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# Embodied language performance: Mediational affordances of dramatic activity for second language learning

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EMBODIED LANGUAGE PERFORMANCE: MEDIATIONAL

AFFORDANCES OF DRAMATIC ACTIVITY

FOR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING


by


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Bachelor of Fine Arts
Ohio University
1979

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2000


A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the


**Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Curriculum and Instruction**
**Department of Curriculum and Instruction**
**College of Education**


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# Dissertation Approval

The Graduate College

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

November 18 _____ , 20 05

The Dissertation prepared by

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**Entitled**

Embodied Language Performance: Mediational Affordances of Dramatic

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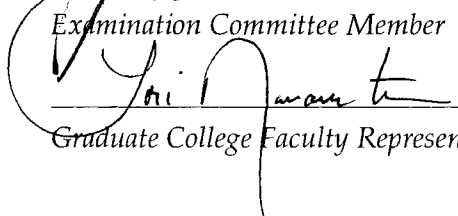
ii

ABSTRACT

**Embodied Language Performance: Mediational Affordances of
Dramatic Activity for Second Language Learning**

by

John R. Haught

Dr. Steven McCafferty, Examination Committee Chair
Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

This qualitative study examines the unique mediational affordances a drama based

approach to second language learning provides. From the perspective of Sociocultural

theory, the nature of learning is greatly determined by the mediational means employed

and this study revealed the importance of modeling and imitation and multiple

perspective taking that arose from the recursive process of rehearsal to be instrumental in

the students' understanding and growing mastery of English. This recursion process

occurs within instructional conversations which serve to level the relations of power

between teacher and learner, resulting in a more authentic learning environment. In short,

drama introduces alterity into the learning environment in ways that serve to encourage

autonomy for the learners as they slowly move from other regulated activity to self

regulation.

The study examines how the participants interacted within the unique learning

environment created by the drama workshops and the activities. Activity theory posits

that each participant arrives with a unique set of motives and goals and this study

iii

discusses how drama creates a learning environment and types of activity systems that accommodate these varying goals and facilitates an authentic dialogic interplay between everyone involved. Dramatic activity affords the co-construction of meaning between participants as they engage in language performance.

The study further examines the pedagogical implications for utilizing drama in second language learning. Arguing that learning is first and foremost an activity, language learning will be examined as performance. Viewing language as performance serves to demonstrate how language is highly contextual to sociocultural and institutional circumstances. The role of the language teacher is crucial to provide the necessary interventions and the learning environments that foster and extend the learners use of the target language. A drama approach to second language learning provides a number of highly unique mediational affordances which can be actively manipulated in a seemingly endless variety of ways. It is argued that viewing teaching and learning from the perspective of social activity opens a space for drama based learning in which language performance and language learning become a dialectical interplay that cannot be separated. Language learning is embodied as the learner enacting a scenario becomes a subject within a contextually situated activity system in pursuit of specific goals. This results in a highly authentic use of language for communicative purposes which in turn enhance language acquisition.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support of many people. I first have to thank my committee members for their invaluable comments and direction. I must also thank Dr. Gary Palmer, Dr. Ana Christina da Silva-Iddings and Dr. John Readence for their advice and assistance during my early doctoral studies.

Though I had been told that the dissertation process was a transformative experience, I did not realize how profoundly this work would affect my world view. I must thank Dr. Steven McCafferty for introducing me to field of Sociocultural theory. Steve was instrumental in helping me understand and apply this exciting new paradigm to my own work and without his influence this dissertation could never have been written. Choosing the road less traveled has made all the difference.

I must also thank the wonderful ESL students who participated in the drama workshops. They gave me far more than simply data. Thanks to Chizu Jaret for facilitating the workshops and a special thank you to all the inhabitants of 'doc alley' whose support and friendship helped keep spirits light.

Finally, I would like to thank my mother and my sisters and brother for keeping the faith, my daughter Fabiola for not letting me take myself too seriously, and most of all my incredibly patient and supportive wife, Dayssi, who suffered cramped apartments, cross country moves, and years of uncertainty just so I could pursue my dream. I couldn't have done it without you.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The use of drama and theatre training techniques may well be one of the most holistic

approaches to second language learning. No other activity engages the learner in so many

varied ways. The approach is uniquely multi-modal, forcing the learner to recognize the

power of language and the many levels of communication in which we participate.

Drama activities create a communicative learning environment which fosters

collaborative problem solving through authentic language use. Learners must perform

their understanding.

Communication occurs at many different levels and for second language learners it is

vital to teach more than lexicon and grammar. Second language educational drama

advocates insist that pragmatics and culturally embedded communicative gambits are best

taught through interactive role playing. Learners begin to recognize the paralinguistic

elements of communication including gesture, expression, bodily-kinesthetic responses,

engagement, and relations of space and proximity. Language performance embodies

understanding in a visceral fashion.

Engaging language learners in interactive scenarios within the diverse classroom

creates many opportunities for intercultural conversations and greater understanding.

These sorts of explorations open spaces for the negotiation of multiple perspectives and

1

possibilities for action. Performing language from multiple perspectives demonstrates the highly contextual nature of language and students learn a variety of discourse genres. A drama approach engages students in a performative inquiry which encourages the exploration of intercultural recognition and responsibility.

Drawing upon Bakhtin's (1981) notion of dialogism, meaning arises from the relation of voices engaged in dialogue, and is always a unique and nonrecurring property of the interaction. Dramatic activities permit interactions to occur between individuals with unique histories, goals, and voices who are actively creating and re-creating their world and themselves through dialogue. Drama and language performance serves to embody intertextual learning by engaging students in physical, cognitive, and affective activity.

If we look at language learning through the wider lens of multimodal meaning-making (Kress, Jewitt, Ogborn, & Tsatsarelis, 2001), we expand our understanding of how learning evolves. Cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) provides a framework that allows us to look directly at humans engaged in activity, which is, according to Kress, *et al.* "a semiotically well articulated mode" which "encompasses different forms like gesture, the movement of the body (body posture and position) and the use of space as a meaning-making resource" (p. 61). Educational drama provides a format which directly encourages a multimodal approach to teaching and learning and allows direct observation of mediation in learning activity.

While studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of drama in education in enhancing language competencies (Conard, 1998; Wagner, 1998a), and its ability to contribute to authentic communication (Di Pietro, 1987; Via, 1976), few have utilized the

2

practices of process drama to examine its ability to allow language learners to explore

issues of speech genres, social role playing, power relations, and culturally influenced

expectations of conduct within a socially stratified culture (Liu, 2002). This study will

operate from the assumption that the research overwhelmingly suggests that

improvements in language use will result from the collaborative meaning making

inherent in drama activities. Instead, this study will examine the specific mediational

affordances drama provides to language acquisition while investigating its capacity to

allow learners to explore the secondary discourses (Gee, 1996) of society and increase

intercultural understanding among language learners.

It will be argued that the unique mediational affordances provided by dramatic

language learning capture social learning in action. Through the recursive nature of

dramatic language rehearsal, Vygotsky's (1978) genetic law of intermental / intramental

learning and the internalization / externalization of concepts become concretized and

observable. This cycle of expansive learning (Engestrom, 1987) can be documented as

the learners engage in the co-construction of meaning.


## 1.2 The Present Study

This qualitative research study involved the observation of university English as a

Second Language (ESL) students engaged in a voluntary workshop entitled English

through Drama. The workshops were advertised as an opportunity for English language

learners (ELL) to practice their speaking and listening skills. The students, all women,

met over 12 weeks to engage in theatre games and exercises, improvisations, and scripted

3

drama scenes. The workshops were videotaped and the tapes were used for both instructional purposes as well as data analysis.

John, the principle researcher, was assisted by Chizu, a doctoral student. John was both researcher and primary teacher throughout the study, with Chizu contributing to the process of language modeling and observation. As a participant-researcher, John was interacting with the student participants through teaching, language modeling, and engaging in instructional conversations. From an SCT perspective, he was deeply ingrained within the mediational process.

1.3 The Research Questions

The research questions and subsequent methodology for this study arose from pedagogical issues surrounding the use of drama with second language learners. The purpose of this study was to describe and analyze how the use of drama activities affects second language learning. The research questions that initially guided this study evolved with the emerging data. The pressing questions for analysis became the following:

1. What were the specific means of mediation utilized by participants in a drama approach to second language learning?

2. What mediational affordances are facilitated by a drama approach to second language learning?

3. What are the pedagogical implications for a drama approach to second language learning?

4

It should be understood that the questions are interconnected and this dissertation will explore the mediation that takes place between drama and second language learning and this mediational relationship takes many forms as the students engaged in collective meaning-making. If we accept an SCT perspective on L2 development, then language learning is not merely the mastery of formal grammars and lexicon. Rather, language development is a process of meaning regulation or developing awareness and self-control during the internalization of communication concepts and strategies. L2 development then, is the revolutionary process of developing agency while working through the Zone of Proximal Development.

## 1.4 Theoretical Framework

Drawing upon the work of sociocultural theorists and cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) in particular, this study will examine drama's ability to create an atmosphere of performative and dialogic inquiry based upon the interactions of learners engaged in collaborative problem solving activities. The following section will briefly explore the intersections between activity theory, drama, and second language learning.

Drama is a Greek word meaning action. There is a tendency to equate drama with theatre, however, there are subtle but important differences between the two. Theatre could be considered to be an act of drama, or a dramatization. Theatre requires an audience that is engaged by the action. Theatre is a collaborative enterprise between actors, writers, designers, technicians, and others, all working together in a period of rehearsal and creative exploration towards a common goal; performance. Theatre is ultimately evaluated by how well the performance communicates to its audience.

5

Drama, on the other hand, is a term will that can be used in a variety of ways. It can be considered to be a tool that has the unique ability to allow us to play, allowing us to be another person or in a situation we would not normally encounter. Drama is an individual pursuit undertaken within a social context, defined by human interactions. Drama, as a rule, is concerned with what happens to participants when they are engaged in activity. It can be considered an extension of child's play, and like that play is often free and spontaneous. Drama often has no end result or performance, no right or wrong way of doing, and as a result is often unique and unrepeatable. Drama is the human activity of creative play and imaginative role playing.

Process drama is just this type of human activity that is not meant to result in a performance. It is concerned with the development of a dramatic world created through the dialogic interaction of students and teacher (Bowell & Heap, 2001). These theatrical exercises are not intended for an external audience, but are rather used as tools of inquiry into a variety of issues and subjects. According to Kao and O'Neill (1998) process drama requires the use of language in authentic, meaningful co-construction of knowledge and collaborative problem solving. Teachers and students co-create a dramatic world in which experiences, interpretations, and understandings can occur.

Activity theory posits that humans construct their understanding of the world not merely through the biological matter of their brain, but through interaction with the culture in which they live. Wagner (2002) argued that educational drama was the perfect medium for engaging learners in what Vygotsky (1978) called their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Wagner (2002) claimed that in role playing activities learners assumed not only the language, but the entire personae of others. She believed that this

6

forced the learner into a developmental level above their actual one in a manner more completely engaging than language alone was capable of.

In his call for schooling as a practice of dialogic inquiry, Wells (1999) argued that activity theory enabled comparisons to be made between very different practices of schooling and encouraged critical and innovative ways to teach. Positing that Engestrom's (1987) activity system model could be seen as situating the activity within a dynamic community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), he argued that discourse itself was the mediating tool-kit within this community. A drama approach to language learning provides a number of alterations to typical classroom discourse, and therefore, provides a highly unique mediational tool-kit. Van Lier (1994) referred to theses opportunities as mediational affordances or the opening of spaces for the co-construction of discourse and meaning.

