in role	9	=6
Teacher in role	7	=7
Improvisation	7	=7
Hot seating	7	=7

Table 8.4 Drama activities which language teachers find most useful (n=88)

As table 8.5 illustrates drama activities, when engaged in, are most likely to be used with first years, second years and fourth years. There were 26 instances of drama being used often or very often with first years, 12 with second years and 11 with fourth years. There are just two instances of it being used often or very often with third years and sixth years. Fifth year learners do not get much more exposure to drama activities with just 3 instances of it being used often or very often with them. Thus drama activities are least frequently used with the senior cycle and with examination classes. This reinforces the perception that drama based activities are for fun and light relief in many teachers' eyes.

How often do practising teachers use drama with each year group? (n=88).

Year group	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Often	V. Often
1st	3	8	23	18	8
2nd	7	13	24	8	4
3rd	17	14	22	2	
4th	11	7	17	7	4
5th	20	19	15	1	2
6th	25	16	9	1	1
TOTAL	83	77	110	37	19

Table 8.5 Frequency of use of drama with each year group (n=88)

When the two gender cohorts were examined it was seen that female teachers in this cohort use drama activities more often than their male counterparts with 36 cases of female teachers employing them occasionally, often or very often, compared with 21 cases of male teachers (tables 8.6 and 8.7). Women respondents indicate that they are more likely to use drama activities often or very often.

How often do male teachers use drama with each year group?

Year group	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Often	V. Often
1st	2	2	4	1	1
2nd	1	4	5		
3rd	4	3	3		
4th	2	2	2	1	
5th	1	5	2		
6th	4	3	2		
TOTAL	14	19	18	2	1

Table 8.6 Frequency of use of drama by male teachers (n=17)

How often do female teachers use drama with each year group?

Year group	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Often	V. Often
1st		3	8	5	
2nd	6	3	7		
3rd	10	3	3		
4th	7	1	4	2	1
5th	12	1	3		
6th	10	3	2	1	
TOTAL	45	14	27	8	1

Table 8.7 Frequency of use of drama by female teachers (n=17)

The categorisation of why drama is used in the language class was not prompted or presented to the language teachers; rather, it emerged from a content analysis of their expressed views (table 8.8). When asked why they use drama in the language class teachers ranked 'the creation of a lively, fun, positive atmosphere' in joint first place with 'to interest and motivate learners'. This supports the perception that teachers view drama activities as a source of light relief in the classroom, as one respondent put it: 'To enliven the group. To provide a dynamic, to entertain' (R16 FD). It is seen as a way of introducing a break from the tedium of normal classroom business. Typical comments include

'It livens up a class and takes away from the monotony of the textbook' (R9 FD2), and 'Liven up atmosphere. Break monotony' (R17 FD2). The motivational strength of drama activities is linked to the enjoyable, fun dimension. Some comments include 'They enjoy it and don't realise that they are actually working' (R15 FD2), and 'To create an association between learning a language and having fun' (R29 FD).

The use of drama in the language class 'to encourage and support oral production' ranks second. This was the only language skill specifically referred to in teachers' responses. It was surprising to this researcher that none of the respondents referred to aural or listening skills and yet these must also be supported if oral language is being produced. The use of drama to protect learners in their oral production was highlighted: 'It gives students an opportunity to speak, without putting them on the spot on their own in front of the class' (R26 FD), and 'Inhibited students take on a role and may be more relaxed and communicate freely with one another' (R45 FD2).

'To introduce variety of approach' ranked joint third place. The responses here tied in strongly with views expressed by teachers who used drama to introduce fun to language learning, that drama activities are valued as a break from routine. Respondents write that they use it to add variety in a teacher and textbook dominated approach: 'To vary the activities in the class and to move more away from talk and chalk' (R18 FD), and 'To supplement material of textbook – to bring the language to life' (R19 FD) are typical of the responses in this category. 'Providing the learners with opportunities for meaningful communication through drama' ranked joint third place. It was decided to create this category as separate from 'encourage and support oral production' as the emphasis in these responses was on using language to relay or receive a message rather than simply to practice speaking in the target language, which does not necessarily imply communication.

According to respondents drama is used to consolidate learning. They write about using drama to enable learners to practice and reinforce vocabulary and structures previously covered. A typical response was: 'To reinforce what has been done in a more formal way. They tend to remember what they say in a drama situation' (R18 FD). Contextualisation comes next in ranking and responses here tied in with responses categorised under 'opportunities for meaningful communication' but it was decided to make a separate category, as here the emphasis was more on the creation of a context than on the message exchanged. A typical response was 'With junior classes I find drama helps them to remember vocabulary and verbs much better than just lists on a blackboard as there is a real situation for them to apply the vocabulary/verbs' (R27 FD2).

'To develop learner confidence in using the target language' and 'To encourage language production' ranked joint sixth place. Responses regarding confidence in using the target language centred on oral

work. Respondents wrote about drama helping learners to lose their inhibitions about speaking in the target language, gaining confidence in oral communication and in pronunciation and gaining a sense of achievement. 'They have a sense of achievement, their confidence is boosted when they can complete tasks or relate to others in the target language' (R18 FD). Responses regarding encouraging language production focused on oral and written skills.

Why do you use drama in the language class?

Reasons	%	Rank
To create a lively, fun atmosphere	37	1
To interest and motivate learners	37	=1
To encourage and support oral production	28	2
To add variety of approach to lessons	22	=3
Meaningful communication	22	=3
To consolidate learning	15	4
To contextualise learning	13	5
To develop learner confidence in using the tl	11	=6
To encourage language production	11	=6
To foster active learning	8	7
To harness learner interests	5	=8
To support differentiation of learning	4	9
Monitoring/assessment	3	10
Intercultural competence	1	11

Table 8.8 Reasons for using DiE in language class (n=79)

The reasons or circumstances that might discourage teachers from using drama in the language class are presented in descending rank order in Table 8.9. Once again these reasons or circumstances were not selected from a list provided for teachers but are based on a content analysis of teachers' unprompted responses. Perhaps the most important aspect of the data here is that it reflects the pressures teachers experience through discipline problems, time constraints (both within and outside the classroom), and large class sizes.

Fear of losing control of the class is the biggest deterrent: 'Control of the class would be the biggest factor. It's hard enough keeping a class quiet at the best of times' (R9 FD). There is also an impression that not all will be involved and that therefore there will be discipline issues: 'Those not actively involved become distracted' (R4 FD). Responses indicate that the emphasis seems to be on

sticking with tried and tested traditional activities to maintain the status quo: 'Students get excited and it can be difficult to settle them back to more mundane activities' (R 18 FD). This echoes the trend to use drama activities as a break from routine as identified in the data yielded by the previous question when teachers were asked why they use drama in the language class.

Responses reveal a perception that drama activities need a lot of class time and take more preparation time than other classroom activities. The question is raised as to whether the drama activities yield results commensurate with the amount of class time they take: 'Time commitment, for what results?'(R6 FD). Drama activities are seen as an add-on extra and not as a means of advancing the aims and objectives of the curriculum. This opinion is revealed in comments such as: 'Pressure to cover the curriculum in time' (R10 FD), and 'Pressure of time/exams' (R46 FD2). There is also a link with data gained in response to an earlier question which revealed just two instances of drama being used often or very often with examination classes (see table 8.5). It links with the number five ranking for 'syllabus,' where responses such as '[I] Find the level of material to be covered at senior cycle does not leave much time for drama' are typical (R19 FD).

What are the reasons/circumstances that might discourage you from using drama in the language class?

Reasons for not using	%	Rank
Discipline	43	1
Amount of time it takes	28	2
Large class size	24	3
Amount of preparation needed	15	=4
Noise levels	15	=4
Classroom size and/or layout	15	=4
Syllabus	14	5
Class don't see the relevance	11	6
Class personality	9	7
Lack of teacher training	8	8
Shy learners	7	9
Learners lacking focus	7	9
Learners' poor competence in tl	4.5	10
Very demanding of teacher energy	1	=11
Learners not used to it	1	=11
School prefers a more traditional approach	1	=11

Table 8.9 Reasons/circumstances discouraging the use of drama in the language class (n=88)

According to respondents, the low uptake in the use of drama in the language class centres on external factors such as discipline, class size and time constraints, and they do not rank lack of training as a serious factor. In fact, lack of training in the use of DiE assumes the eighth ranking position representing just 8% of respondents. Just 17% of teachers surveyed have received training in the use of drama in the language class, yet 74% would be interested in receiving (further) training (fig.8.15).

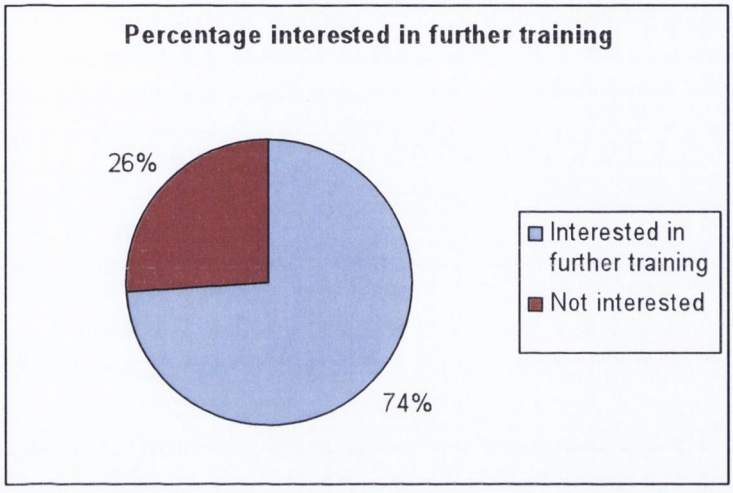

Figure 8.15 Percentage of practising teachers interested in further training in drama (n=88)

As figures 8.16 and 8.17 show, when male and female replies were analysed, the number of females who expressed interest in receiving training in the use of drama in the language class (82%) was considerably higher than the number of males who expressed interest (18%).