Fels and McGivern (2002) termed this co-construction of discourse through drama 'performative inquiry'. They claimed that drama activities such as improvisation, role playing, tableau, and writing in role opened possibilities for intercultural conversations and explorations beyond what was possible in the traditional classroom. Arguing that drama activities engaged learners in a multi-modal form of learning that involved affective and bodily/kinesthetic responses as well as verbal and cognitive skills, they believed that this permitted insights unavailable from less interactive learning approaches. This type of learning activity made possible greater intersubjectivity between learners and increased intercultural understanding.

Incorporating creative elements of drama and recognizing the transformative role of drama permits possibilities for introducing alterity into classroom discourse. Wertsch

(1998), in his analysis of the predominant form of teacher questioning practices, differentiated between authentic (dialogic) questions as opposed to 'test' (univocal) questions in classroom interaction and argued that the intransigence of the Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) model of education lay in its ability to allow the teacher to maintain control and power within the classroom. According to Wertsch, classroom discourse can only be changed through a fundamental reworking of the "participant structure" (pp. 125). Wertsch argued that as classroom discourse is a mediated activity, the activity can be changed by introducing an element of 'alterity'. Alterity provides the dissonance and communicative breakdown that forces innovation and invention between learners.

The role of play and drama as alterity is particularly significant for second language learners who can often feel disconnected from the language and may feel as if they are performing or playing a part (McCafferty, 2002). Merely making the transformation from family member to student requires the assumption of a new role for children with many costs as well as benefits (Packer, 2000). The assumption of these new roles is especially problematic for a bi-cultural or second language learner. The inability to express oneself with native fluency or to fit into a given situation often compromises the learner's position in terms of power and social ranking. Drama activities permit the exploration of these new roles in a safe and secure environment with the support of classmates and peers.

Drama, by transforming roles, introducing alterity, and allowing learners to create meaning within an imagination space, has the potential to invite what Tulloch (1999) called the liminoid; a border area of transgressive negotiation. Participants find

8

themselves between one context of meaning and another, and are caught up in a process of separation, transition, and transformation (O'Neill, 1995). In the liminal state people play with familiar elements and re-order them, displacing common perceptions. Bakhtin (1981) referred to this as the carnivalesque. The spirit of carnival is an attitude of irreverence and playfulness, a subversive and joyful up-ending of traditional societal norms. The role reversals and humor inspired by carnival allow students to resist the traditionally marginalizing classroom environment in a productive format while enhancing creative potential. Perhaps drama and the inherent fun of improvisation and role play has similar possibilities for transforming, at least temporarily, the institutional environment of school and permitting learners to enter into another realm of discourse where they can interact and create meaning.

Drama then should serve to expand the dialogic sphere through performative inquiry which introduces alterity into the interconnected and interpenetrating activity systems of the stage or classroom. Engestrom (1999) regarded these systems as a "virtual disturbance", in a constant state of flux and seeking change, containing both internal contradictions and being subjected to contradictions from without. However, it was these very contradictions, or alterity, that gave rise to creative and innovative production both within and between systems. The very nature of sociocultural interaction and the multiple layers and voices of human actors necessitates contradiction and breakdown, which in turn gives rise to invention and transformation. Transforming and resolving these contradictions is a long term cyclical process of internalization and externalization which Engestrom termed expansive learning (1987). This expansion creates Zones of Proximal

9

Development from which arise historically new activities generated through cooperative actions.

Thus, CHAT and drama activity explores the expansive learning that arises from collaborative problem solving and the social interaction of second language learners within the complex interplay of activity systems. Conflict and dissonance are an inevitable part of dialogic interaction and is the very thing that drives innovation and invention. Drama introduces another element of alterity by engaging learners in a multi-modal form of performative inquiry. This results in historically new activity within the ZPD which results in transformations of individual identity, cultural tools, and of the activity itself. The purpose of this study then is to investigate how second language learners will react to the process of language performance, whether they gain insight into social role playing and different speech genres, how drama affords different mediational interactions, and do learners deepen their understanding of intercultural communication. Pedagogical implications will be considered for how to best create an effective learning environment and enhance learning outcomes. CHAT will serve as the descriptive and analytical tool in this investigation.

## 1.5 Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 provides background into the historical role of drama in education and drama in second language learning. It then provides an in-depth look at sociocultural theory with an emphasis upon Cultural Historical Activity Theory. Sections dealing with imitative learning and the Zone of Proximal Development are followed by a discussion of the intersections between CHAT, drama and pedagogy.

Chapter 3 describes how the study was conducted and how the data was analyzed. It also contains a section describing the unique role of the researcher from a SCT perspective. It is argued that in social learning the researcher is inexorably caught up in the mediational process.

Chapter 4 describes the results of the study. Examples of the different mediational affordances that arose from the dramatic interactions will be detailed. The chapter begins with an overview of the process that evolved as the students moved from simple decoding of drama texts to increased comprehension as the collaboratively made meaning of the scripts. Special emphasis will be given the role of language modeling and imitation, instructional conversation, and recursion, or the revisiting of language from multiple perspectives through the process of rehearsal. The data also documents how the students' growing understanding becomes embodied through their language performance.

Chapter 5 will discuss the findings and their implications for second language learning and teaching. It will be argued that drama provides unique mediational affordances which can be manipulated into a number of teaching interventions. It is further argued that language performance captures the processes involved in expansive learning in concrete, observable ways. Language performance creates an expectation of full participation within the discourse community while also implying that individuals perform themselves, or present themselves in different ways in different contexts.

Chapter 6 looks briefly at some issues raised by the study and possibilities for future research. The uses of complementary media within a drama environment will be considered as well as issues regarding the promotion of creative activities within the

11

curriculum. How drama might inform critical pedagogy and critical literacy is briefly explored.

## 1.6 Conclusion

It is hoped that this dissertation might provide some insight into the mediational affordances and learning opportunities that educational drama provides. It will be argued that a drama approach to second language learning provides mediational affordances that are unique to the medium and that these affordances are holistic, multimodal, and subject to great manipulability. Among the unique mediational affordances of drama are qualities which contribute to authenticity of learning and learner autonomy. Drama permits multiple perspective taking through recursive explorations of text. Drama affords opportunities for educational conversation which in turn gives rise to equality, voice, and increased classroom democracy.

This study is further intended to add to the growing body of research demonstrating the efficacy of sociocultural theory and cultural-historical activity theory as an analytic tool for the explorations of human learning and development. It will be argued that activity theory provides an explanation for the learning processes that these learners engaged in. I believe these processes concretely demonstrate the social intermental / intramental cycle of externalization / internalization the learners experienced through the recursive process of collaborative meaning making. Drama activities capture expansive learning in action.

12

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 General Research in Educational Drama

While drama activities have been widely utilized within language arts classroom

settings, second language learning has had a much more spotty record of theory and

implementation regarding the potential of drama to increase language acquisition.

In contrast to other educational practices, drama has received comparatively little

attention from researchers. Summarizing data from *Dissertation Abstracts International*,

Wagner (1998a) noted that from January, 1989 to September 1997, 17,671 dissertations

were reported in reading and 16,542 in writing. However, only 71 dissertations were

reported in educational drama in any combination of practice. An inquiry into *Digital*

*Dissertations* for the period 1997 to present resulted in an additional 11 drama in

education dissertations. Only one dealt with second language concerns; the use of process

drama in a Japanese EFL college classroom.

Wagner suggested that "the time is ripe" for researchers to expand their inquiries into

drama in education and to begin to systematically build upon the prior research of others.

In her 1998 compilation *Educational Drama in the Language Arts: What Research*

*Shows*, Wagner drew primarily upon studies dealing with 'process drama', or the use of

classroom drama techniques which are meant for inquiry and exploration, as opposed to

'product drama' intended for performance. Most of the studies selected used traditional

13

empirical or quantitative methodologies comparing drama with other methods of instruction. Though she questioned the appropriateness of many of the various assessment instruments and tests, and pointed out flaws in certain studies, she determined that the majority of studies showed statistically significant results in oral language development, narrative and persuasive writing skills, and pre-reading activities and increased comprehension. Despite acknowledging the difficulty of comparing many disparate forms of classroom drama, she felt the findings argued favorably for the continued support and study of educational drama interventions in the classroom.

In her meta-analysis of L1 empirical educational drama studies, Conard (1998) also determined a positive effect for educational drama. Starting with 51 possible studies, she eliminated all qualitative examinations and focused only on 20 quantitative reports. She then correlated her findings with an earlier empirical study conducted by Kardash and Wright (1987, in Conard, 1998). She discovered that both meta-analyses were in agreement concerning the following items.

1. Both showed a positive effect for creative drama activities.

2. Studies in private schools produce larger effect sizes than in public schools.

3. Effect size decreases as the students' age increases. Younger learners appear to benefit most from creative drama.

4. Effect sizes were nearly double for regular students compared to remedial students, and gifted students appeared to benefit enormously from drama activities.

Despite her findings, Conard felt that both meta-analyses were limited by the paucity of good empirical studies and the failure of many researchers to collect reliable data or document the characteristics of their measuring instruments. She argued that in the

14

present (1998) climate of high-stakes testing and accountability, researchers were going to need to conduct rigorous studies that may help pinpoint specific instructional practices if they wished to defend the use of educational drama in the classroom.

Vitz (1983) conducted a two-way comparison of a drama based ESL program with a more traditional audio-lingual ESL class. The Southeast Asian elementary learners showed a statistically significant improvement in verbal output, more, but not significantly longer utterances, and greater complexity in sentence structure. She concluded that, though her study population was small, the results indicated great promise for educational drama in the ESL classroom. Planchat (1994, in Wagner, 1998) found that ninety nine second graders developed better oral production skills with fewer errors and fewer error corrections after a ten week program of creative drama activities in their French immersion program.

None of these researchers wished to consider the large number of qualitative studies that many researchers have conducted. Though Wagner (1998b; 2002) claimed a sociocultural view of learning and built her theoretical framework on the writings of Vygotsky, Bruner, and Gardner, she too chose to concentrate upon quantitative studies in her analysis of research findings. The impression the reader gets is that the drama in education community has been forced to take a defensive position in their advocacy and feel as if only empirical evidence will be considered valid. This seems unfortunate as it undoubtedly excludes some valuable studies that might further inform the practice.

Though the research tends to support the beneficial educational outcomes associated with using drama in the classroom, it does little to differentiate between the many approaches that have utilized. The following sections will review current trends and some

of the different approaches in educational drama. That will be followed by an examination of drama approaches and research specific to the foreign and second language classroom.

## 2.1.2 Creative Drama in the L1 Classroom

Creative drama is the term most often used to describe the use of drama with very young children. It has been utilized in mainstream, single language classrooms in both pre-school and elementary grades with great regularity. It differs from simple dramatic play by virtue of having the direction and supervision of a teacher or leader. The *Children's Theatre Association of America* defines it thus:

> "Creative drama is an improvisational, nonexhibitional, process-centered form of drama in which participants are guided by a leader to imagine, enact, and reflect upon human experiences. Although creative drama has traditionally been thought of in relation to children and young people, the process is appropriate for all ages" (McCaslin, 1980pp. 8).

The emphasis lies in a process based approach. Roles are assigned, scenes are planned, and usually there is an attempt to 'tell a story' or make a play. Though improvisational in nature, there is a basic script. The students know what is to take place in the story and how each character is expected to act. It should be emphasized that the process is not intended for public performance, but is a means of exploring text and the elements of storytelling. Creative Drama has been widely utilized within the mainstream language arts classroom, particularly in the primary grades.

16

### 2.1.3 Process Drama vs. Product Drama

Process drama arose in Australia in the late 1980s and was an attempt to distinguish itself from less complex or ambitious activities like improvisation or scenarios and to situate itself in a broader educational context (Kao & O'Neill, 1998). Process is meant to imply an ongoing event as opposed to product, which suggests completion or a finished project. Process drama is not limited to single, brief exercises or scenes, but entails a more complex series of varying activities which all serve to explore and investigate an issue in various ways (O'Neill, 1995).

Typically process drama begins with a pre-text. The pre-text is introduced by the teacher as a device to introduce an entryway into the construction of a dramatic world. More than merely a stimulus, the pre-text both suggests the boundaries and make-up of the potential dramatic world to be created and suggests roles that participants may assume. A popular pre-text example is when the teacher posts a simple notice:

$100

offered to anyone willing to spend

one night in

DARKWOOD HOUSE

This simple announcement hints at a past and suggests a future which is meant to propel middle school students into a dramatic world in which they mutually negotiate and weave together a text. The teacher serves as both participant and facilitator, moving into role at times and suggesting various activities for exploring and creating the text.

Moody (2002) argued that process drama would not inspire students sufficiently unless there were some sort of culminating experience or a performance product. He

17

claimed that the schism between process and product is a false construction because product drama always entails an elaborate process that fully engages both our dramatic skills and our literacy skills. He argued that educational drama as a term should be much more inclusive to the full range of theatrical approaches.

### 2.1.4 Drama in the Foreign/Second Language Classroom

Communication occurs at many different levels and for second language learners it is vital to teach more than lexicon and grammar. Second language educational drama advocates insist that pragmatics and culturally embedded communicative competencies are best taught through interactive role playing.

Drama activities of many types have been used in the second language classroom and a number of different methodologies have emerged. Unlike the Drama in Education (DIE) and Creative Drama communities, which often attempt to distinguish classroom process activities as separate from performance based school theater programs, many language teachers have embraced a performance product as part of their learning program. One of the earliest pioneers of drama-based language teaching, Via (1976) was a theater professional who went to China to teach theater and found himself teaching ESL within his first year. Using a product based approach his students produced and performed plays in the target language. Sharing both approach and era, Hines (1973) believed in the value of scripted role play for language learners and published a collection of skits specifically designed for the EFL/ESL classroom. However, it was Via (1976) who appeared to understand drama as a means to explicitly teach cultural norms of communication. Arguing that learning a language cannot be divorced from acquiring a culture, he wrote that language learning entails learning how native speakers "hold their

18

bodies, how far they stand apart, where they look when they talk, how men shake hands with each other, how children talk to their parents, and so on" (Via, 1976, xiv). He saw performance as a way to not only bring awareness of these things into the classroom, but to explicitly practice them in an attempt to grasp the appropriate social behavioral norms of the new culture.

Strategic Interaction (SI) was an influential teaching method developed by Di Pietro and is specifically designed for language learners (1987). Drawing upon the sociocultural theory of learning devised by Vygotsky (1978), SI is a process based approach which utilized improvisational interactive scenarios in an attempt to foster increased competence in the target language. The SI activities have three stages. The first stage is the planning stage. The instructor divides the class into two or more groups and each group is assigned a role to play in the scenario. The groups are then given time to plan collectively how they intend to play out their role. However, unlike in Creative Drama, the role of the other group is unknown to the players until the actual performance takes place. This is important because the roles are designed to have somewhat different goals or intentions. These divergent goals are designed to provide a point of conflict that arises in performance and that the students must resolve.

After planning their roles each group appoints a player and the performance stage can begin. As the conflict quickly becomes evident the performers' anticipated responses no longer serve to accomplish their goals and the students must maintain communication in the target language until the conflict can be resolved. The goal is for the students to utilize creativity and resourcefulness in the target language in the face of a potential communication breakdown. If needed, the performer can return to the group for advice

19

and assistance. The performance continues until the conflict is resolved or communication halts. By forcing the students to think on their feet, no two scenarios play out the same way twice. Each performance is dynamic and constrained only by the students' abilities.

The third stage is the debriefing. The instructor regroups the class and discusses the events of the Performance stage. The discussion may include any aspects of the observed scenario including cultural or grammatical problems as well as the nature of the discourse.

Di Pietro (1987) argued that "The scenario is the key device in making second-language discourse strategic in the classroom. It contains four essential elements: strategic interplay, roles, personal agendas, and shared context. In presenting the scenario we highlight spontaneity in discourse" (p. 66). Though role playing and simulations have been featured devices in language learning before, Di Pietro details the important differences in the construction of SI scenarios (p.67).

**Role Play**

1. Students play a "part", someone other than self.

2. Student is told what to do, say or think.

3. The target language is prescribed and practiced from presented material.

4. Usually players know what the others are going to say and do.

**Scenario Role**

1. Student plays self within structure of scene.

2. Student is given situation, but not what to say or do.

3. Aspects of language are taken from the scene for later study.

4. More dramatic tension and uncertainty.

20

Scenarios may be between two players or may involve a group and multiple roles. Relationships within the scenario may be complementary or may be adversarial with divergent motives or goals. Performances tend to be dynamic and individual, depending largely on the personality, skills and background of each individual player.

Like creative drama, SI performances are not intended for the entertainment of their audiences though this may often be a by-product. The players represent the peer group that helped to form the communication strategies. Therefore, the observers have a stake in the performance proceedings and may be called into action at any moment if the player decides it is necessary to return to the group for advice. This, and the anticipated analysis and discussion that follow performance, effectively increases participation among all class members. Di Pietro further details how SI can be used in the development of literacy skills by allowing writing exercises and journal work to arise from the scenarios and treating text itself as discourse.

Also, Strategic Interaction has been incorporated into the rapidly emerging world of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Colburn (1998) devised a system for utilizing SI scenarios via internet relay chat. Adhering to the original SI format, students still plan their roles in groups and there is still an unknown conflict introduced. The actual scenarios are played out online with the students typing in their dialogue. If the player needs the assistance of his group, this can be accomplished either live or over the chat relay. The debriefing stage can be performed in class or, in the case of distance education for example, the students could retire to a debriefing channel. While losing the face to face interaction and paralinguistic attributes, Colburn argued that online scenarios still retain much of Di Pietro's original vision. Students practice discourse skills not

21

normally found in writing situations and are still forced to 'think on their feet' as they search for proper communication strategies.

Di Pietro's work has influenced a number of second language acquisition (SLA) researchers. Drawing upon both the process approach of Di Pietro and the product approach of Via (1976), ESL instructor and researcher Miccoli (2003) led her students through a 3 phase program that began with theater games, improvisations, and SI scenarios. The students then engaged in more formal theater training which culminated in the performance of short plays. Miccoli combined the experience with the use of portfolios for student reflection and cited the students' own reflective essays as evidence of the power of drama to both engage learners and improve their language skills.

Elgar (2002) used improvisational scenarios with her English language learners (ELLs) as a basis for the writing of short plays for classroom performance. She conceded that the playwriting activity was not intended to produce great literature, but claimed that it engaged students on a variety of levels and promoted a number of different literacy skills. Summak, Summak, and Gur (1994) also engaged their ELLs in playwriting, but utilized Turkish folk tales as the basis for the stories which their Turkish students then performed in English using the traditional Shadow Puppet Theater of their country. They believed that performing with puppets behind a curtain lowered the performance anxiety for their students while still allowing many of the benefits of drama activities. Collins (2002) claimed much the same stress reducing rationale for his extensive use of videotaped performance in the language classroom. By eliminating live performance in front of classroom peers, he claimed that as anxiety was reduced collaborative interactions increased and students reported enjoying the learning process.

22

Still others draw upon Di Pietro's (1987) work in their argument for process drama as a tool for introducing authentic language use into the classroom. Liu (2002) argued that language learning is both a personal and social behavior. He believed that Strategic Interaction allowed students to recognize the power of language and to engage in, "new roles, situations, and worlds; dynamic tension; the motivating and challenging power of the unexpected; the tactical quality of language acquired under the stress of achieving a goal; the linguistic and psychological ambiguity of human interaction; the group nature of enterprise; and the significance of context" (p.55).

Despite this impressive list, he argued that process drama was capable of incorporating all these elements in a more complex and flexible manner than SI. Rather than a series of brief exercises, his vision of process drama included a variety of strategies and means of organization. His model began with a pre-text to set a model or theme which the students would use to create a series of episodes to be improvised or composed and rehearsed over a time span for exploration and elaboration. Everyone in the classroom was to be engaged in the activity and there was no external audience. The intent was for students to become involved in authentic language use that permitted extensive exploration that would challenge their responses throughout the entire process. He further argued that process drama served three functions in the language classroom; cognitive, social, and affective, and that this three pronged engagement is what afforded process drama such a powerful position in second language pedagogy.

Others have argued for drama's ability to address learning on a variety of levels. Wagner (1998b; Wagner, 2002) discussed how drama activities amounted to a holistic methodology which addressed the greatest number of Gardner's (1993) multiple

23

intelligences. Schewe (2002) developed specific dramatic games and activities to harness the bodily-kinesthetic knowledge of the students in his foreign language classroom. He argued that there were both universal and culturally specific gestures and body language that could be explored by language learners. Culham (2002) devised non-verbal exercises that would allow his ELL students to concentrate entirely upon the para-linguistic elements of communication. He claimed that the richly diverse mix of learners in his university classrooms helped to illustrate the culturally acquired differences in student comfort levels concerning bodily spatial relationships, proximity, restraint, and the use of physical gesture.

Lantolf (1993) spoke of how SI specifically engaged learners within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)at two distinct phases of the scenario process. He further elaborated upon dramatic improvisation to allow for the study of language as dialogically embedded utterances. Drawing upon Bakhtin's (1981) notion of dialogism, he argued that meaning arises from the relation of voices engaged in dialogue, and is always a unique and nonrecurring property of the interaction. Dramatic activities permit interactions to occur between individuals with unique histories, goals, and voices who are actively creating and re-creating their world and themselves through dialogue.

In a similar vein, Fels and McGivern (2002) argued that language learning through dramatic explorations leads to intercultural conversation and transformation. They referred to this sort of exploration as performative inquiry and felt that these activities opened spaces for the negotiation of multiple perspectives and possibilities for action. They argued that performative inquiry was both a teaching tool and a research methodology for the exploration of intercultural recognition and responsibility. They also

24

believed that performative inquiry served to embody intertextual learning by engaging students in physical, cognitive, and affective activity. Axtmann (2002) claimed that the act of performance entails the completion of purpose and execution of an act that implies communication between participants engaged in dialogic interaction. She referred to this as transcultural performance, and suggested this resulted in authentic cultural sharing and increased intertextual awareness. Her dramatic exercises were directed at increasing cultural awareness between community members in the classroom. Berry (2000) saw the dramatic conventions of parody and humor serving a similar transcultural function of interrogation and border crossing, while Worthman (2002) viewed drama as a means to explore what Gee (1996) called secondary discourses, or discourses beyond one's everyday, primary discourse. All of these researchers appear to view drama as a valuable tool for intercultural discourse explorations.

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study will examine drama and second/foreign language learning through the lens of Sociocultural Theory (SCT) and, more specifically, Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). It is my contention that this view of social learning permits a perspective which both recognizes and validates the benefits of a drama approach to language learning. Overviews of the theories are first presented, followed by an exploration of the Zone of Proximal Development and imitative learning. Then the relationships between SCT and second language learning will be discussed, followed by pedagogical implications. In the discussion section the confluences between SCT and drama will be explored.