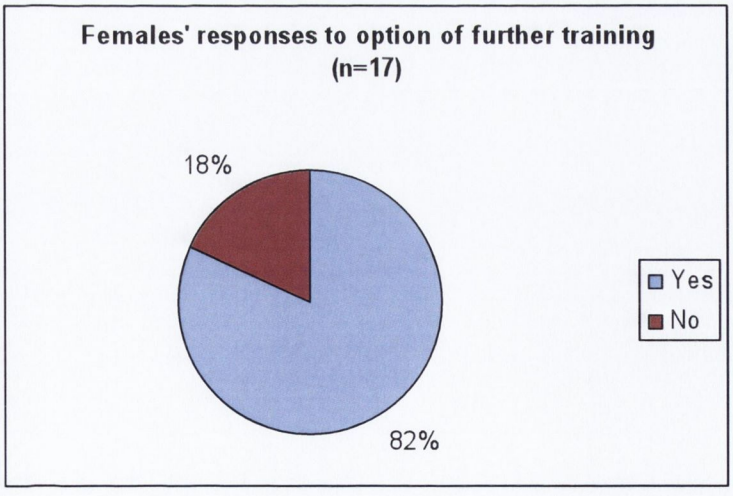

Figure 8.16 Females' responses to the option of further training (n=17)

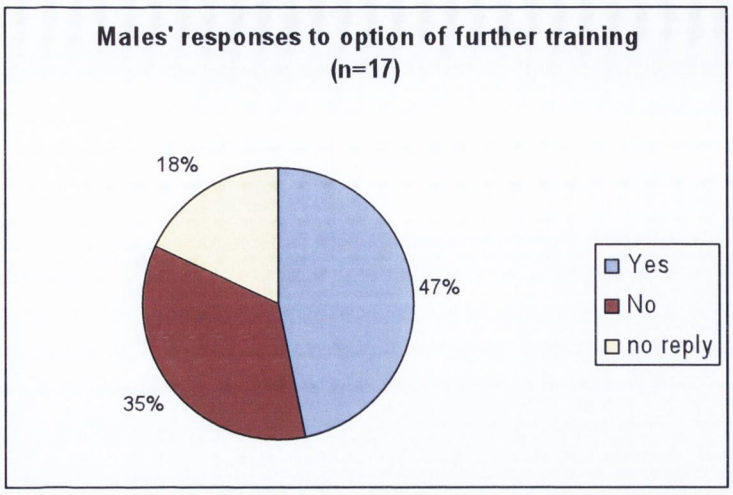

Figure 8.17 Males' responses to the option of further training (n=17)

8.3.1 The project

In this section the data from the drama training workshops with student language teachers and their subsequent impact on their learners in schools will be presented and discussed.

Pre-workshop research statements

Before each series of workshops participants were asked to complete one or both of the following statements: 'I'm looking forward to…' and 'I'm apprehensive about…'. Over the research period (2001-2007) the data reveals consistently that before the workshop series, student teachers had the perception that DiE was performance-focused and were thus apprehensive about being exposed in front of classmates. They expressed unease about being singled out, humiliating themselves and having to perform in front of others. They also expressed apprehension about using the drama in their language classes stating fear of losing control, creating noise and confusion and the effort it would involve for little return.

The responses to 'I'm looking forward to…' typically focused on learning new techniques to enthuse and motivate their learners. However, the dominant expressed expectation was that they would learn about role play, plays in the target language, and 'writing out little dialogues in French and acting them out' (R10 PW4). In other words, they expected to learn about traditional classroom drama activities. None of the participants from any of the year groups had experience in learning or teaching through Drama in Education. Interestingly some responses focused positively on the teaching approach anticipated, for example, 'I'm looking forward to moving around instead of being stuck in my chair' (R3 PW3), and on self-development 'I'm looking forward to social contact with others' (R7 PW3), and 'I'm looking forward to developing my personal skills' (R7 PW3).

Overwhelmingly, participants expected a performance-focused approach and expected to learn techniques that would help to promote performance activities in the language classroom.

8.3.2. Post workshop questionnaires

Following the series of workshops a questionnaire (Form E. Appendix 3) was issued to ascertain whether participants had enjoyed the workshops and why/why not, whether they would use DiE in their language classes and why/why not, and their ratings of DiE in the language class under certain headings. Their responses are summarised in table 8.10. As no individual trend or pattern emerged for any of the year groups the data is presented summatively representing responses from student teachers from 2001 to 2007.

Asked to what extent they believed DiE in the language class would help to make learners more independent of their teacher, 76% of respondents indicated quite or very much. As argued in Chapter 4, many learners have 'unlearned' most of their skills as self-directed learners before they come to the language class.[1583] It follows that learners are often at a loss when given opportunities to take responsibility for their learning and need preparation or training to become more independent.[1584] As was argued in Chapter 6, DiE helps to furnish learners with the psychological preparation they need by building their confidence to take a more active and independent role in their learning. It encourages a collaborative approach with built-in opportunities for reflection. It can help learners to consider a task and how best to tackle it before pooling ideas on how to complete the task or overcome the problem. Within the collaborative framework offered by DiE, learners can learn how others tackle problems, and thus be exposed to strategies that will better help them to manage their language learning. It was suggested that such an approach could enable learners to become more independent of their teachers and to become more autonomous in their language learning, which will enhance their self-esteem and confidence in their abilities as language learners.

Against such a background, it is encouraging to note that following their training in DiE, 92% of student teachers quite or very much agreed that DiE would help develop learners' confidence in using the target language. As posited in Chapter 4, learners gain autonomy in their use of the target language by being actively involved in productive use of the target language rather than reproducing language models provided by the teacher or textbook.[1585] This will enable learners to use the target language outside of the immediate learning environment. It will also enable learners to take advantage

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[1583] C. Konshita Thomson. 'Self-assessment in self-directed learning: issues of learner diversity', in *Taking Control. Autonomy in Language Learning*. Eds R. Pemberton et al. (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, 1996), 77.
[1584] L. Dickenson. *Learner Autonomy 2: Learner training for language learning.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1992), 13.
[1585] D. Nunan. 'Towards autonomous learning: some theoretical, empirical and practical issues' in *Taking Control: Autonomy in language Learning.* Eds R. Pemberton et al. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 20.

of language learning opportunities that arise during language use. As argued in Chapter 6, Drama in Education provides meaningful, contextualised opportunities for learners to develop the skills necessary for confident face-to-face interaction through the target language.

97% quite or very much agreed that DiE would help to improve interaction between learners. 'It was exhilarating and very rich in interaction' (R24 POW3). The participants were beginning to recognise that DiE provides improved opportunities for learners to interact, to negotiate meaning and thus to peer-scaffold to higher levels of communicative competence. As outlined in Chapter 2 comprehensible input is necessary for language acquisition. Negotiation of meaning is used to make input comprehensible and easier to process.[1586] When learners interact their attempts to communicate may go wrong. To maximise comprehension and negotiate communication difficulties, modifications to input and to interaction may be used. These modifications include repetitions and paraphrase, comprehension checks, clarification requests and use of gesture help to ensure that input is comprehensible. They help to fine-tune L2 input so it becomes better suited to the learner's current state of language development. Researcher observations of training sessions confirm that DiE improves interaction between learners by providing the stimulus to interact and creating a relaxed atmosphere which encourages intermingling. As one of the student teachers wrote after the workshops 'It was stimulating and promoted relaxed interaction among students' (R18 POW3).

78% of respondents quite or very much agreed that DiE in the language class would improve interaction between teacher and learners. As discussed in Chapter 6, DiE carries a strong emphasis on collaboration of learners with the teacher. In fact, because it is not teacher-led it could not exist without the participants sharing their ideas and opinions. Improved interaction between teacher and learners enables the teacher to better understand the needs and interests of the learners so that he/she may work to make their language-learning personal and meaningful. Knowing the interests of the group will enable lessons to be planned so that the target language may become a medium for pursuing and furthering their interests as set out as an aim in the Junior and Leaving Certificate language syllabuses. Improved interaction between teacher and learners can help establish a relaxed yet motivating classroom atmosphere.[1587] As discussed in Chapter 2, this helps the language acquisition process by lowering the affective filter and thereby enabling a greater proportion of L2 input to be converted into acquired knowledge.[1588] As one respondent wrote 'It builds a better relationship between the teacher and the pupils and also helps the pupils to connect more with the language' (R8 POW6).

[1586] M.H. Long. 'Native speaker/non-native speaker conversation and the negotiation of comprehensible input' in *Applied Linguistics Vol. 4* (1983): 126-41.
[1587] J. Neelands. *Learning Through Imagined Experience*. Ed. Patrick Scott. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1992).
[1588] S. Krashen. *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications*. (London: Longman, 1985), 3.

63% indicated that they quite or very much agreed that DiE would help to lower anxiety levels - 'It should prove a tremendous asset in creating a positive attitude/atmosphere amongst the learners' (R14 POW3). 62% quite or very much agreed that DiE would help learners become less embarrassed about speaking in front of a group – 'I think it helps in lowering the level of anxiety and it may also help shy students!' (R5 POW7).

As discussed above, learners who are stressed about their language learning may not be as effective in their efforts to acquire or produce the target language. The interactive, collaborative classroom environment helps create a more relaxed classroom atmosphere where everyone's contribution is supported and welcomed. As outlined in Chapter 3 risk taking in the target language is an essential element in learning to communicate in the target language, and occurred consistently during training sessions as recorded in the researcher's journal on numerous occasions. To take risks and experiment in using the target language, learners must feel sufficiently at ease to use the resources at their disposal to communicate their meaning without fear of making errors or looking foolish. As discussed in Chapter 2, pushed output is fundamental to developing communicative competence and learners are best supported in their efforts to produce the target language in an anxiety-free environment.

76% quite or very much agreed that DiE would help to focus learner attention on the communication of meaning. As contended in Chapter 3, a communicative approach centres on the notion of learning to communicate through communication. Conveying and receiving messages or meaning is fundamental to communication. As the data from student teachers' memories of their language classes at school suggest, language classes too frequently focus on the structure of the language with insufficient attention given to communication of meaning. As argued in Chapter 6, drama in the language class creates a context and a reason for using the target language, as demonstrated regularly during the training sessions when the learners needed to communicate their thoughts and ideas to the group in order to further the drama. Drama in Education gives learners a voice and encourages them to use it.[1589] As one of the student teachers wrote as her reason for using DiE in the language classes 'To motivate my students and enable them to enjoy and appreciate using the language which is its ultimate purpose' (R1 POW7).