25

## 2.2.1 Sociocultural Theory and Cultural-Historical

## Activity Theory

Within the last few decades language education has seen an increased interest in the cultural historical psychology of Lev Vygotsky and his followers. The Vygotskian framework of socially mediated cognition and learning has increasingly influenced research on teaching and learning (Moll, 2001). Known popularly as sociocultural theory (SCT), this theory views learning and cognition as a complex social practice acquired through dialogic communication located within cultural and historical contexts (Kostogriz, 2000). While Vygotsky was mainly concerned with the development of the individual, his friend and student Leont'ev, engaged the concept of activity when he distinguished between collective activity and individual action and their relationship within social and cultural contexts (Engestrom & Miettinen, 1999). Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), or simply activity theory (AT), is today "an emerging multidisciplinary and international community of scientific thought united by the category of activity" (Kuuti, 1996p. 25).

Within second language education, CHAT provides a framework for exploring the dynamic interactions between the various and often conflicting activity systems that exist within the classroom. Conflict, contradiction, and dissonance are the driving forces behind the transformational properties of activity systems, and the resolution or problem solving of learners engaged with these contradictions within their zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978) are a realization of these transformations. As opposed to an information processing model of teaching and learning, CHAT recognizes the agency of individual learners collaboratively constructing knowledge within a

26

community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Given the growing influence of researchers working within an activity theory perspective, it is important to explore how sociocultural theory and activity theory are impacting research into teaching and learning and the field of language learning in particular.

## 2.2.2 Cultural-Historical Activity Theory

The cultural historical theory of activity grew out of the dissatisfaction of a group of revolutionary Soviet psychologists in the 1920s and '30s. Objecting to the Cartesian dualism embodied by behaviorism and psychoanalysis, the groups' founder, Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), attempted to solve this dilemma by drawing upon Marx's theory of dialectical materialism. Vygotsky sought to demonstrate that mind is not in opposition to the material world, but embedded in social activities and mediated by the tools people use in their activities (CHAT, 2003). Individuals never simply react to the environment, but the relationship between human subject and objects of the environment is mediated by material tools and culturally created semiotic artifacts (Kostogriz, 2000). As developed by Vygotsky's colleagues Leont'ev and Luria, perception, imagination, thinking, and emotion are not merely derived from activity, but are activities themselves (Zinchenko, 1996). Activity and cognition are inseparable and unified. Instead of the dualism of mind *and* action, we have a new construct of mind *as* action (Wertsch, 1998). CHAT differs from Piaget's view of development by claiming that mind is not only formed within the context of the social environment, but arises directly through the mediation process (Lantolf, 2000). Higher mental processes arise and mind becomes a functional system when its neuro-electrical impulses are brought under control through the appropriation of cultural artifacts, especially language (Luria, 1979).

27

Cultural-historical activity theory and activity systems must be studied within their natural environment which is the sociocultural world. If thinking and activity are inseparable, then thinking is always motivated by a need and action is directed toward some object to fulfill that need. The traditional laboratory approaches to the study of mind and behavior focus on the individual and what the individual is doing. An activity orientation adds additional dimensions to the study by asking how, why, and where the individual is acting (Wertsch, 1998). Therefore, the context in which the activity takes place is vital to the overall understanding of the activity. Additionally, activity theory is predicated on the notion that all individuals are unique and that humans' complex activities are determined by the varying context, goals, and sociocultural history of the participants (Roebuck, 2000). Consequently, the natural environment is the only authentic venue for observation and study.

In realizing his theoretical approach to activity, Leont'ev (1981) devised a hierarchical structure of activity that differentiates between processes at different levels. The three strata are *activity, action*, and *operations* (the latter sometimes referred to as *conditions*), each of which is directed at a different object and provide a different perspective on the organization of events (Wells, 1999). At the top of the hierarchy is activity which is driven by an overall *motive*. Below that are actions which are directed at specific *goals* (See appendix, Fig. 1). It is only through actions that activities are translated into reality (Kaptelinin, 1996). But actual behavior is manifest only on the third stratum of operations. Operations are the particular means implemented in order to achieve the goals of our actions. Leont'ev (1981) further distinguished between actions as consciously attuned to goals, as opposed to operations which are often a well-practiced

28

routine and are largely unconscious and automatic in nature. In activity theory, in order to

· predict and understand changes in people's behavior, it is necessary to assess the status of

the behavior and try to determine if it is directed toward a motive, goal, or actual

conditions.

Another fundamental principle of SCT and CHAT is that of internalization-

externalization (Vygotsky, 1978). In socially mediated learning, mental processes are

derived from external actions through the course of internalization. The way humans

learn and acquire new abilities first takes place on an inter-subjective level with others

and later becomes intra-subjective once internalized or appropriated. Externalization is

the process undertaken when an individual runs into difficulty and must consciously

attend to the concept or process once again. An example might be learning to drive a

standard shift automobile. During the early stages every aspect of shifting, clutch and gas

are consciously attended to actions. Over time these actions become internalized and

become unconscious operations. However, a bad storm with slick roads may force the

individual to externalize their operations once again and attend to driving in a

deliberately conscious fashion.

The early development of CHAT said little about how the activities were embedded

within an historical-cultural context or addressed the creative nature of human

interactions (Lektorsky, 1999). Drawing upon Vygotsky's mediational triangle (See

appendix, Fig. 2) which demonstrates how the tool transforms the relationship between

subject and object, Engestrom (1987) devised his now widely accepted, though still

controversial, model of an activity system. By expanding the mediational triangle,

Engestrom demonstrated how we may better understand how actions are embedded

29

within cultural activities (See appendix, Fig 3). The model demonstrated how activity systems are composed of collaborative practices which includes object, subject, and mediating tools or artifacts (instruments) within the context of rules, community, and the division of labor (Kostogriz, 2000). It is important to note that these relationships are not static, but are in constant construction as part of the mediational process. Engestrom (1999) later regarded these systems as a *virtual disturbance* containing both internal contradictions and being subjected to contradictions from without. However, it was these very contradictions that gave rise to creative and innovative production both within and between systems. The very nature of sociocultural interaction and the multiple layers and voices of human actors necessitates contradiction and breakdown, which in turn gives rise to invention and transformation. Transforming and resolving these contradictions is a long term cyclical process of internalization and externalization which Engestrom termed 'expansive learning' (Engestrom, 1987). This expansion creates zones of proximal development from which arise new activities.

Before turning to how CHAT has been applied to second language learning research, let us summarize the fundamental principles of activity theory (Kaptelinin, 1996; Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001):

1. The human mind is formed through interaction in a culturally constructed environment. Mind and activity are inseparable.

2. The cultural and social environment is objective, just like any object from the natural sciences. Humans are object oriented to these environments.

30

3. Activities are hierarchically structured. Activities are object-oriented and driven by motives. Actions are driven by goals intended to fulfill motives, and operations are the actual processes carried out to realize these actions.

4. Mental processes are derived through the process of internalization or appropriation. Contradictions entail the need for externalization, which is a creative and transformative process when re-internalized. This spiral of internalization and externalization results in expansive learning.

5. Human activity is mediated through the use of tools, both external (like a hammer or a computer) and internal (like concepts and semiotic signs). Tools are culturally acquired and largely determine the nature of operations.

6. Activities are transformational and develop over time. The understanding of human activity comes through understanding how it has developed.

Thus, CHAT explores the expansive learning that arises from collaborative problem solving and social interactions of learners within a complex interplay of activity systems. Conflict and dissonance are an inevitable part of dialogic interaction and is the very thing that drives innovation and invention. This results in historically new activity within the ZPD which results in transformations of individual identity, cultural tools, and of the activity itself. From this fertile ground the implications for second language acquisition can be considered.

### 2.2.3 The Zone of Proximal Development

31

"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 by problem solving

under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers"

(Vygotsky 1978: 86).

Perhaps no construct of Vygotsky's has received more popular attention than his zone

of proximal development. However, as Kinginger (2002) has noted, "the interpretation

of the construct has been fraught with ambiguity from the start" (p. 243). In her

persuasive examination of the various interpretations of the ZPD, Kinginger demonstrates

how it has been misinterpreted by many as a mere social transmission of existing

knowledge. She points us to several studies which demonstrate how the ZPD is a

collective process by which historically new forms of social activity are generated

through joint cooperative action.

Wells (1999) called for an expanded vision of the ZPD in which the construct was not

seen as something possessed by the learner, but rather as an interactive space that holds

the potential for social learning. Newman, Griffin, and Cole used a similar metaphor to

describe the zone, saying "the zone of proximal development is something more than

social support that some today call scaffolding; it is not just a set of devices used by one

person to support high-level activity by another. The ZPD is the locus of social

negotiations about meanings, and it is, in the context of schools, a place where teachers

and pupils may appropriate one another's understandings" (1989, xii). These researchers

regarded the ZPD as a place where cognitive change takes place.

Newman and Holzman (1993) objected to what they called the pragmatist orientation underlying most interpretations of the ZPD. They critiqued readings of the ZPD as a 'tool for result' by which interpreters have simplified the concept so that it is seen as a mechanism for the transmission of knowledge. They prefer to read Vygotsky within the framework of Marxist dialectical historical materialism. They argue that the ZPD is the location of revolutionary and fundamentally new activity. The ZPD is seen as a dialectic unity of 'tool and result' where social transformation takes place. This activity is revolutionary, simply because it utilizes pre-existing tools in the creation of new knowledge. Learners do not acquire new knowledge, but enter into a dialectical relationship with existing tools, transforming both the cultural artifacts and themselves in the process. The ZPD becomes not a place, but a transformational activity.

The significance of the ZPD, in our view, is that it is not premised on the individual-society separation; it is an historical unity. In fact, it methodologically destroys the need for interactionist of solutions to the dualism of mind and society because it does not except their ontic separation in the first place! The claim that learning takes place in the ZPD is neither a claim about learning nor about the ZPD. For the ZPD is not a place at all; it is an activity, an historical unity, the essential socialness of human beings expressed in revolutionary activity, as Marx put it (Newman and Holzman 1993: 79).

Newman and Holzman believe that most contemporary interpretations of the ZPD have failed to grasp the transformative qualities and the revolutionary activity intended by Vygotsky. By failing to grasp the revolutionary activity that takes place and the dialectic quality of the ZPD, most interpreters have reduced it to a 'tool for result', instead of a 'tool and result'.

33

There exist two opposing tendencies in social interaction: intersubjectivity, or the degree to which individuals are able to share a perspective, and alterity, the conflict that arises from the multivocality of our discourses (Wertsch, 1998). Wertsch argued that the most important developmental landmarks arise from conflict and alterity rather than a simple intersubjective view of the ZPD. Packer and Goicoechea (2000) claimed that concepts like the ZPD have often been interpreted merely as prescriptions for collaboration and cooperation, but point out that Vygotsky wrote about "a bitter struggle, now concealed, now explicit, between the teacher and student" in an "atmosphere of tense social struggle" in the classroom (Vygotsky, 1978, in Packer, 2000). They argued that enculturation is a problematic process that splits the individual as they are torn between conflicting desires and goals. The reconciliation of these desires is the crucial point of identity construction and school is an important site for the production of persons. For the L2 learner attempting to construct a new identity within a foreign culture this problematic process is compounded.

2.2.4 Drama and the Zone of

Proximal Development

Vygotsky certainly recognized the dialogic nature of theater and drama and as a young teacher directed theater groups in his school in Gomel in Belarusia. He even wrote a paper on the psychology of the actor (Johnson, 2004). The process of engaging in dramatic activities gives us access to the same mediational tools that we use in everyday life. Interpreting a script or performing an improvisation is actively creating social history. Vygotsky's construct of the ZPD serves as an excellent example to explain what takes place in a drama setting.

34

Activity theory posits that humans construct their understanding of the world not merely through the biological matter of their brain, but through interaction with the culture in which they live. Wagner (2002) argued that educational drama was the perfect medium for engaging learners in their zone of proximal development. Wagner claimed that in role playing activities learners assumed not only the language, but the entire personae of others. She believed that this catapulted the learner into a developmental level above their actual one in a manner more completely engaging than language alone was capable of. Drama is a profoundly challenging social event. The participants must negotiate and arrive at a single vision of what the event is about. In drama activities participants often scaffold each other as they co-construct meaning and transform understanding.

## 2.3 Cultural-historical Activity Theory and
## Second Language Learning

As an analytical tool, CHAT has been applied to a number of fields and researchers and theoreticians from various disciplines continue to draw upon each others work in an ongoing attempt to develop the possibilities of the theory. In this section the focus will be upon CHAT based work that has taken place within language learning settings. The research cited will include K through 12 classrooms, universities, and adult education settings. Such a wide scope is intended to demonstrate the versatility and encompassing appeal of an activity theoretical approach.

### 2.3.1 Transformation within L2 Activities

35

Previous research has suggested that language and cultural diversity issues can be analyzed through an activity theoretical approach. Kostogriz (2000) claimed that learning is a social process and that activity theory provides a broad conceptual framework for research and learning practice design. An activity system analysis allowed the researcher to trace the learning trajectories of a multicultural, multivoiced classroom activity system which acknowledged the varying cultural-historical background of each individual learner. He argued that removing the focus from individual behavior to a systems approach was much more comprehensive and engaged such difficult topics as intertextual memory, intentionality, mediation, intersubjectivity, history, and change.

Kostogriz outlined his model of the Literacy Learning Activity System (LLAS) and demonstrated how it could be utilized on a variety of levels to analyze classroom events. He argued that the LLAS was a dynamic system containing both historical remnants of earlier teaching and learning practices as well as the emerging, future types of practices. He suggested that viewing education as local activity systems both problematizes current schooling practice and forces educators to examine transformative events in terms of local contingency and context. Therefore, Kostogriz claimed that a CHAT analysis expanded the ecology of schooling beyond what most traditional education research addressed.

Transformation played a key role in McCafferty's (2002) examination of the role of gesture in conjunction with speech in creating zones of proximal development (ZPD) for second language learning and teaching. McCafferty demonstrated how gesture enabled the language learner and teacher to facilitate communication and utilize elements of the setting and each other in order to transform the interactions between them. These

36

transformations included the invention of new tools and practices, new problem solving activities, and the establishment of new social groundings. These newly invented activities reciprocally affected both learner and teacher as they moved through their ZPD and created a new ones.

Drawing upon Newman & Holtzman's (1993) notion of interaction within the ZPD being a fundamentally revolutionary activity that transforms all the participants, McCafferty (2002) believed these transformations to be an essential part of the learning process. He suggested that L2 learners engaged in naturalistic language contexts might benefit from being made aware of the role of gesture in meaning making within the target language. Process drama is one approach to making L2 learners aware of the paralinguistic elements of communication.

Analyzing the progress of international students in a university writing course, Nelson and Kim (2001) noted how the cultural-historical background of the students (from seven different countries) affected their motives for learning, which in turn afforded very different activity systems for each student. Drawing upon Engestrom's (1987) notion of 'expansive learning', Nelson & Kim (2001) documented how some students transformed their actions and expanded into another activity. They asserted that learning activity requires students to discover the contradictions between what they are learning with what they already know. By contrasting new learning with their prior knowledge and practice, the students may transcend the classroom context and expand and transfer their learning into the societal world. The authors attempted to differentiate between what they called genuine learning activities and 'mere school-going activities', or the routines of the classroom. They claimed that the routines did not serve a

transformative function and contributed little to learning. They believed that CHAT could help us to determine which is taking place within the classroom by analyzing the transformation of students' actions and understandings.

Using the written recall protocols of second language learners, Roebuck (2000) demonstrated that, though learners were involved in the same task, they are each involved in a different activity. The difficulties and contradictions encountered by the learners gave rise to transformative repositioning toward their engagement with the tasks. Roebuck argued that her findings demonstrate the fallacy of treating research participants as subjects without agency. She claimed that while cause–effect models may be valid within the natural sciences, the study of human beings must account for their cultural-historical identity and agency. The goal of the researcher, in accord with Vygotsky's view, was to discover, rather than predict, the nature of the participant's activity.

In a similar vein, Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) argued for the importance of seeing second language learners as individuals who actively engage in negotiating the terms and conditions under which they will choose to learn. They proceeded to document how the learning strategies of different language learners were largely determined by their histories which in turn influenced their motives and goals for language learning. They argued that teachers cannot assume that all learners are there for the same reasons and that learning is about mediated participation within a community of learners. This mediation fundamentally involves how language learners negotiate their multiple identities between two (or more) languages. They contended that activity is a distributed process that must take into account the individual learner and the myriad other agencies impacting that individual's life. They claimed that individuals' activity systems

38

interacting with other systems will result in different outcomes for different learners and, therefore, the entire notion of educational standardization is anathema to the theory.

### 2.3.2 Play and Drama within L2 Activities

Several researchers have recognized the legitimate role of play and drama as activities within language learning. Kramsch (2000), in her study of semiotic mediation with L2 writers, noted how the students constructed rhetorical roles through both spoken and written mediums which allowed them to experience themselves as private, individual as well as public, social sign makers. By adopting narrative roles, the students came to realize that they could represent themselves in a variety of ways. These roles allowed them to appreciate the fluidity of meanings within their target language.

Recalling Vygotsky's (1989) notion of role as a social performance related concept of the dialogic creation of self, Kramsch (2000) argued that human personality is composed of the myriad different roles that get played out in dialogic situations and that making L2 students aware of these roles enhances their ability to engage in a greater variety of discursive situations. Moro (1999) referred to this as an expansion of the dialogic sphere, in which speech or writing activity creates interfaces between diverse utterances and different voices. This expansion or awareness of different discursive possibilities helps to expand the language learner's ability to assume different roles.

Iddings, Haught, and Devlin (2005)demonstrated how ELL children creatively utilized a variety of semiotic means to create understanding and appropriate elements of their social and cultural surroundings. Documenting the friendship of two young girls who shared little common language, the researchers showed how these children enlisted gesture, dramatic play, and collaborative art and crafts activities to mediate their

39

friendship and creatively expand their world. The authors argued that the use of these multi-modal semiotic tools provided essential affordances and learning motivation for these young learners, and that by viewing their interactions as purposeful and intentional, we no longer characterize the language learners as deficient communicators, but recognize them as multicompetent makers and users of a variety of semiotic signs.

In his work on the role of gesture in L2 acquisition, McCafferty (2002) noted how, when interacting with native speakers, L2 learners might often feel disconnected from the situation and feel almost as if they were performing a role. He argued that for L2 learners the situation was very similar to the imitative role that children assume in dramatic play. The L2 learner is often largely imitating and 'ventriloquating' (Bakhtin, 1981) the speech of native speakers and these imitation activities play an important role in establishing a new sense of identity within the learner's target culture.

Other researchers (Brostrom, 1999; Hakkarainen, 1999) have noted that play and imitation are important activities in which the participants not only appropriate the surrounding social world, but make creative and transformational changes in their relations to it. Hannikainen (2001) demonstrated the use of play among young children as an inclusionary activity that was often undertaken despite the instructional intentions of the supervising adults. Viewing language acquisition as part of the process of acquiring society (Rodriguez Rojo, 2001), L2 learners, like children, are learning to master the roles and activities they will assume in the future.

Iddings and McCafferty (in review) suggested that children may have a need to transform the institutional activity system of school through imagination in order to permit and create meaning. By drawing upon Bakhtin's (1984) notion of *carnival*,

40

Iddings and McCafferty (2003) argued that the irreverent frame of mind adopted by L2

learners in play serves as a resource of semiotic mediation through which they orient

themselves to the world. Though carnival can be seen as a site of resistance, in this study

the children's interactions were humorous and playful and they enjoyed a sense of agency

as they gladly assumed and transformed their social roles while attending to their 'work'.

The children creatively transformed their individual activities in response to the

perceived dissonance created by the institutional system of school.

### 2.3.3 Imitation in Speech and Language Learning.

In discussing the role of imitation and second language learning we must first address

research and findings arising from the neuro-scientific community. We will then

examine the role of imitation from a sociocultural theoretical perspective.

Fadiga, et al (2002) provided evidence that listening to speech specifically excites

neurons for the tongue muscles. Using transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) a subject

listened to spoken words and an increase in motor evoked potentials could be recorded

from the listener's tongue muscles. This was the first time anyone had demonstrated that

listening activates the speech motor centers. This aligns with recent work done with the

observation/execution matching system; known popularly as 'mirror neurons'. This

system is thought to be a physiological expression of a brain mechanism that makes

possible understanding of the actions of others. In other words, the agent and the observer

share the same motor action understanding and ability. Additionally, Kohler, et al (2002),

while working with monkeys, discovered that many object related actions can be

recognized by sound. Multifunctional neurons in the premotor cortex would discharge

when the animals would hear a specific sound. It is suggested that if humans have mirror

41

neurons as well, which appears likely, the meaning of actions could be tied to hearing spoken language and that vocabulary contains not only a schema of an action, but how it should be physically executed. The authors suggest this may be a key to gestural communication and perhaps the evolution of spoken language.

Allot (2003) argued that advances in the understanding of mirror neurons suggest that language and imitation are very closely linked through motor control. Citing recent research that demonstrates motor equivalence can operate from speech to gesture or from gesture to speech; it also seems likely that it can operate between other modalities and speech. He went on to say that perception in all forms may be tied to motor action dependent on cross modal, a-modal or multimodal operations in the brain. Though he acknowledged the difficulties between various scientific branches studying the origins of speech, he recognized the importance of the discovery of mirror neurons and its impact on our understanding of language acquisition.

We now turn to concerns regarding imitation from a sociocultural theoretical perspective. Newman and Holzman (1993) argued that in Vygotsky's primary law of sociogenesis, in which he speaks of development leading learning; they believed that most people lose touch of the basic dialectical model from which Vygotsky is grounded. They spoke of how Vygotsky was concerned with imitation as one of the most developmentally important learning skills in very young children and reminded us of how he contrasted the mimicry of a parrot with the imitation of a child, drawing our attention to the fact that learning entails joint interaction within the ZPD. The child does not simply mimic like a parrot, but recognizes the goal directed action of the adult they are emulating. In later volumes they contended that imitation is learning only when it takes

place as revolutionary activity within the ZPD (Newman & Holzman, 1996). Drawing correlations between Wittgenstein's 'forms of life', they went on to claim that imitative learning within the ZPD or imitating revolutionary activity is actually the performing of life and culture itself.

> The per-*form*-ance of *life* - the synthesis of Vygotsky in Wittgenstein - is required to sustain a developmental learning community. For it is only in performing-a human skill which for most of us is left to atrophy after early childhood - that we can be who and what we are not (a head taller than ourselves). Thus, the *form of life* in the ever-changing ZPDs that make up our community environment is filled with play - that is, it is performatory. We are, as our critics have observed with dismay, forever being who we are not. We are performing. (p.159)

It is interesting that Newman and Holzman refer to the performatory interactions within the ZPD as play. Vygotsky assigned great importance to the role of dramatic and imitative play in a child's development. He believed that while engaged in play the child was projecting him or herself into the future; not merely imitating adults, but adopting personae. He contended that the child was operating within their ZPD at all levels of their functioning and this was the beginning of the development of higher mental processes (Lantolf, 2000). "In playing the child is always above his average level, above his everyday behavior... in such a situation the child tries, as it were, to leap above the average level of his behavior" (Vygotsky, 1978).