Communicative approaches involve the exercising of the four language skills, reading, writing, listening and speaking around a theme. 84% of respondents quite or very much agreed that DiE would help develop learners' speaking skills and 81% agreed quite or very much that DiE would help to develop learners' listening skills. DiE gives a purpose to the exercising of these skills and as in real

[1589] Cecily O' Neill, 'Active Undertanding: the Power of Drama in the Curriculum' In *Report of Conference on Drama in Education*. Eds. John White and Eilis Mullan (Dublin: National Association for Youth Drama, 1993), 4.

life, each skill flows naturally from the other. All skills are exercised in context. Speaking and listening skills play an integral part in creating and furthering the drama.

Respondents were less enthusiastic about DiE helping to develop reading skills with just 31% indicating quite or very much, and 33% indicating somewhat. They were even less enthusiastic about its abilities to develop writing skills with 22% indicating quite or very much, and 33% indicating some. Post-workshop interviews suggested that these figures may result from respondents' belief that these skills are not neglected in the language class and thus do not need the same level of remedial action from DiE as speaking and listening.

89% quite or very much agreed that DiE could promote a content-rich approach. Journal entries taken during non-participant observation of student teachers in their language classes indicate that frequently, particularly in the early stages of their teaching career, student teachers do not introduce sufficient content in their classes. Entries indicate that insufficient content often results in learners being bored and under challenged. DiE works around a theme to exercise the four language skills in an integrated, contextualised approach. As discussed in Chapter 6 the theme and content are negotiated between learners and their teacher to help ensure learner interest. This helps to ensure that the content evokes a response in the learner to bring them into active participation in the lesson. This was readily identified during the training sessions when it was noted that DiE provides a motivating, content rich learning environment where language learning is contextualised and made relevant as strong links are made with the world outside the classroom. 80% of respondents quite or very much agreed that that DiE helped to link classroom learning with the outside world - 'It makes the language 'real' and useful for the students' (R2 POW7). During the workshops, real-life situations were brought into the classroom for learners to explore through the target language. Links were made with the content of other subject areas to demonstrate that a cross-curricular approach can be exploited for language learning to enrich content and to strengthen associations between language learning and other aspects of the learners' lives. For example, during the creation of one drama story participants set about preparing a meal to welcome the visiting parents of their daughter-in-law to be. This entailed a discussion of recipes for chocolate cake. Participants noted how this could easily be adapted to their classrooms to encourage learners to read recipes in the target language and to describe recipes learnt in Home Economics classes.

91% indicated that they quite or very much agreed that DiE in the language class helped to develop a collaborative approach to learning. As discussed in Chapter 3 the communicative language teacher takes the role of facilitator of learning. This would not be possible without a collaborative approach being established between teacher and learners and data from the observation of training sessions confirmed that this occurred consistently. As argued in Chapter 6, DiE supports the communicative

aim of enabling the teacher to facilitate and manage the group from within. Learners will imperceptibly take their cues from the teacher as he/she models appropriate language and behaviour. DiE enables the teacher to support and encourage by keeping the lines of communication open so all can work within a consensus. Barriers are removed and a framework for the empowerment of learners is built in their place. It was noted in post workshop discussions with participants that they saw the potential of DiE to allow the power relationship between teacher and learners to be tacitly agreed as negotiable, with all working as a team in which everyone's contribution is welcomed and valued.

As demonstrated during the drama training sessions it was recognised by all participants that above DiE promotes increased interaction and collaboration between learners. Through the group and pair work learners helped each other through their respective zones of proximal development[1590] and worked together to examine situations, complete tasks and solve problems. The growth of independence was supported by learner interdependence; they helped one another learn and supported one another in their efforts to produce language - 'I don't usually enjoy 'drama' or being on show but as it was always a group effort, I never felt like I was exposed' (R4 POW7).

81% quite or very much agreed that DiE would intrinsically motivate learners to learn the target language. As argued in Chapter 4 learners who have clearly defined interim goals leading to a main goal are most likely to be successful. If learners' long-term goal is to be able to communicate effectively in the target language then interim steps that enable them to see their growing ability to communicate effectively will help to sustain their motivation.[1591] As claimed in Chapter 6, and as revealed in the observations of the training sessions, DiE can help provide the scaffolding, the opportunities and the impetus to involve learners in using the target language to express and receive messages. This provides the necessary practice and pushed output to build confidence and competence. It was noted in research journal entries that participants commented on how the DiE process would allow learners to see the progress they are making in the target language, their growing ability to make and receive meaning in the target language. DiE helps to maintain learners' motivation as they see progress being made towards their long-term goal. As also seen in Chapter 4, another important motivating factor is the learners' perception of the learning experience; if learners do not derive satisfaction from the pursuit of the learning goal then motivation is likely to dissipate. The use of DiE in the classroom helps to make the learning process pleasurable as learners engage in collaborative activities that give them a sense of ownership and personal control over their learning process. This 'intrinsic reward' offered by the learning process can promote the perception that learning the target language is motivating in itself - 'I think pupils would be much more enthusiastic about learning the language if Drama in Education was used' (R6 POW7).

[1590] L. S. Vygotsky. *Mind in Society*. (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978)
[1591] E. Ushioda. *Learner Autonomy 5: The Role of Motivation*. Ed. D. Little. (Dublin: Authentik, 1996).

As seen from the data elicited from the pre-workshop series sentence completion task, drama activities are often viewed with suspicion as they are seen as belonging to the domain of the extroverted. However, having participated in Drama in Education workshops 71% of respondents quite or very much believed that DiE would encourage shy learners to express themselves in the target language. One respondent commented 'It definitely promotes an encouraging environment for people who are shy to express themselves in normal classes' (R15 POW3). As argued above and in Chapter 6 DiE does not put the spot-light on the individual but instead emphasises a collaborative approach where learners co-operate to achieve a task or solve a problem. Observational data revealed that the use of small-group work and pair work helped to give shy individuals the support and opportunities they needed to practise using the target language without having the eyes of the whole group on them.

82% quite or very much believed that DiE would enrich learners' vocabulary. Written comments showed that respondents believed DiE provided lots of opportunities to consolidate vocabulary used by giving learners opportunities to use it in context. One respondent commented 'I think it is a great way to help learners retain vocabulary and verbs – linking words to action' (R7 POW7). This is confirmed in the analysis of learner questionnaires on the use of DiE in the language class where 63% of that learner cohort indicated that DiE helped their understanding by linking language to action.

90% quite or very much believed that DiE would appeal to different learning styles. As suggested in Chapter 6 DiE uses a range of teaching and learning strategies in a multi-sensory way and facilitates different modes of expression. It enables a wide range of approaches and resources to be used to scaffold and encourage the participation of all. It draws on and supports the interaction of multiple intelligences to best facilitate learners' understanding and learning - 'I am particularly impressed by its ability to be adapted to various learning styles so that every student can take something from a class' (R3 POW4).

58% quite or very much believed that DiE would develop learners' ability to self-assess their progress. As discussed in Chapter 2, learners need to have knowledge of a language but also the ability to use it in socially and culturally accepted ways. Observational data confirms that DiE can help create an infinite variety of social contexts where learners can experience and experiment with the different functions and uses of language. For example contexts created involved participants in contexts such as fans in a spectator stand in a football stadium, strangers making conversation in a train carriage, a residents' association meeting and friends in a coffee shop. As discussed in Chapter 2, learners are involved in a continual process of hypothesis formation and testing with consequent

changes to their internal grammar systems or interlanguage.[1592] To facilitate this, learners need exposure to the target language and opportunities for pushed output. They need a supportive environment where they can experiment with the target language without fear of making errors. In addition they need occasions for reflection on input, their output and positive and negative evidence received. Through participation in the training workshops, student teachers acknowledged that DiE provided built-in opportunities for reflection so that they could reflect on and assess their progress. As discussed in Chapter 4, new hypotheses derived from these reflections can then be tested through further target language input and output and then further reflected on in a continuum of action and reflection.

78% quite or very much believed that DiE would help heighten learners' self-esteem. As argued in Chapter 6 the DiE experience allows learners to see that their previous knowledge, skills and experiences are relevant and helpful in their language learning. This supports the learners' sense of self and creates the affective environment that is best suited to promoting language acquisition. As discussed above and demonstrated during the training workshops, DiE helps create motivating, interesting contexts for learners to use the target language. It scaffolds and supports them into successfully communicating their meanings and receiving the meanings of others. Learners can see how they are progressing in their understanding and production of the target language and this helps to support their self-esteem.

99% quite or very much agreed that DiE would promote enjoyment in the language classroom. This links with the positive response to the workshops noted by the researcher's journal entries following the drama workshops and also by the affirmative responses to the workshop indicated in the questionnaire.

100% of respondents indicated that they enjoyed the drama workshops. Some respondents indicated that they had not expected to but were pleasantly surprised: 'At first I thought I wouldn't, but found myself becoming more involved' (R5 POW6). The data reveals that they appreciated them for the insights they gave into different approaches to language teaching and learning and for the opportunities afforded them to interact with fellow student teachers. Indicative responses are: 'It gave a surprising and welcome insight into the value of drama in the language class' (R18 POW3). 'It made me aware of the various ways in which drama could be used (before I would have had a narrow vision, i.e. thought mainly of plays etc.)' (R13 POW3). 'It's a breath of fresh air to student teachers in a country where the system is rife with curriculum based teaching' (R1 POW7). 'I enjoyed the variety

[1592] R. Cherington. 'Interlanguage' in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning*. Ed. M.Byram (London: 2000), 308.

and high-activity nature of the classes. They were good for communicating with other people in the class – and fun' (R20 POW4).

Post-workshop questionnaire.

Each question begins: Drama in Education in the language classroom will help…	Not at all	A little	Some	V. much/ quite
... to make learners more independent of the teacher.	1%	2%	21%	76%
… to develop learners' confidence in using the target languages	0%	0%	8%	92%
… to improve interaction between learners.	0%	0%	3%	97%
… to improve interaction between teacher and learners.	0%	1%	21%	78%
… to lower anxiety levels.	0%	8%	29%	63%
… to focus learner attention on the communication of meaning.	0%	4%	20%	76%
… learners become less embarrassed when speaking in front of a group.	3%	6%	29%	62%
… to develop speaking skills.	0%	2%	14%	84%
… to develop listening skills.	0%	0%	19%	81%
… to develop reading skills.	12%	24%	33%	31%
… to develop writing skills.	16%	29%	33%	22%
… to promote a content-rich approach.	0%	3%	9%	89%
… to link classroom learning with the outside world.	0%	2%	18%	80%
… to develop a collaborative approach to learning.	0%	0%	9%	91%
… to intrinsically motivate learners to learn the target language.	0%	3%	16%	81%
… to encourage shy learners to express themselves.	0%	9%	20%	71%
… to enrich vocabulary.	0%	3%	15%	82%
… to improve pronunciation.	1%	2%	32%	63%
… to improve intonation.	1%	5%	26%	68%
… to appeal to different learning styles	0%	4%	6%	90%
… to develop learners' ability to self-assess their progress.	2%	11%	29%	58%
… to heighten learners' self-esteem.		1%	19%	78%
…to promote enjoyment in the language classroom.			1%	99%

Table 8.10 Post drama workshop responses (6 cohorts of student teachers: N=238)

99% indicated that they would use DiE in the language class. Their responses indicate that experiencing DiE through the workshops enabled them to see how it could be used in the language classroom: 'The workshops highlighted different but very effective ways of teaching a foreign language' (R21 POW3). Having had the experience of active learning instead of the more typical lecture format was also cited as a reason for understanding the need to introduce it into the classroom: 'It highlighted for me why an active approach is so much more enjoyable for learners' (R3 POW4). This is supported by data yielded from post workshop interviews (see section 8.3.3), where the promotion of active learning was ranked as number one in using DiE in the language class. Those who were apprehensive about organising a drama-based approach were reassured by the training received 'I always thought it would be too difficult to organise logistically. Now I see ways of doing it without too much chaos' (R17 POW4). Others enjoyed the supportive, interactive aspect of the workshops and expressed a desire to transfer this to their language classes: 'I really did enjoy the classes. It was fun and I got to talk to people I didn't speak to before. I did not feel embarrassed and thought some of the activities could be easily transferred into my classroom' (Respondent 2 POW6).

Respondents who would not use DiE in their language classes (1%) cited their lack of confidence in co-ordinating this type of activity. 25% of respondents indicated that they would use DiE but that it would depend on the circumstances. Discipline ranked as the number one consideration with respondents replying that they would use DiE only with classes where discipline was not an issue. Class size ranked second as a condition of use. Teacher confidence ranked third place with respondents writing that they would introduce it slowly until they gained confidence in using the approach. Discipline and class size also ranked high as reasons for not using drama in the survey of experienced teachers.

8.3.3 Post workshop interviews with a sample of student teachers

Each year, after the drama training, a self-selecting sample of student teachers was interviewed. The main purpose of the interviews was to gather information about the extent to which student teachers were using DiE with their classes with whom and for what purpose. The interviews were semi-structured and took place towards the end of the second term when student teachers each had between seven and eight months' experience of teaching their current classes. A total of thirty interviews representing each year group in the research period, with a representative male-female ratio and a representative cross-section of school types were conducted.

Of the thirty interviewees twenty-five were female and five were male. The school types represented were:

Single sex boys' secondary	N=7
Single sex girls' secondary	N=16
Co-educational secondary	N=1
Co-educational vocational	N=2
Co-educational community	N=3

Table 8.11 Interviewees' schools

100% of interviewees considered DiE a useful methodology for furthering the aims of a communicative language class. 100% declared that they would be interested in using DiE in their language classes, however, 10% (representing two male student teachers and one female student teacher) stated that they were not using DiE with their current class groups. The reasons given for not using DiE despite being convinced of its usefulness centred on discipline issues, learner and school expectations. One of the male student teachers, working in a single sex boys' secondary school, stated that he would not feel comfortable using it in his current school. He believed that because of the history and ethos of the school, the learners had pre-conceived ideas about how a male teacher should teach, and using DiE did not fit into these ideas. He stated that the boys would probably accept this approach if he were a female teacher. He conceded that he might try using a DiE approach in this school if he were teaching a first year group but that the older boys would not accept to work this way with him. 'Difficulty that a guy would have with these guys in particular is that they wouldn't see that as being a man's role. It's nothing to do with right or wrong it's just more that a man doesn't teach like that particularly within the ethos of this school' (R4 POWI). Interestingly, the other male teacher, who was working in a girls' secondary school also claimed he would not feel comfortable using DiE with his learners because the girls would not accept to work this way with him. 'I don't know I do a bit of role play with them but anything more than that and they'd just go bananas on me' (R17 POWI). The female teacher who worked in a co-educational community school stated that although she would love to use a DiE approach, she had initially had such discipline problems with her second year groups that she would not risk doing anything that might compromise her. She could not use DiE with her third years because she just saw them once a week and her co-operating teacher directed her exactly on what to do - 'It's just the book and the papers with them, there's no time for collaborative work' (R29 POW1).

It is interesting to note that the proportion of males who do not use DiE is greater and this reflects the trend seen in the data yielded in the questionnaire issued to practising teachers about their use of DiE in the language classes and discussed in section 8.2.4.3. Here it was seen that male teachers were less

likely to use drama activities with their classes than female teachers and less likely to want to receive training in the area. Interestingly, discipline issues emerged in this questionnaire as the main reason why practising teachers would not use drama activities in the language class and it also emerges in the interviews as a key reason for not using drama in the language class.

Respondents who used DiE with their language groups gave a variety of reasons for doing so: each interviewee cited several objectives for using DiE. Table 8.12 represents a rank ordering of the reasons given in the student teachers' individual unprompted contributions. Responses indicate that DiE is most often used by interviewees to promote active, collaborative learning, to develop learners' communicative competence and to support syllabus themes and topics. The student teachers who use it (90%) view DiE as a means of advancing the aims of the Junior and Leaving Certificates. This is supported in research journal entries of non-participant researcher observations which indicate that student teachers use drama activities to support the achievement of clear cognitive and behavioural outcomes. They use them as a method to advance the aims of the syllabus and not as add-on extras. However, it is encouraging to note, that following period of training in DiE, the student teachers regarded DiE first and foremost as a means of encouraging learners to become more involved in their learning.

The interviews yielded valuable advice on how to use DiE in the language class. Additional data emerged on student teachers' experiences of language teaching and learning when they were in second-level school which confirmed conclusively that emphasis was put on reading and writing in a passive learning environment which they now recognised as being contradictory to DES guidelines on best practice in language classes.

Objectives in using DiE in the language classroom	**Rank**
Promote active learning	1
Practice and development of the four skills	2
Collaborative learning	2
Communicative use of tl	=3
Support syllabus themes and topics	=3
Encourage interaction	=4
Fun/enjoyment	=4
Hook learner interest	=4
Link learning with outside world	=4
Promote learner autonomy	=4
Practise structures	=5
Develop learner confidence in oral production	=5
Foster a supportive classroom atmosphere	=5
Facilitate vocabulary and structure practice and learning	6
Encourage a Multiple Intelligences approach to teaching/learning	7
Facilitate differentiation	8

Table 8.12 Reasons for using DiE in the language classroom

It is noteworthy that all of the reasons cited are tantamount to good practice in education, and concur with the stated principles of a communicative approach as described in this thesis. It indicates that providing training in the use of DiE allows the student language teachers to experience its benefits and begin to make connections between DiE and a communicative approach to language education.

8.3.4 Participant observations

As noted in section 8.2.3, non-participant observation of student language teachers and their learners in their classrooms revealed year on year that student teachers generally needed the time up to Christmas to internalise the content of their language methodology lectures, the advice of their professional placement supervisors, and their reading matter. They also needed this time to experiment with and reflect on their use of a communicative approach to language teaching and learning. Therefore, workshops on the use of DiE in the foreign language class were offered in the second term. The researcher facilitated these workshops and also engaged in participant observation. An analysis of the data from each research journal from 2001 to 2007, revealed a number of key trends which emerged consistently from the observations made in each year group.

Research journal entries note that student teachers generally appeared to be quite apprehensive at the beginning of the first workshop. This is confirmed by the responses to the pre-workshop writing task as discussed in section 8.3.1 where participants expressed unease about being singled out, humiliating themselves and having to perform in front of others. However, notes indicate that while the researcher read aloud a random selection of these sentence completion statements, participants laughed and immediately appeared more comfortable as they realised that others felt the same. They appeared further relieved after the facilitator had reassured them that nobody would be put on the spot or embarrassed by the activities. Participants were then engaged in warm-up activities that are particularly suitable for language learning. As they saw the immediate applicability of these exercises to their language lessons and as the warm-up activities fulfilled their objective, participants visibly relaxed. Participants frequently commented on how their involvement in the activities along with the relaxed atmosphere made them forget about their shyness and apprehensions. This is reinforced in post-workshop questionnaires where respondents wrote of how the workshops had helped them to focus on the activities rather than their shyness 'Yes, it helps to break down barriers and shyness between adults then it should definitely do the same for pupils' (R1 POW 7).

As the workshops progressed journal entries indicate that participants became increasingly involved and collaborative. This perception is reinforced in questionnaire responses as discussed in section 8.3.1 where respondents write how they enjoyed the workshops and became involved even though they had not expected to. It is further reinforced by data indicating that 100% of participants enjoyed the drama workshops and by the high turn-out of student teachers at each of the DiE workshops.

8.4 Learners' responses to the use of drama in the language class in second level schools

175 questionnaires (Form F. Appendix 4) completed and returned by language learners in second-level schools by their student teachers were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The learners were in a cross-section of Dublin based schools and were from first, second and transition year classes since these were the classes the student teachers were teaching. The object of the questionnaires which were distributed and collected by the learners' class teacher was to find out if they enjoyed the use of DiE in their language classes and why, whether they would recommend the use of DiE in the language class and why, and to what extent they found DiE helped them to gain a better understanding of the target language and why.

When asked if they enjoyed the use of DiE in the language class 71% of learners replied very much or a lot (see fig. 8.18). An analysis of their comments revealed that a majority (63%) wrote that they enjoyed the use of DiE in their language class because they found it made language learning easier. One learner wrote 'I liked doing French this way because I think we learnt a lot more' (R3 F1). Almost two thirds wrote that they learned more because DiE made language lessons more enjoyable, for example, 'It was fun and I got to enjoy going to class which made you hardly realise you were learning when you were' (R12 F1). Making learning more interesting was ranked second (26%) as a reason for enjoying the use of DiE in the language class, with 11% saying they enjoyed it because it was fun. A typical comment was: 'Yes, it was good, I enjoyed myself' (R10 F11).