Play provides the optimal context for young children to develop cognitive and social skills and provide a foundation for skills that will emerge in the future. Vygotsky argued

43

that play is not totally free and unstructured activity but is bound within constraints and rules. It is in the recognition and motivation to abide by these rules that young children first developed the ability to regulate their behavior. "The influence of play on a child's development is enormous... it is a novel form of behavior liberating the child from constraints... the child begins to act in a cognitive, rather than an externally visual realm... the condition is reached in which the child begins to act independently of what he sees" (p. 180). Thus the child is able to engage in imitation and dramatic play in which objects and cultural tools can be transformed in the imagination of the child enrolls can be assumed. Play, imitation, and dramatic play in particular, can be viewed from a sociocultural perspective as a vital part of a child's mental development. We see a direct and reciprocal relation between activities in both the physical-social realm and the inner mental realm of the individuals' development.

### 2.3.4 Activity Theory and L2 Pedagogy

In their extensive examination of classroom cultures, Gallego and Cole (2001) noted several successful examples of activity based learning. Discussing sheltered English instruction they specifically noted how Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) embodied the following activity based instructional features (p. 986):

1. Active participation – Students learn both content and language through active engagement in academic tasks related to content knowledge.

2. Social interaction – Students learn by interacting with others as they carry out collaborative activities.

44

3. Integrated oral and written language – Language processes are integrated in a variety of ways for a variety of purposes, thus enabling greater opportunities for language activities.

4. Real books and real tasks – Students read real texts and write for useful purposes.

5. Background knowledge – Activities are based upon student's prior knowledge and cultural and linguistic resources.

These attributes recognized the cultural-historical situatedness of a community of learners within an activity system. The authors also argued that this model of instruction acknowledged and welcomed the interpenetration of other activity systems, particularly the community and home.

Gallego and Cole (2001) also cited the work of Luis Moll and the Funds of Knowledge project which strived to establish strategic connections between community households and the classroom. They believed that the ultimate goal of the program was to transform classroom practice. Specifically, teachers were to use the information gained in local households to change the sorts of activities and routines available to the classroom. They noted Moll and Greenberg's (1990) belief that if educators fail to focus on social relationships and people in activity as the unit of analysis, they will never recognize the funds of knowledge available within working class households. Gallego and Cole (2001) concluded that an activity theoretical approach was an important resource for thinking critically and creatively about the future of education and our ability to include culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

Moll (2001) also recognized several studies that attempted to create settings or environments for teaching and learning that utilized community resources in new ways.

45

Noting such programs as *La Clase Magica* and The Fifth Dimension as examples, he claimed that the emphasis of these minority student community outreach programs are theoretically inspired activity systems, which also serve as the subject of research. He argued that these programs attempt to create or reconstruct social and cultural practices whose primary goal is to transform teaching and learning activities.

In their development of teaching standards for an activity theoretical pedagogy, Dalton and Tharp (2002) argued that this vision demanded a totally different pattern of classroom activity settings and that a CHAT perspective offered the greatest hope of engaging at risk populations because students would be more actively engaged in problem solving activities and would be encouraged to utilize and build upon their prior knowledge.  They claimed that knowledge stored in cultural artifacts cannot be grasped through reading and memory, but can only be acquired through participatory activities that utilize the knowledge and guidance of more expert others. Dalton and Tharp attempted to establish standards and indicators that the teacher could follow in order to address the standards.

Though intended as general pedagogical standards, several of the indicators addressed the needs of diversity in general and L2 learners in particular, including use of both L1 and L2 within the classroom, utilization of cultural and community knowledge, acknowledging various discourse genres, and encouraging the legitimacy of every classroom voice. They cited several studies describing how students' mastery of language, conversational conventions and academic content are postponed by conventional classrooms due to minimal interaction and language production opportunities. They argued that these limited opportunities restricted language minority

46

students' success and alienated all students who gradually felt that school had little relevance to their lived lives. They believed that a CHAT model of pedagogy reflected the social and cultural origins of learning and how students' capabilities develop in interaction with others. They stressed the importance of the teacher and that the standards must be contextualized for the individual communities of practice, but felt that this pedagogical stance shifted attention from individual student attributes to an emphasis on the transformational development of attributes through active engagement with others. Though applying standards to something as inherently contextual as activity theory is problematic in itself, the creation of such a format might make the implementation of such practices more palatable to traditional educators

### 2.3.5 Critical Pedagogy and
### Language Learners

The politics of identity strongly influence the formation of bicultural and second language students' ability to succeed in school. The current climate in many schools is what Valenzuela (1999) calls 'subtractive schooling', in which the cultural, community and linguistic resources a student brings to the school environment are subtracted and dismissed as irrelevant and unvalued within the dominant school culture. Many schools fail to recognize the students' knowledge as a potential resource and instead view them as a problem that must be overcome through an assimilationist model of cultural and linguistic eradication (Baker, 2000). In his examination of deculturalization programs historically utilized within the U.S., Spring (2001) lists the following general educational methods:

1.          Segregation and isolation.

47

2.	Forced change of language.

3.	Content of curriculum reflects culture of the dominant group.

4.	Content of textbooks reflects culture of the dominant group.

5.	Dominated groups are not allowed to express their culture or religion.

6.	Use of teachers from the dominant group.

These methods continue to be employed to a large degree within our schools resulting in

the student's self-worth, as embodied by his primary culture and language, being reduced

to a problem and the worth of his or her identity is thrown into question.

The predominant model of classroom discourse has been a teacher dominated,

initiation-response-evaluation (IRE) format. The teacher asks a "test' question (to which

she knows the answer), the student responds, and the teacher indicates (evaluates) the

appropriateness of the response. Invariably the teacher does most of the talking and

student responses are limited to rote short answers. Little true dialogue or conversation

takes place, and when it does, it is usually student initiated, quite accidental, and often

viewed as a deviation from the material at hand (Wells, 1999). The controlling, teacher

dominated classroom is actually a form of cultural transmission, reflecting the values of

the dominant culture and perpetuating the inequalities of the societal power structure

(Akkari, 1998; Delpit, 1995).

An alternative view of education has begun to examine and question the IRE model

of classroom interaction and the accompanying power relations it entails. Van Lier

(1996) has called for increased authenticity and learner autonomy within the second

language classroom This view is heavily influenced by Vygotsky's interactive

psychology and a sociocultural perspective. Sociocultural theory posits that learning does

48

not take place within an individual but in transactions between people. Higher psychological processes are acquired through interactions with others that are later internalized and carried out independently by individuals.

This sampling of research allows some insight into the applicability of an activity theoretical framework into a wide array of L2 learning contexts. Researchers have utilized CHAT as both a descriptive and prescriptive tool. By applying CHAT to both classroom analysis and as a pedagogical framework, these researchers have demonstrated the adaptability of an activity theoretical framework. In the next section we will explore the broader implications and possibilities for L2 education reform when viewed through a CHAT lens.

## 2.4 Discussion

### 2.4.1 Emerging Issues in Second Language Drama Activities

This review of the research and practice of drama in second language learning raises some interesting concerns for the second language instructor and researcher. The two meta-analyses noted earlier (Conard, 1998, Kardash & Wright, 1987) were in agreement concerning the increased efficacy of drama in education, but both noted that the effect was greater for both younger and better academic performing learners. Though most of the studies analyzed were not second language learning situations, this raises questions regarding the use of drama for older language learners and immigrants with limited literacy skills. Would drama activities result in the same communicative competencies for these learners? Would it be most effective for building oral fluency as opposed to literacy

skills? How willing would adult learners be to engage in drama activities? Would they view theater games as frivolous and silly? How could the practices be adapted for different groups of learners?

The entire designation used by Conard (1998) regarding the decreased effect for 'remedial' learners is troubling. Many SLLs are labeled remedial, but this is often a result of confounding language issues for a cognitive or developmental problem. If the implication is that drama is most beneficial for the smart, creative kids, then we need to investigate specifically which activities appear to benefit all language learners and in what ways. Di Pietro (1987) argued that the use of interactive scenarios is appropriate at any age and language ability level, but practices should be attuned to the context of the class and the specific group of learners.

The debate between the use of process or product based learning appears to be overstated. Reviewing the studies reveals successful applications of both methodologies and the two have been integrated quite successfully in several instances. It might be argued that methods such as memorization and performance of a script, choral reading, readers' theater, and similar activities amounts to nothing more than glorified audio-lingualism; 'drill and skill' on a slightly higher plane perhaps, but essentially rote learning. Others have argued that scripted performance allows rehearsal of culturally accepted norms of behavior (Via, 1976), increased fluency, more accurate pronunciation, and enhanced expressiveness through the rehearsal process (Collins, 2002; Moody, 2002; O'Neil, 1995). Many believed that the incorporation of dramatic literature into the language learning process increases other literacy skills (Dodson, 2000, 2002; Moody, 2002; Via, 1976). In modern theater practice, the rehearsal of scripted material usually

entails improvisation and games as devices to explore characterization and subtexts. As Moody (2002) argued, the two approaches overlap in their actual implementation in the classroom. They are not opposite ends of a spectrum, but part of a larger approach to learning that has a great deal to offer language learners. In addition, Dodson (2002) claimed that exploring theatrical text set in the cultural world of the target language broadens intercultural understanding.

Perhaps it is in the area of intercultural understanding that drama activities have the greatest potential. Fels and McGivern (2002) felt that language acquisition required an embodied understanding of the historical, political, social, and cultural landscapes of the target language. They believed that performative inquiry through drama activities provided an entranceway into these landscapes that transformed students' learning into an embodied, visceral experience. Berry (2000) believed that the domains created through drama activities served to cross borders between cultures and increase opportunity for intercultural understanding. She further argued, borrowing from Bakhtin's (1981) notion of carnival, the humor and parody that often arise through improvisation and role play serves to open cultural constructions to interrogation and call into question our assumptions and understandings.

Finally, the affective dimensions of drama activities need to be more fully investigated. Mahn and John-Steiner (2002) argued that one essential aspect of life-long learning is confidence, and they explored how supportive interrelations between peers and mentors were crucial to enable all learners to have the confidence to engage in creative risk-taking. Drama activities tend to build strong relationships between learners and between teacher and students, and motivation to learn often accompanies

51

involvement. Theatrical performance is one of the greatest of creative risk-takings, and one crucial aspect of performance is building a sense of trust among members of the ensemble. Therefore, drama activities have the potential to create a community of language learners which can engage in language play and experimentation in an atmosphere of caring which permits mistakes and learners realize that laughter can be supportive rather than derisive. If we can learn to create such an environment we will have fundamentally altered the educational landscape for our second language learners.

The challenge for us as educators and researchers then is to search for ways to allow our language learners to enter into these landscapes and domains in such a manner that encourages authentic communication and the opportunity to produce language which embodies intercultural understanding and sharing of concepts. If we accept the notion that language acquisition entails the acquisition of culture, and drama activities appear to embody this acquisition in a tangible, visceral experience, then we need to create spaces within the education experience of our students to grant them access into these drama worlds.

## 2.4.2 CHAT Research

A number of commonalities were noted in the above CHAT based studies. All utilized activity theory as a descriptive tool and many went further and employed it as an explanatory device. What is markedly noticeable was how the researchers appeared to classify operations and attempt to ascertain what they believed to be the goal driven actions. In addition, CHAT attuned the researchers' attention to context. Each activity is unique do to the cultural historical context in which it is embedded and those goals of those involved. Context permeates every aspect of data collection and analysis.