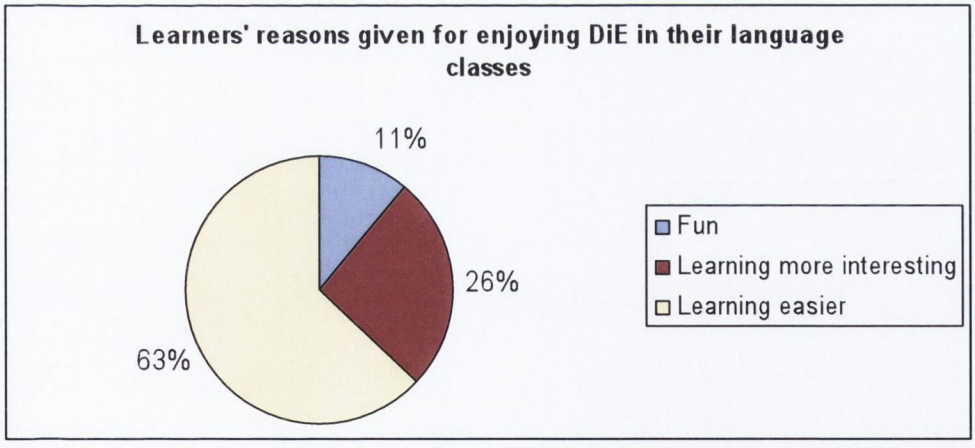

Figure 8.18 Learners' reasons for enjoying DiE (n=175)

When asked if they would recommend the use of DiE in the language class, 80% replied positively. 44% of these respondents wrote that they would recommend DiE because it was more enjoyable and interesting, therefore motivating learners to work harder and concentrate more. Typical responses are: 'It is a great way of learning because it is unusual and fun so you listen more and you are not bored or tired' (R8 F14), and 'It's much easier to learn and you concentrate much more because you're more

interested because it's different to other classes and more fun' (R10 F15). Ranking second (26%) was the support offered by the drama context which made comprehension and production of the target language easier. Ranking third (23%) was the support that the collaborative approach offered, a typical response being 'It is sometimes easier to understand things when a friend explains them to you in a less technical way than teachers' (R9 F12). Ranking fourth (7%) was the motivation that the creative nature of DiE offered.

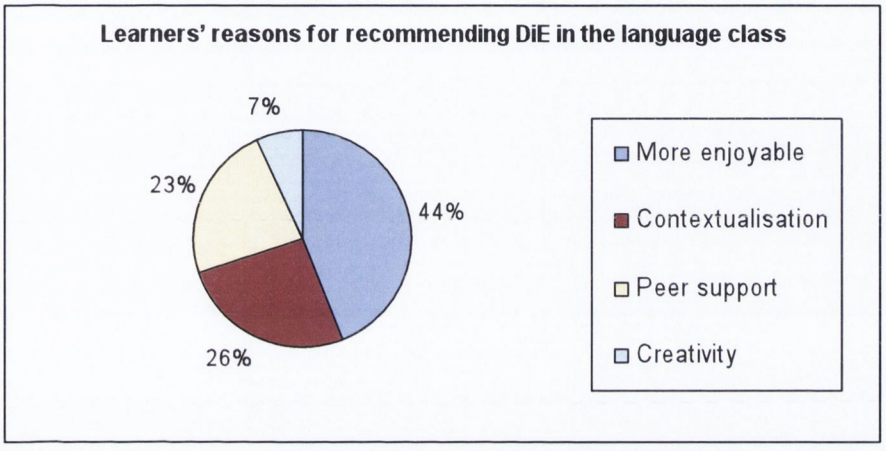

Figure 8.19 Learners' reasons for recommending DiE (n=175)

Asked if DiE activities helped them to gain a better understanding of the target language 64% replied very much or a lot. The main reasons cited were better contextualisation of the language (37%), linking language to action (33%), and collaboration with classmates (30%), (see fig.8.19).

'The best thing about drama in the French class is you got to communicate with others and have a laugh and when we did this I looked forward to doing French' (R3 F15).

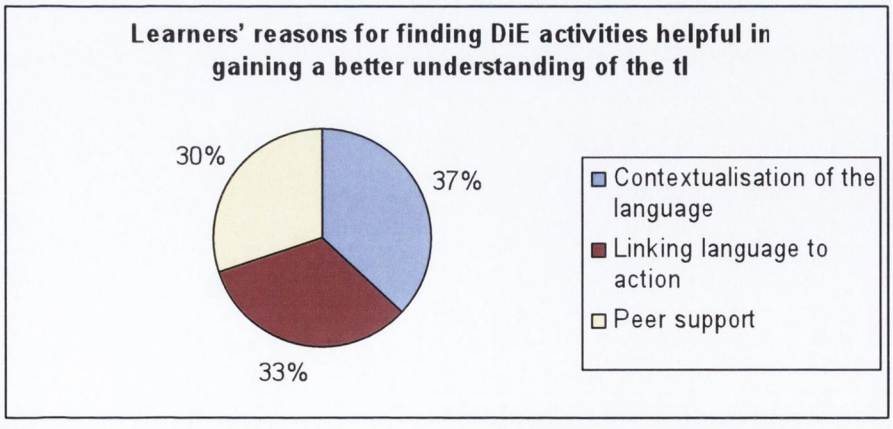

Figure 8.20 Learners' reasons for finding DiE activities helpful (n=175)

8.5 Post project follow-up interviews

The researcher's experience of working with newly-qualified teachers in their first and second years of teaching, showed that they are frequently under tremendous pressures and stress during this time and so it was decided to interview former student teachers, all of whom had taken part in the DiE training sessions, and all of whom had now gained a minimum of two years post teacher-training experience. All of the interviewees had regularly used DiE with their classes during their teacher-training period. A total of ten teachers were interviewed representing a cross-section of the student teacher cohorts from 2001 to 2007. They were teaching in a variety of school types throughout Ireland. The object of the interviews was to find out the extent, if any, to which they were using DiE now in their language classes and to explore their reasons for doing so or not. The interviews were conducted by telephone and the researcher had contacted the interviewees beforehand to schedule a suitable time and date to conduct the interview.

100% of the interviewees reported that they use DiE in their language classes. Responses showed that 100% used them often and very often with first, second and fourth year groups. This contrasts with the data yielded from the questionnaire issued to practising teachers which indicates that while practising teachers are also most likely to use drama activities with first, second and fourth years, just 50% use it often or very often with first years, 30% with second years and 30% often or very often with fourth years.

100% of the interviewees claimed to use drama activities occasionally with third, fifth and sixth year groups. Again this contrasts sharply with findings from the questionnaire issued to practising teachers which found that 40% used drama activities occasionally with third years, 30% used them occasionally with fifth years and 10% often or very often with fifth years, and 20% used them occasionally with sixth years. When the interviewees were asked why they used drama strategies less frequently with third, fifth and sixth years the reasons cited were pressures of examinations, learners being unfamiliar with this way of learning and learner expectations of how the course should be covered.

When asked what factors might discourage them from using drama activities with a group they cited discipline issues, senior learners not being used to oral production of the target language and unused to collaborative approaches.

All of the interviewees claimed to use a wide variety of drama strategies. They reported that the strategies they most frequently used with junior classes are drama games, drama warm-ups, mime, role play, line of life, tableau and thought tracking. The interviewees were not presented with a list of drama strategies from which to choose. The list emerged from a qualitative analysis of interviewees'

responses. When asked what strategies they used with senior cycle students the list was the same as above but they reported putting less emphasis on games, warm-ups and mime and added reading and writing in role, conscience alley, hot seating and role on the wall to the list.

All expressed an interest in receiving further training in the use of DiE in the language class with typical responses being - 'We covered so much new stuff on the Dip. [Post Graduate Diploma in Education] that a lot of it went over my head. I find drama activities really useful so I'd love to have a few more workshops' (R4 PSI), and 'I was focused on junior classes when I was doing the Dip. I think I'd get a lot more out of the workshops now that I have a bit of experience' (R8 PSI).

When asked why they use DiE in their language classes, responses showed the emphasis to be firmly on creating opportunities for learners to use the target language communicatively (table 8.13). Their objective was to establish a classroom atmosphere conducive to motivating their learners to learn the target language. To this end they were concerned with making links with the world outside the classroom. Responses indicated that teachers valued DiE as a means of developing the four skills and learning and consolidating vocabulary and structures.

Their replies ranked as follows:

Reasons cited for using DiE	Rank
Establish contexts for real communication	1
Establish an anxiety free atmosphere	2
Motivate learners	3
Make links with the outside world	4
Develop the four language skills	=5
Vocabulary and structure learning and consolidation	=5

Table 8.13 Reasons cited for using DiE

The differences in the responses from this sample of teachers to those who participated in the surveys discussed earlier in sections 8.2.4.2 and 8.2.4.3 are stark. There is a substantial difference in their attitudes to active learning in the language class, and there is an almost seismic disparity between the extend of their use of active teaching and learning methods as compared to the teachers reported in the surveys. The only difference of note which can account for the significant difference in both attitude towards and practice of active learning, relates to the degree of training provided. All of the interviewees had received some training in DiE, albeit limited within the parameters of a busy

Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) timetable and schedule, whereas only 17% of the teachers surveyed had received training. It is also significant that while the degree of training provided to teachers appears to account for the difference between these two groups of practicing teachers, the teachers surveyed in the large sample do not recognise a lack of training as serious impediment to their ability to use DiE in their language teaching (8%). Other factors such as class size, time constraints and discipline rank highest, with lack of training ranking only eight. As the interviewees confirmed, and as the literature also testifies to (see Chapters 4 and 6), the use of active learning approaches such as DiE in the language classroom, reduces considerably the extent of classroom management and discipline issues, and also results in a higher cognitive and affective learning outcome. The data cited earlier in the second level language learners survey (see section 8.4), similarly testifies to the role that DiE plays in making language learning both more enjoyable and interesting, but also easier to learn.

It is interesting to note that the interviewees enthusiasm towards the use of DiE in their language classes has not waned over the 2 plus years since their initial training and exposure to the techniques, and thus the positive responses recorded in the post training surveys and interviews at the end of each academic year (see section 8.3.2), have been sustained and strengthened according to interviewees responses. They all noted that as a result of seeing their learners benefit from use of a DiE methodology, their own commitment to this active learning approach has been increased. This is also evident in the wider range of DiE techniques being used, and with a greater number of classes, including the exam classes.