52

Another common aspect was the inherent concern for social reform. Cultural psychology directs attention to reforming social institutions and societal conditions (Ratner, 1997). By analyzing the context in which activities take place, there appeared to be a natural proclivity to search for a better way. Activity theory appears to assume a critical perspective almost by default. This is largely due to the fact that CHAT acknowledges the inevitability of conflict and contradiction that arises in every activity system. Vygotsky wrote at length about the conflictual nature of learning (Kozulin, 1998), but the zone of proximal development is often characterized as an unproblematic walk down the primrose path of learning. Activity theory not only acknowledges the inevitability of contradictions, but regards them as the source of creativity and innovation. All researchers appeared to recognize the activity systems as dynamic and continuously evolving. This seems to almost inevitably lead to the search for solutions or ways to transform the activity in an attempt to further social justice and equality.

In his call for schooling as a practice of dialogic inquiry, Wells (1999) argued that activity theory enabled comparisons to be made between very different practices of schooling and encouraged critical and innovative ways to teach. Positing that Engestrom's (1987) activity system model could be seen as situating the activity within a dynamic community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), he argued that discourse itself was the mediating tool-kit within this community. Analyzing different instances of classroom discourse, Wells demonstrated how teacher response (an operation) altered classroom action (goals) in different ways. Using a model he termed Teaching as Responsive Intervention, his examples suggested how teacher response had the ability to either inhibit or extend classroom discourse. He argued that it was through the strategic

53

use of follow-up responses that teachers have the greatest potential to transform their classrooms into communities of dialogic inquiry.

Elsewhere, Wells (2003) argued that the practice of schooling can never become truly homogenized or standardized due to the unpredictable manner in which dialogue unfolds. Within an activity system the notion of a stable goal is incompatible with genuine move-by-move co-construction of discourse. He believed that teachers can learn to embrace the unexpected within their classrooms and by responding in an extending fashion invite collaborative construction of meaning. This, he argued, is applying the concept of *register* to the area of operations. By the teacher adopting a register of extension into his or her operations, the nature of the action is affected, with a goal of dialogic inquiry coming closer to realization. In the case of second language learners, a community of dialogic inquiry would afford more opportunities to engage in authentic, meaningful language use.

In the studies surveyed here, activity theory appears to be predominately a qualitative research tool. However, Wardekker (2000) claimed that either quantitative or qualitative methods could be used within the activity theoretical framework and points to the possibility that AT may not be able to make the paradigm wars go away, "but it would make them less interesting and instead point our attention toward different problems and difficulties in the realm of research methods" (p. 260). He claimed that the traditional two views of research (positivist and interpretivist) are based upon a Cartesian dualism which asks if mankind is primarily natural or primarily cultural. He contended that CHAT offers a third view which may aid in bridging the gap between the two paradigms. He argued that CHAT doesn't fully endorse either view because CHAT research cannot be about a

stable, objective world or stable narratives of experience. It rather concerns the understanding of change processes in a specific situation that cannot be transferred to other persons or settings. He felt that transformational, collaborative research involving dialogue between researchers and participants may become the methodological norm for CHAT practitioners

Whether or not activity theory may have any impact upon the paradigm wars, there is little doubt that it has the potential to affect L2 pedagogy in concrete ways. With its emphasis upon socially collaborative meaning making which acknowledges and draws upon students' prior knowledge and cultural resources, CHAT has served as a model for a handful of successful programs that actively engage learners in hands-on cultural acquisition. Perhaps these programs will eventually serve as models for contextually situated programs of teaching and learning that successfully buck the trend toward increasingly controlled and regimented classrooms. The contextual outlook of an activity theoretical framework appears to be of particular benefit for bicultural and language minority students, as it recognizes their diversity and backgrounds as a legitimate component of the activity system. It is interesting to note that nearly all of the extant programs cited were designed to address the needs of bicultural and at risk student populations. As research continues to demonstrate the efficacy of these models perhaps educators will recognize an opportunity for a genuine educational reform that may better reach all students.

In sum, it appears that cultural-historical activity theory is indeed a powerful explanatory tool that forces the researcher to examine the dynamics of activity systems in a thorough manner. The importance of context does not make the findings generalizable,

but the insights are certainly as valid as any other interpretivist methodology. The focus upon the development and transformations that takes place within activity systems results in a clarifying picture of the learning process. Acknowledging that conflict gives rise to innovation and invention encourages us to take a proactive and reform minded analysis of how the system can change and expand.

Recognizing the cultural-historical subjectivities of the learner while recognizing their agency in the negotiation of the learning environment expands the construction of who and what a learner is. An agentive view of the learner endorses Well's (2003) notion of schooling as a semiotic apprenticeship best achieved through dialogic inquiry. This vision of learning thoroughly discounts the notion of scripted teaching or standardized curriculum, because in a collaborative dynamic of activity systems outcomes are by nature contradictory and unpredictable.

Perhaps the greatest difference that Vygotsky's theory offers is the emphasis upon the social, as opposed to the traditional Western concern with the individual. The individual still exists, and we are concerned with his or her development, but the individual is now a system within systems, acting with agency while simultaneously being acted upon. Kerr (1997) argued that the powerful set of tools offered by Vygotsky's theory has been the impetus behind Russian education reform. He believed that the same potential exists for the West as new ideas for considering how mind and consciousness develop in social interaction, perhaps resulting in new views of education practice.

Vygotsky's premature death was both problematic and yet somewhat fortuitous for the future of sociocultural theory. Though lost when he was in the middle of developing some of his strongest formulations, his radical concept of socially constructed mind has

given impetus to a huge and growing body of international research. In second language education, in particular, there are a number of areas that deserve further study.

More research is needed to investigate how socializing practices and the more firmly established identity constructs of older language learners affect cultural transmission and language acquisition. Another related area of interest might be culturally differing attitudes regarding collaborative learning practices and how these might affect motivation and learning activities.

Little serious study of the affective role in teaching and learning has been done. Mahn and John-Steiner (2002) argued that one essential aspect of life-long learning is confidence, and they explored how supportive interrelations between peers and mentors were crucial to enable learners to have the confidence to engage in creative risk-taking. More work is needed in this area and, further, the role that emotion plays in motivation and engagement and identity formation for language learners should also be explored.

The role of classroom discourse and how introducing elements of alterity affect student responses is worth studying. Wells' (1999, 2002) work with teacher-researchers in creating communities of dialogic inquiry looks very promising, but perhaps there are other means of altering classroom discourse which might prove just as effective or complementary. If meaningful learning takes place through collaborative problem solving, there may be a variety of creative ways to introduce problems and challenges for learners to engage in.

Finally, the emergence of distance education and on-line learning presents some challenging questions for socially based learning. How does an on-line language learner engage others in a community of practice when merely interacting with a computer

57

terminal? How do we afford this learner opportunities for collaborative problem solving and opportunities to produce language in authentic interactions? Will the growing use of on-line learning hinder CHAT based learning in the future, or will the activity transform and expand? Can a computer scaffold learning and development through the ZPD in the same manner as a human mentor?

Reviewing the growing body of work surrounding cultural-historical activity theory reveals a dynamic and enthusiastic community of inquiry which has embraced the notion that teaching and learning is an active, hands-on process of cultural acquisition only accomplished through collaboration and action with others. The free and enthusiastic exchange of ideas from people working in widely scattered areas attests to the degree of thought this new vision of learning creates. One gets the impression that this is truly a community of dialogic inquiry which embraces the contradictions and dissonances created as a natural by-product of heterogeneous thought. And, like any activity system, this one will continue to grow and transform itself as its members search for new and better ways of addressing their concerns.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research questions and subsequent methodology for this study arose from

pedagogical issues surrounding the use of drama with second language learners.

The purpose of this study was to describe and analyze how the use of drama activities

affects second language learning. The research questions that initially guided this study

evolved with the emerging data. The pressing questions for analysis became the

following:

1. What are the specific means of mediation utilized by participants in a drama approach

to second language learning?

2. What mediational affordances are facilitated by a drama approach to second language

learning?

3. What are the pedagogical implications for a drama approach to second language

learning?

It should be understood that the questions are interconnected and this dissertation will

explore the mediation that takes place between drama and second language learning and

this mediational relationship takes many forms as the students engaged in collective

meaning-making.

59

## 3.2 The Study

In accord with a cultural-historical activity theoretical framework, activity was the primary unit of analysis. This study was concerned with describing, interpreting, and explaining activity as opposed to other phenomenon such as behavior or linguistic structure (though these elements are part of the activity). Sociocultural theory proposes that mental processes and cultural-historical setting must be understood as dialectically interacting moments which make up human activity. In other words, human activity can only be understood by invoking multiple perspectives and examining the dialectical tensions that comprise the moment. Analysis was concerned with trying to unlock the multiple dimensions of the mediation process our participants are engaged in during their rehearsals and performances. This analysis was conducted through a qualitative research design that consisted of observation, videotape recordings, stimulated recall protocols, conversations between participants and the researcher, and more structured interviews. A qualitative investigation is best suited to answer these questions through the microgenetic examination of participant interactions and the transformations that take place.

### 3.2.1 Microgenetic Analysis

Vygotsky described four dimensions to the genetic study of behavior and its development. Phylogenesis examines the rise of psychological signs and symbols, the most important of which is language, over the entire evolution of humans. Ontogenesis considers human development over the life of an individual. The sociocultural dimension is concerned with development within a specific society and culture. The fourth dimension, Microgenesis, is concerned with the development of human interactions and

60

activity over a short period of time. This last dimension is what many studies of classroom-based learning, and this study in particular, are concerned with.

Genetic analysis requires examining the interconnectedness of the various elements of activity. Microgenetic analysis is a thorough examination of the multiple layers of activity captured in very short segments. In discussing his method of genetic analysis, Vygotsky (1978) talked of the

> need to concentrate not on the *product* of development but on the very
>
> *process* by which higher forms are established…This is the aim of
>
> dynamic analysis…*To study something historically means to study it in the*
>
> *process of change;* that is the dialectical method's basic demand. To
>
> encompass in research the process of a given thing's development on all
>
> its phases and changes – from birth to death – fundamentally means to
>
> discover its nature, its essence, for "it is only in movement that a body
>
> shows what it is." Thus, the historical (that is in the broadest sense of
>
> history) study of behavior is not an auxiliary aspect of theoretical study,
>
> but rather forms its very base. (pp. 64-65, italics in original)

Unlike other investigative procedures, a microgenetic analysis attempts to capture minute detail of transformative activity. By gathering data over a period of time and observing the participants as they moved from other-regulated activity to self-regulated activity, a microgenetic analysis serves somewhat like time-lapse photography by revealing the subtle changes as they evolve. The study meant to describe participants' transformations as they collaboratively worked through their respective Zones of Proximal Development by examining in detail their interactions from multiple

perspectives. Microgenetic analysis attempts to detail the hyper-contextuality of the multiple layers of human interaction by detailing specific short moments captured over a longer period of time.

Microgenetic methodology is characterized by several features. Unlike traditional laboratory methods, which might collect data before and after some intervention or specific period of time (for example, studies utilizing pre- and post-test designs), in microgenetic studies, data collection continues throughout the entire time period of the study. The researcher attempts to capture the processes involved from when behavior begins to change until it stabilizes (Hall, 2004). Multiple observations over a longer period of time permit the analysis of both changing behaviors as well as more stable aspects of participant interactions. Group dynamics are revealed as are individual differences and attention is also brought to how the surrounding conditions affect activity. And since analysis is concerned with obtaining very detailed accounts of activity, sample size tends to be limited. The priority switches from a large number of participants to a high density of observations

In this study the emphasis will be upon the processes the participants engaged in as they co-constructed meaning. In keeping with Vygotsky's notion of genetic analysis (1978), the historical process of change will be documented as the students engage in recursive encounters with dramatic material and move toward increased self-regulation. Observations of the same moments will be analyzed from different perspectives and aspects of participant interaction in an attempt to reveal the multiple layers of human activity. A microgenetic analysis calls for the deconstruction of the multi-layered simultaneity of activity into discrete parts in order to understand what is taking place.