It is noteworthy that while these teachers' use of active learning is sustained and increasing, the trend in the general population of teachers is moving in the opposite direction. Data presented at the outset of this chapter in section 8.2.1 indicates that experiences of active learning in the classroom are decreasing. There is a notable downward shift between the first data set (2001 to 2003) presented, and the second data set (2005 to 2007) in terms of second level learners experience of a communicative language environment in the classroom. This is most noticeable in those statistics which report:

- a 17% decrease in the numbers of teachers using the target language in classrooms;
- a six fold increase in the numbers reporting no opportunities being provided in their second level classrooms to motivate them as learners to produce the target language;
- a 20% increase in the numbers of former second level students who would describe their language classes as never having been collaborative in approach (60 to 80%);
- a 25% increase in the numbers reporting that no emphasis was put on communication through the target language (from 60 to 85%);
- a 24% increase in the use of a transmission approach to teaching grammar (from 56% to 80%); and

- a reduction in the integration of the four language skills with greater numbers of respondents in the 2005 to 2007 cohort noting that most emphasis was placed on reading and writing rather than speaking and listening when attending second level education.

This downward trend in the use of active and communicative teaching and learning approaches contradicts the trend anticipated in the primary and secondary literature in the field. As has been shown in Chapters 2 to 5 of this thesis, the literature points convincingly to the significant role that active learning can play in the enhanced teaching and learning of MFL at second level. However, the data reveals that instead of an improvement in 2001 to 2007, the situation appears to be deteriorating. Respondents cited a number of reasons for this, reasons which were confirmed repeatedly from different data sources in this study. These were chiefly, the influence and pressures of state examinations, large class sizes, mixed ability classes and inclusive learning environments, and a lack of training in the implementation of communicative approaches. As has been noted here, those teachers who had participated in the project some years earlier and received a limited degree of training in DiE, unanimously bucked the general trend recorded in the data. It would appear that this training experience was sufficiently effective to impress upon them the value and efficacy of using DiE to assist in the implementation and nurturing of a communicative approach in the language classrooms.

8.6 Concluding comments

The final chapter in this thesis will endeavour to draw the various strands of this research study together and offer some tentative conclusions. However, it is possible to assert that the experience of engaging in a period of DiE training impacted positively on participating student teachers (now practicing teachers) in terms of their receptivity and implementation of communicative approach in their language classrooms. The highly structured period of training and follow up support provided during their professional education programme allowed them to put theory into practice in relation to the communicative approach, and to experience at first hand concrete and tangible strategies through DiE which serve to deliver effectively and affectively many of the core principles underpinning the communicative approach to language teaching and learning.

Chapter Nine

Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1 Introduction

This chapter will offer a summary of the major areas of enquiry of the study, including both the review of literature and the empirical and qualitative data from the practitioner based project. The major findings emerging from this study will be outlined in a concise and accessible approach to highlight them appropriately, and recommendations arising from conducting this research will be offered. Finally, the parameters within which this study was conducted and its limitations will be outlined, as will areas for future research in this field.

9.2 Summary

This study was concerned with the specific field of second language learning and a communicative approach to teaching and learning. The researcher sought to investigate the related areas of SLA and learner autonomy in an effort to determine the extent to which an active learning approach is advocated in the literature. European and national policy documents were also examined in order to assess whether such guidelines similarly reflected an emphasis on active learning and learner autonomy. The researcher's prior expertise and experience in using DiE in language teaching and learning prompted an investigation into whether DiE and a communicative approach to teaching and learning were similar in their theoretical underpinnings and bases. Directed and informed by the review of literature, a research project was established to explore in practice any potential connections between the two approaches to education. This was conducted with practising language teachers, student teachers and second level language learners over a 6 year research period, during which an enormous amount of data was gathered, collated, analysed and synthesised. The summative outcomes were presented and discussed in Chapter 8, and the major findings will be summarised in the following section.

9.3. Research findings

Where relevant, findings from the review of literature are compared with the data from the research project.

- The data suggests that there was very little collaboration between second language teachers and their learners with regard to the decision-making process in Irish second level schools, in contrast to the findings from the literature which asserts that learner autonomy can only be

developed through the practice of autonomy and learners need to be supported in its practice.[1593]

- A sizeable majority of teachers did not use the target language for classroom management and interaction, despite the fact that the use of the target language for classroom management is a basic tenet of a communicative approach to language teaching and learning.[1594]
- Swain holds that production skills can only be developed by pushing learners to produce language through oral and written work.[1595] However, the data reveals that few motivating opportunities were created for learners to produce language.
- A communicative approach, with its emphasis on learning to communicate through communication, would suggest the necessity of a collaborative approach to provide opportunities for communication,[1596] which contrasts with the fact that very few respondents in the study experienced a collaborative approach in second level classrooms.
- Contrary to the recommendation to create opportunities for learners and their teachers to use the target language for real communication,[1597] a significant majority indicated that little or no emphasis was put on communication through the target language in their language classes at school.
- Student teachers revealed that they were apprehensive about using the target language because they did not have the experience of their teachers using it when they were at school. They also found it a challenge to convince learners who, in turn, had not been accustomed to a maximum of target language being used by teachers that they would understand and learn better as a result of this exposure.
- The literature suggests that an inductive, discovery learning approach be used in the teaching and learning of grammar.[1598] However, data yielded suggests that a transmission and 'drill-like' approach was used.
- A communicative approach advises that the four skills be developed in an integrated approach, however over 80% of respondents reported that an integrated approach to the development of the four skills was not used.
- Despite the fact, or perhaps because of the fact, that most of the respondents had not experienced a learner-centred, creative approach when they were learning MFL at second-

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[1593] D. Little. *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.* (Dublin: Authentik, 1991), 4.
[1594] N. Pachler and K. Field. *Learning to Teach Modern Foreign Languages in the Secondary School. A Companion to School Experience.* 2nd edition. (London: Routledge Palmer, 2001).
[1595] M. Swain and S. Lapkin. 'Problems in output and the cognitive processes they generate: a step towards second language learning' in *Applied Linguistics* Vol. 16 (1995): 371-391.
[1596] R. Mitchell. 'The communicative approach to language teaching: An introduction.' In *Teaching Modern Languages.* Ed. A. Swarbrick (London: Routledge/The Open University, 1994).
[1597] *Ibid.*
[1598] *Ibid.*

level, 92% expressed a desire for ideas on how to make their teaching more innovative, motivating and learner-centred.

- When asked to list areas that they would particularly like to cover during a language methodology course, grammar ranked highest but they expressed a desire to how to make grammar interesting and fun and this indicates their receptivity to approaches that are learner-centred. They also expressed a wish to learn how to develop and access creative activities and resources, and use the text book as an aid to teaching and learning rather than something to be followed slavishly. This indicates receptivity to the notion of active, involved learning among a majority of student language teachers.
- 89% of practising language teachers believe they have not been furnished with sufficient guidelines/training to facilitate the fostering of learner autonomy. There is a belief that the Department of Education and Science (DES) has neglected this area. There is a willingness among respondents to learn about how to foster learner autonomy but there appears to be insufficient opportunities for training.
- 82% of practising language teachers feel that they have not been furnished with sufficient support to encourage greater oral participation among their learners. They believe they do not have sufficient in-service support. Large class sizes, the backwash effect of state examinations which place too much emphasis on reading and writing, textbooks which emphasise the development of reading and writing skills, and a lack of learner motivation are also cited as obstacles.
- 82% of practising teachers believe that they have not been furnished with sufficient information to implement a wider range of teaching methodologies in the language classroom and express a need for more in-service. The difficulties cited include heavy workloads, learners being focused on preparing for examinations, backwash effect of state examinations, and time constraints.
- 78% of practising teachers believe that the Junior and Leaving Certificate programmes do not support learners to use language independently in real, unpredictable situations. They suggest that a formulaic approach to preparing for the examinations will achieve good grades. An over-emphasis on reading and writing is seen as a hurdle to the fostering of independent use of the language in real, unpredictable situations. Learner perception and expectation of what should be covered in preparation for the examinations and how, is also a difficulty.
- Teachers highlight the absence of a compulsory oral examination at Junior Certificate level as having a very negative effect on the development of oral competence. The use of English for answering aural questions is also cited as a barrier to promoting independent use of the target language as it necessitates a good deal of mother tongue use in the classroom.
- The data revealed that practising language teachers have a limited knowledge of DiE strategies, apart from role play.

- The reasons or circumstances that discourage teachers from using drama in the language class are discipline problems, time constraints (both within and outside the classroom), and large class sizes. Fear of losing control of the class is the biggest deterrent.
- Learners gain autonomy in their use of the target language by being actively involved in productive use of the target language rather than reproducing language models provided by the teacher or textbook.[1599] Following their training in DiE, 92% of student teachers quite or very much agreed that DiE would help develop learners' confidence in using the target language.
- The literature revealed that developing communicative competence is reliant on comprehensible input. A basic means of fostering the creation of comprehensible input is through interaction which facilitates negotiation of meaning used to make input comprehensible and easier to process.[1600] Following the workshops 97% of student teachers quite or very much agreed that DiE would help to improve interaction between learners, to negotiate meaning and thus to peer-scaffold to higher levels of communicative competence.
- Improved interaction between teacher and learners can help establish a relaxed yet motivating classroom atmosphere.[1601] The data confirmed that the use of DiE improved the interaction between teacher and learners and helped to lower anxiety levels.
- Respondents indicated that DiE could promote a content-rich approach and link classroom learning with the outside world to intrinsically motivate learners, and would enrich learners' vocabulary.
- A majority of respondents noted that DiE would promote enjoyment in the language classroom, and enhance learners' self esteem.
- The use of DiE with second level learners had a positive impact, making comprehension and production of the target language easier.
- 100% of interviewees who had participated in the drama training workshops reported that they still use DiE in their language classes and claimed to use a wide variety of drama strategies.

9.4 Recommendations

The review of literature highlights the compatibility of a DiE methodology with furthering the aims of a communicative approach to language teaching and learning. DiE can offer the support and the contexts to develop learners' communicative competence and their autonomy as users and learners of

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[1599] D. Nunan. 'Towards autonomous learning: some theoretical, empirical and practical issues', In *Taking Control: Autonomy in language Learning.* Eds R. Pemberton et al. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), 20.

[1600] M.H. Long. 'Native speaker/non-native speaker conversation and the negotiation of comprehensible input' in *Applied Linguistics Vol. 4* (1983), 126-41.

[1601] J. Neelands. *Learning Through Imagined Experience*. Ed. Patrick Scott. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1992).

the target language. Surveys of, and interviews with student teachers and practising teachers, who have participated in drama training workshops confirm this finding. By contrast, language teachers who have not been trained in the use of DiE in the language class consider drama as a source of enjoyment and do not see its value as a means of advancing the aims of a communicative classroom. However, language learners, whose teachers have used DiE in their language classes enjoyed it, found it helpful in their language learning, and would recommend its use in the language class. It is recommended that DiE be promoted widely among language teachers as an effective approach to teaching and learning in the language class.

SLA research and European language learning initiatives point to the importance of active learning approaches, collaborative learning and the fostering of learner autonomy in developing learners' communicative competence. However, practising language teachers surveyed believe that they do not have enough training or support to implement recommendations. It is recommended that language teachers be given considerably more support in the form of in-service training which will educate teachers in the theoretical underpinnings of developments in language teaching and learning as well as providing them with practical, hands-on experience of how to implement them in their current teaching contexts.

In order that Drama in Education be understood by language teachers as a teaching methodology which can further the development of their learners' communicative competence, in-service should be complemented by sustained pre-service training in the use of DiE in the language class. This training should educate student teachers in the theory and the practice of DiE in the language class to enable them to understand why it can be used, and how it can be used to advance the aims of communicative language teaching and learning. If student teachers' practical exposure to DiE is not supported by its theoretical underpinnings there is a danger that it will continue to be considered as a source of light relief in the language class.

In surveys of and interviews with practising and student teachers, the negative back-wash effects of the Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations is very often cited as a reason for devoting so much class time to the development of reading and writing skills to the detriment of oral and aural skills. It is recommended that an oral examination be compulsory at Junior Certificate level and, that at Leaving Certificate level, the oral examination be assigned a higher percentage of marks, in particular for Higher Level candidates. To avoid the formulaic approach identified by so many of the teachers and student teachers surveyed and interviewed, it is recommended that part of the oral examination include an opportunity to engage in spontaneous, unpredictable dialogue such as a DiE context will provide.

9.5 Limitations of the research

As identified in Chapter 7 (see section 7.6), the researcher was aware of a number of potential areas of bias as she approached the study, and she employed a series of research tools to reduce these and triangulate her data sources. In addition, there are a number of other issues that warrant comment here. Firstly, the extended nature of the data collection period had certain irrefutable advantages from the perspective of solidifying and validating the qualitative data, and increasing its generalisability. It served to indicate that the same or very similar attitudes, opinions, experiences and perceptions existed among the research sample over a period of 6 years, thereby diminishing potential claims that the data represents a particular group at a specific time, and may deliver different results had the research been conducted at a different time and with a different group. However, such an approach also resulted in the generation of an enormous quantity of data, which at times almost overwhelmed the researcher. Decisions had to be taken at a later stage to limit the presentation of the data, as it became too unwieldy and threatened to seriously distort the overall layout, organisation and presentation of the thesis. Thus, rather than present the data from each cohort of students which might have been a more logical approach, themes, patterns and issues were identified across the data sample in a comparative mode where relevant, and reported on.

The longitudinal nature of the study also necessitated the administration of two surveys of practising teachers (one in 2005 and one in 2007), in order to ensure that the data was up to date and reflected teachers' opinions.

It is acknowledged that had there been greater time available on the student teachers' timetables, more time would have been given to the drama training workshops. Eight hours of training was deemed the absolute minimum required to efficiently cover the material in order to empower participants and equip them with sufficient confidence and skills to try out the approaches with their own learners in schools. Had greater time been available for such training workshops in DiE, it is possible that a different outcome may have been recorded.

Similarly, it is acknowledged that the practical elements of the research project were conducted in one third level institution, and had it been conducted in another institution, and with a different instructor, the outcome and results may have been different.

Finally, in view of the amount of data generated, additional processing time was required and this ultimately impacted upon the final completion date for the thesis. It caused further challenges in relation to keeping up to date with new initiatives and the publication of new material and reports in the field which were on-going while the data was being processed. The researcher is reasonably confident that she succeeded in this regard.

9.6 Areas for further study

As a result of having conducted this study, it is recommended that a larger and more extended DiE training and education project be devised and evaluated in a number of third level institutions with student language teachers. Similarly, as the data revealed, it would appear that there is a demand among practising language teachers for training and education in the use of DiE techniques in language teaching and learning. Such initiatives could form the basis of a research study and, if successful, inform the provision of future in-service education courses for language teachers.

9.7 Closing observations

As an addendum, and in the closing remarks of this chapter, it is important to note that as the researcher I was surprised by the data provided from the general language teaching population which indicates a regression away from the principles of a communicative approach and a return towards structuralism. Anecdotal evidence would have pointed towards a position of reliance on textbook teaching and a lack of emphasis on the integration of the four language skills, but it did not prepare me for the extent to which practice in second level MFL teaching and learning has slipped, and appears to be moving further away from the achievement of communicative language teaching and learning, despite the introduction of progressive EU and national guidelines in the field. It signals that despite the positive outcomes of the drama training programme, there is a huge task facing policy makers and practitioners in introducing and sustaining a communicative approach to language teaching and learning in second level schools. However, if some or any of the recommendations in this thesis are taken on board, there is hope for a brighter future and a generation of plurilingual citizens.

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Appendix 1

Commonly used Drama in Education Strategies

1. **Collective or collaborative storytelling.** The whole class joins in with the telling of the story. The teacher leads the telling and invites individuals to supply words, sound effects, phrases or whole sentences. The way the detail is supplied by the class while the development of the plot is controlled by the teacher.
2. **Conscience Alley:** At a critical moment in a character's life when a dilemma, problem, comma or choice must be made, the character walks between two rows of students who may offer advice as the character passes. The advice may be from the students as themselves or from other characters; the advive may include lines or words spoken earlier in the drama.
3. **Costuming:** Selected props or items of clothing are chosen by the teacher to indicate a particular role to the class. It is important that any costume is put on in front of the class so they observe the teacher going into role in front of them, and there is no confusion about who the teacher actually is.
4. **Defining space:** This is the way in which the teacher and class agree on the parameters and features of the fictional space. Two chairs, for example, may mark the position of the gateposts leading to the castle.
5. **Forum Theatre:** All 'performers' and 'observers' take responsibility for the crafting of the drama. A small group act out a drama for the rest of the group as 'observers'. The 'observers' have the right to stop the drama at any point they wish and make suggestions as to how it might proceed, ask fore the scene or moment to be replayed with changes designed to bring out another point of view or focus.
6. **Hotseating:** The teacher or the participant is questioned in role by the others. Whoever is on the 'hotseat' answers as their character would.
7. **Improvisation:** A spontaneous acting out of a given situation in which participants have to respond to given circumstances. They act and speak in role. There is no pre-planning. Improvisation is often led by the teacher in role enabling her to keep control of the direction of the improvisation.
8. **Mantle of the Expert:** The major feature of the convention is that participants are in role as characters with specialist knowledge relevant to the situation they find themselves in.
9. **Modelling:** A character is moulded into a still image by the other participants in the group who speak the instructions as the character takes on these physical attributes.
10. **Narration:** Teacher narration in drama activities is often a very useful device. The teacher is empowered to direct particular aspects of the drama. Narration can be used to excite or build tension in the drama.

11. **Overheard conversations:** Participants in groups make up conversations that people in their drama may have had. They then overhear one another's conversations as though they are eavesdropping. This enables the participants to work in small groups and gives all of them the chance to comment in role on the action of the drama.
12. **Ritual:** Any action, no matter how simple and mundane, can be performed in a formal and dignified manner to make the actions seem significant.
13. **Role on the wall:** A record of a character is kept in the form of a large outline of a figure in which might write key lines, phrases, ideas or feelings about the character. The outline is kept and re-edited as discover more about the character.
14. **Statementing**: Statementing involves the participants literally in making statements about a person, event or place in the drama. The statements can be made in a ritualistic manner, with the participants coming forward one at a time to say their statement. They may remain frozen in a gesture appropriate to the statement.
15. **Tableau / Freeze Frame**: Participants create a physical image using their own bodies to represent a moment from the drama.
16. **Teacher in Role**: Expressed in its simplest form the teacher/facilitator takes part in the drama along with the other participants. This enables the teacher to work with the participants from inside the drama. Additional information can be given through the teacher's role and questions asked to challenge the participants' ideas. **Shadow Role** is an adaptation of teacher in role where the teacher 'underplays' the role in order to empower the pupils to participate as fully as possible in the unfolding drama.
17. **Thought Tracking:** Thought tracking enables the participants in role to speak aloud the thoughts that would normally remain concealed. Thought tracking is when the teacher literally taps a participant on the elbow as a signal for the person to speak the thoughts of the character s/he is playing.

Appendix 2

Form C

Support in the Language Class

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

1. **The Junior and Leaving Certificate language syllabi advocate the development of learner autonomy in the language class.** In your opinion have language teachers been furnished with sufficient guidelines/training to facilitate the fostering of learner autonomy? Please comment.

2. **The Inspectorate recommends that language teachers find ways of encouraging greater oral participation of their learners in the target language.** In your opinion have language teachers been furnished with sufficient support to implement this recommendation? Please comment.

3. **The Inspectorate advises the use of a wider range of teaching methodologies in the language classroom.** In your opinion are teachers furnished with sufficient information to implement this recommendation? Please comment.

4. **To what extent do you feel supported to experiment with different teaching methodologies in the language classroom?** Please circle the appropriate response:
   1 (not at all) 2 (a little) 3 (somewhat) 4 (quite) 5 (very much)
   Please comment.

5. **In your opinion to what extent do the Junior and Leaving Certificate programmes support learners to use language independently in real, unpredictable, situations?** Please comment.

Form D

Using Drama in the Language Class

Please circle the appropriate response/s

1. **Are you**
   Male Female?

2. **Have you been teaching languages for**
   1-3 years 4-7 years 8-11 years 12-19 years 20-30 years Over 30 years?

3. **Do you teach**
   Irish French Spanish German Italian Japanese
   Other (please specify)?

4. **Are you teaching in a**
   Boys' School Girls' School Co-ed School ?

5. **Is your school**
   Secondary Comprehensive Vocational Community ?

6. **Is your school**
   Urban* Rural
   ***located in a city/suburb of a city/in a large town**

7. **Is your average language class size**
   Under 12 Between 12-18 19-25 26-30 Over 30?

8. **Do you generally teach languages to**
   1st year 2nd year 3rd year 4th year 5th year 6th year
   Other (please specify)?

9. **Please circle the drama activities/strategies with which you are familiar**

   1. Drama Games 2. Drama Warm-ups 3. Role-Plays
   4. Improvisations 5. Simulations 6. Reading Scripts 7. Writing Scripts
   8. Mime 9. Staging Plays 10. Reading/Writing in Role 11. Forum Theatre
   12. Teacher in Role 13. Tableau / Freeze-frame 14. Thought-Tracking
   15. Hot-Seating 16. Line of Life 17. Role on the Wall
   18. Conscience Alley 19. Mantle of the Expert 20. Modelling/Sculpting

10. **Do you use drama activities/strategies in your language classes?**

Never Seldom Occasionally Often Very Often
(If 'Never' please skip to question number 14)

11. Which of the drama activities/strategies listed in question 9 do you find most useful in your language classes? Please list: e.g., no. 1, 3, 5, 6.

12. With which groups do you use drama activities? How often?

1 = Never 2 = Seldom 3 = Occasionally 4 = Often 5 = Very Often

1st Years:	1	2	3	4	5
2nd Years:	1	2	3	4	5
3rd Years:	1	2	3	4	5
4th Years:	1	2	3	4	5
5th Years:	1	2	3	4	5
6th Years:	1	2	3	4	5

13. Why do you use drama in the language class? Please comment.

14. What are the reasons/circumstances that might discourage you from using drama in the language class? Please comment.

15. Have you received training in the use of drama in the language class?

Yes (please state where and when)

No

16. Would you be interested in receiving (further) training in the use of drama in the language class?

Yes/No

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire

Letter to accompany questionnaire for teachers

March 18th 2006

Dear Colleague,

I'm a language teacher, currently on career-break from Maryfield College, Drumcondra, researching the use of drama in the language class. I would be very grateful if you filled in this questionnaire. It will take you less than 5 minutes and would be a great help to my research.

Please seal the completed questionnaire in the envelope provided and return it to the colleague who gave it to you. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

_____

Céline Healy

Appendix 3

Form A

Student Teachers' Experiences of Language Learning

Please reflect on the way you were taught languages in second level school.

1. To what extent were you given choice in the content of the course and the activities in which you engaged? Please comment.

2. Please comment on the use of the target language by your language teachers.

3. To what extent were opportunities created to motivate you, the learners, to use the target language?

4. Would you describe your language classes as collaborative in approach? Please comment.

5. What emphasis was put on communication through the target language? Please comment.

6. What did you enjoy about your language classes? What did you not enjoy? Why?

7. Were the language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking given equal time and emphasis in your language classes? Please comment.

8. Please comment on the approach used for teaching/learning grammar in your language classes.

Thank you!

Form B

Student Teachers' Expectations of Language Methodology Course

Name:_____
Languages taught:_____
Previous teaching or other relevant experience:_____
_____
_____
Address of school where you are currently working:_____
_____
Name of co-operating teacher:_____
Name of professional placement supervisor:_____

What are your expectations of the language methodology course?_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Please list the areas that you would like to cover?_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you!

Pre-workshop Statement Completion

Please complete either or both of the following statements.

I am apprehensive about …

I am looking forward to …

Thank you!

Form E

Post Drama Training Questionnaire

Please give your reactions to the following statements by circling the appropriate number.

1 (not at all) 2 (a little) 3 (somewhat) 4 (Quite) 5 (very much)

Drama in Education in the language class will help:

1. To make learners more independent of the teacher.
   1 2 3 4 5

2. To develop learners' confidence in using the target language.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. To improve interaction between learners.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. To improve interaction between teacher and learners.
   1 2 3 4 5

5. To lower anxiety levels.
   1 2 3 4 5

6. To focus learner attention on the communication of meaning.
   1 2 3 4 5

7. Learners become less embarrassed when speaking in front of a group.
   1 2 3 4 5

8. To develop speaking skills.
   1 2 3 4 5

9. To develop listening skills.
   1 2 3 4 5

1 (not at all) **2 (a little)** **3 (somewhat)** **4 (Quite)** **5 (very much)**

10. To develop reading skills.
    1 2 3 4 5

11. To develop writing skills.
    1 2 3 4 5

12. To promote a content rich approach.
    1 2 3 4 5

13. To link classroom learning with the outside world.
    1 2 3 4 5

14. To develop a collaborative approach to learning.
    1 2 3 4 5

15. To intrinsically motivate learners to learn the target language.
    1 2 3 4 5

16. To encourage shy learners to express themselves.
    1 2 3 4 5

17. To enrich vocabulary.
    1 2 3 4 5

18. To improve pronunciation.
    1 2 3 4 5

19. To improve intonation.
    1 2 3 4 5

20. To appeal to different learning styles.
    1 2 3 4 5

21. To develop learners' ability to self assess their progress.
    1 2 3 4 5

22. To heighten learners' self-esteem.
1 2 3 4 5

23. To promote enjoyment in the language classroom.
1 2 3 4 5

Did you enjoy participating in the drama workshops? Why/why not?

Would you use drama in the language class? Why/why not?

Thank you.

Post-project Interview Schedule

Part A

School profile

1. Is your school secondary; comprehensive; vocational; community?

2. Are you teaching in a boy's school; girls' school; co-ed school?

3. What's your average class size?

Background in Drama in Education

4. When you were a language learner were you given opportunities to engage in drama in the language classroom? Why/why not, do you think?

5. Did you enjoy taking part in the drama activities during the language methodology sessions? Why/Why not?

6. Have you used drama activities in your language class?

(If 'No' refer to part B.)

Reasons for using Drama

7. With what year/s did you use drama activities?

8. Why did you choose to use drama activities with this/these groups?

9. What were your objectives in using drama activities?

10. To what extent did drama activities realise these?

11. Did the drama activities have any other outcomes or effects?

Types of Drama used

12. In general how long did the drama activities last? A full period? A few minutes?

13. Can you give me examples of some of the drama activities you used?

Reactions to the use of Drama

14. What were learners' reactions to the drama activities? What did they like/not like? Find useful/not useful?

15. Had they engaged in drama activities with other language teachers?

16. How did you feel during the drama activities?

Drama for language use

17. To what extent would you say that drama activities help learners to use the language they have? Why do you think this is?

18. To what extent might drama encourage the participation of those who have a limited knowledge of the target language? Why?

19. Is the use of drama in education activities suitable for reserved or shy learners? Why/why not?

20. To what extent does drama in education allow the learner to bring his/her personality to play in the language class?

21. Did the drama activities have any effect on classroom atmosphere?

22. Can you comment on interaction between teacher and learners and between learners during drama activities?

Advantages and difficulties of using Drama in Education

23. Would you advise other new language teachers to use drama activities in the language classroom? Why/why not?

24. If yes, what advice would you offer them before hand?

25. Some teachers say that drama activities are not possible in their classes due to space restrictions. What advice would you offer?

26. Others claim that drama activities make the class giddy? What's your reaction to this?

27. Other teachers say that they can't engage learners in drama activities due to the pressure of getting the syllabus covered for exams. What are your thoughts on this?

28. To what extent would the culture/ethos of the school influence the use or not of drama in the language class? Why/why not?

Further training

29. Do you feel prepared to use drama activities with all years? Why/why not?

30. Would you be interested in receiving more training on the use of drama in the language classroom? Why/Why not?

Part B: Questionnaire for those not using Drama in Education in their language classes

School profile

1. Is your school secondary; comprehensive; vocational; community?
2. Are you teaching in a boy's school; girls' school; co-ed school?
3. What's your average class size?

Background in Drama in Education

4. When you were a language learner were you given opportunities to engage in drama in the language classroom? Why/why not, do you think?

5. Did you enjoy taking part in the drama activities during the language methodology sessions? Why/Why not?

6. Have you used drama activities in your language class?

Reasons for not using Drama

7. Why did you decide not to use them?

8. To what extent would the culture/ethos of the school influence the use or not of drama in the language class? Why/why not?

9. To what extent would the class profile influence a teacher's decision to use drama or not? Why?

Types of interaction in the language class

10. To what extent is it possible to use pair work activities with your learners? Why?

11. To what extent is it possible to use group work activities with your learners? Why?

12. What advice would you offer H.Dip. student teachers on the use of pair and group activities? Why?

Types of activity used

13. What sorts of activities have your learners found most useful/most enjoyed? Why?

14. What sorts of activities do they not find useful/not enjoy? Why?

15. Which of the language skills do they prefer working on? Why?

16. Which do they least like working on? Why?

17. How can learners best be motivated to be actively involved in their learning?

Challenges

18. What do you consider to be the biggest challenges facing H. Dip. Language Teachers?

19. How could they be helped in facing these challenges?

Appendix 4

Form F

Using Drama in Education in the Language Classroom

Please give your reactions to the following questions by circling the appropriate number and writing your comments.

1. Did you enjoy this activity?
1 (not at all) 2 (a little) 3 (somewhat) 4 (a lot) 5 (very much)
Please comment:

2. Did it help your language learning?
1 (not at all) 2 (a little) 3 (somewhat) 4 (a lot) 5 (very much)
Please comment:

3. Did this activity give you a better understanding of the language used?
1 (not at all) 2 (a little) 3 (somewhat) 4 (a lot) 5 (very much)
Please comment:

4. Would you recommend using drama activities like this as a way of learning languages?
1 (not at all) 2 (a little) 3 (somewhat) 4 (a lot) 5 (very much)
Please comment:

Thank you!

Appendix 5

Non-Participant Observation Schedule

Categories

Planning

Collaboration

Use of target language by teacher

Opportunities for learner language production

Integration of skills

Active learning

Use of resources

Use of DiE

Learner reactions

Teacher reactions

Classroom and behaviour management

Classroom atmosphere

Motivation

Participant Observation Schedule

Categories

Collaboration

Opportunities for language production

Integration of skills

Risk taking

Levels of participant engagement

Levels of participant interest

Reactions of participants to the DiE techniques

Classroom atmosphere

Interaction

Applicability of activities to participants' teaching contexts

Focus on meaning

Appendix 6

Follow up Interview Schedule

1. Have you been using DiE in your language classes?

2. Why? / Why not?

3. What strategies have you been using?

4. What classes do you use DiE with? Why?

5. What are the factors that might discourage you from using DiE with certain classes?

6. Would you be interested in further training and education in the use of DiE? Why?