Much like peeling back the layers of an onion, Chapter 4, the results section, will expose the various layers to scrutiny and analysis as we examine how language learning was mediated within drama workshops. The study will go on to examine the multi-modal forms of meaning making the participants engaged in as they practiced their language skills and increased their understanding. Such a fine-grained picture of participant activity will enable an examination of the inter-penetrations of the multiple activity systems contained in these drama language learning interventions.

### 3.2.2 Study Setting

Data were gathered at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. The school is identified in order to situate the study within the unique context of a University located within an international tourist destination as this had a direct bearing upon the motives and goals of the study participants. This university is best characterized as an urban university with a very diverse population of students, many of whom are international students drawn to the College of Hotel Management and Tourism in particular. More than half of the study's participants were interested in international tourism and working in the hotel industry, and several of them indicated their desire to learn English in order to facilitate such employment. These participants therefore felt a professional investment in learning their new language.

The workshops were held in a multi-use room used for both classes and conferences. The space was filled with four 8x4 folding tables and a variety of mismatched chairs. The space was flexible, in that furniture could be arranged to provide for an open space in which to rehearse and perform as well as providing a place for seat work, but there was no 'stage' or designated performance space. The participants often rearranged the room

to accommodate the day's activities. The room was equipped with erasable white boards which allowed the researcher to write and demonstrate spelling, homonyms, and other issues as he assisted the students in the decoding of scripts and other texts.

### 3.2.3 Participants

All but two of the participants were university ESL students while the other two were recruited by their friends who had volunteered to participate in a series of workshops utilizing drama activities to practice and improve their English. Access was arranged through the director of the English Language Center who had agreed to assist with recruiting participants for the study. Participant selection was obtained through visits to regular ESL classrooms and the posting of flyers in the language laboratory and other locations on campus. The workshops were advertised as a fun way to develop speaking and listening skills (Appendix B).

The original intention was to run one workshop with a larger group; however, the students' schedules necessitated forming two different drama workshop groups. Group One originally consisted of four women. Two of the women were from Japan, one woman was from eastern Russia, and the fourth woman was from Belarus. The second group was made up of three women; two from Korea and one from Japan.

### 3.2.4 Group One

Participant 1. In Group One H was an ESL student from Belarus in her late twenties. She was enrolled in ESL classes at the university and planned to complete the TOEFL, though she was unsure what she wanted to study. She had been in the United States for 1 year and 10 months, and had never studied English before arriving in America, nor spoke any other languages. Her stated reason for learning English was to enable her to converse

64

with people in her new country. She was an eager participant and midway through the study she and her Russian friend asked to participate in the workshops twice weekly.

Participant 2. H was joined by her friend M, a woman from eastern Russia who appeared to be in her early forties (both Russian speaking women declined to disclose their ages). M was the only participant who completed the semester who was not a student at the University during the study. She had studied previously at the University where she had made her acquaintance with H and they had remained good friends. M had been in the United States one and a half years at the beginning of the study and considered herself a beginning/intermediate speaker of English. M was a gregarious woman who often dominated the conversation, though she later admitted that she often talked because it was easier to speak than trying to understand spoken English. Of all the participants, she was often the most resistant to certain exercises and unafraid to state her objections or to disagree with others. Some other participants found her to be aggressive and disagreeable, though none said this directly to her. No longer a student, M listed 'life' as her 'major' and wanted to learn English for conversation. She spoke a little French that she had picked up informally while living with an aunt in Paris. She began studying English upon arrival in the United States, but expressed dissatisfaction with the university's ESL program and dropped out. She expressly wanted to learn English for conversational purposes and hoped the drama class would facilitate that.

Participant 3. O was a 26 year old Japanese woman who had attended some ESL classes but her studies had been interrupted when she gave birth to her daughter. Though she had been in the United States for nearly one year her English was very limited and she said she had very little opportunity to practice English. She stated she wanted to

65

learn English because of an experience when she had to go to the hospital with her sick baby and was unable to communicate. Upon leaving the United States to return to Japan, she also spoke of the shame she felt returning to her country with very little English to show for her time spent abroad. She was forced to drop out of the workshops after the first few weeks due to a family emergency, though she did return to participate in a stimulated recall protocol and conversation conducted in her native Japanese.

Participant 4.  C was a 23 year old Japanese woman enrolled in ESL classes at the University. C had been in the United States for one month studying English, and planned to complete the TOEFL exam and pursue an international job in the hotel industry. She claimed that her mother spoke Italian and English, her sister spoke English, and she herself spoke a little Chinese. C too would leave the workshops after three weeks due to her demanding studies

### 3.2.5 Group Two

Participant 5.  In Group Two, A was in her second year of study at the University and was an intermediate speaker of English, having also studied in her native Korea.  At age 24, A had completed the TOEFL exam and was currently studying hotel management. She wanted to master English for an international career in the hotel industry and specifically said she attended the drama workshops in order to improve her pronunciation. Neither she nor her family spoke any other languages. It should be noted that A was in her second year of living in the University dormitories and probably had more opportunity to practice English than many of the other participants.

Participant 6. W also hoped to study hotel management but had not yet taken the TOEFL exam. A Korean who appeared to be in her mid 20's (she did not list her age), W

had been studying English for seven years, but had only three months in the United States. She wanted to learn English to get a job and study the convention industry. W claimed to have had some performance experience in school and was one of the most eager and outgoing of the participants. She was generally unafraid to try things and often served as a catalyst to motivate the others.

Participant 7. N was a 36 year old Japanese student who had been studying English for more than 20 years, though she had only been in the United States for three months. Despite the years, she was a beginning student. Though she had a degree from a Japanese university, she was studying ESL full-time in preparation for the TOEFL. She was not sure what she wanted to study, but indicated that she wanted to remain in the United States. She lived in the home of an American woman where she cared for a toddler in exchange for room and board. All three students in group 2 remained with the study throughout the duration. . Table 3.1 summarizes the participants' backgrounds and length of involvement in the study.

67

Table 3.1 Participant background

| Participant | H | M | O | C | A | W | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Country of Origin | Belarus | Russia | Japan | Japan | Korea | Korea | Japan |
| Native Language | Russian | Russian | Japanese | Japanese | Korean | Korean | Japanese |
| Other Languages | None | Basic French | None | Basic Chinese | None | None | None |
| Time Studying English | 1 year 10 months | 1.5 years | 1 year | 1 month | 1 year | 7 years | 20 years |
| Time in United States | 1 year 10 months | 1.5 years | 1 year | 1 month | 1year 1month | 3 months | 3 months |
| Period of Study Participation | All | All | 3 weeks + exit interview | 3 weeks | All | All | All |
| Age | Late 20's | Early 40's | 26 | 23 | 24 | Mid 20's | 36 |
| Sex | Female | Female | Female | Female | Female | Female | Female |

## 3.3 Data collection

Both groups met once a week for ninety minutes over a fourteen week period. Group

One, which eventually consisted of just the two Russian speaking women, requested to

meet twice a week toward the end of the study. Group One had twelve meetings over

fourteen weeks and Group Two had eleven meetings over fourteen weeks. Eleven and a

half hours of video was collected from group one. Nine and a half hours of video was

collected from group two.

The workshops consisted of a series of popular theatre games, improvisations, tongue

twisters, Strategic Interactions (Di Pietro, 1987), and scripted scene performances

(Appendix C). The students were videotaped and given opportunities to perform and

practice in various groupings. The purpose of the exercises was to encourage spontaneous

and authentic communication within the improvisations, provide practice with written

68

dialogue, and encourage the students to engage in collaborative problem solving. These exercises continued throughout the course of the study, and the students themselves became increasingly involved in constructing the exercises.

The principle researcher and author of this dissertation, John, found himself positioned in the studies as a participant-researcher. His intended function was to give initial direction and select the texts and scenarios for role-play, but initially felt that his influence during the actual rehearsals and performances would be minimal. Ideally, the leader of a drama workshop serves as a facilitator who relinquishes control of the creative process to the students. By giving up control and placing responsibility upon the learner, the traditional discourse patterns of the teacher-controlled classroom would have been profoundly altered. While John accomplished this to a large degree, as has happened in other studies, he also discovered that his involvement was much more intimate and interactive than anticipated (Merriam, 1998; Spradley, 1980). On several occasions the students asked him to specifically model language use so they could imitate his speech. The workshops also included a great deal of instructional conversation as John helped the participants create meaning and understand the written texts.

John was assisted in data collection by Chizu, a doctoral student at the University and a bilingual Japanese / English speaker. Chizu had taught ESL classes for the University's program and A, N, and O were former students of hers. Chizu used the workshops to gather her own data as a pilot study examining identity issues unique to Japanese women studying in the United States. Though her data was of a different nature and purpose, she and John often discussed what took place in the workshops. Chizu served as a workshop facilitator, conversing and coaching the students, and making reflective notes at the end

69

of every session which were also included in the data. She also helped to conduct and transcribe the exit interviews for the two low level Japanese speakers, which were held in Japanese. She often participated in the theater games and warm-ups and occasionally read the script with other participants. With her native like command of English she served as an important model for the other participants.

The primary means of data collection was the use of digital video recordings. The participants were recorded in rehearsal, in conversation, and in structured interviews. Students were also videotaped as they watched themselves on tape to see their reactions and taped again in stimulated recall protocols, in which the students were shown short clips of video and asked to recount their experiences, thoughts and feelings of what was going on at the moment of taping. Two cameras were used for most sessions so that the students' reactions to viewing their videotaped performances could be monitored. The video cameras were mounted on tripods and often turned on by a remote control, so the University students often did not know or were unconcerned about when the cameras were running.

Though John's active participation in the activities often precluded him from taking running field notes during the sessions, he attempted to take reflective notes afterward and also collected student writing, notes, and re-written scripts. All participants completed questionnaires regarding their language learning backgrounds and reflections on the drama activities. Their exit interviews were filmed, two of which were conducted in Japanese by Chizu. These were intended to add insight into the process by permitting the participants to express themselves in their native language.

## 3.4 Overview of Data Analysis Process

Initial data analysis began with the creation of video logs detailing interactions and events recorded during the drama workshops. After the logs had been separated between the two groups and ordered chronologically, various coding strategies were employed in an effort to discern interactions and recurring patterns. The codes were placed in various matrices to explore frequency, interrelationships, similarities and differences between the two participating groups and other junctures. Codes were later color coded and displayed chronologically to visually represent emerging themes. The doctoral committee chair and other students and faculty were invited to give their input on the matrices, coding strategies, and visual representations. John discussed the codes with Chizu to see if they agreed regarding the accuracy of his observations in order to provide inter-rater reliability. After adjusting, saving and abandoning a variety of codes, a decision was reached regarding what appeared to be the most salient features arising from the workshops. The forms of analysis applied to the data sources are summarized in the following list:

- Descriptive analysis and field notes

- Video logs for each group

- Identifying and coding indicators & key events

- Identifying themes & relationships

- Comparing observed indicators to those described by the participants in stimulated recalls and exit interviews

- Analysis of student written artifacts (paraphrased scripts, notes)

71

Table 3.2 Relationship between research questions and data analysis

| Questions | Data Sources | Methods of Analysis |
|---|---|---|
| **What were the specific means of mediation utilized by participants in a drama approach to second language learning?** | Field notes<br>Video logs<br>Student interviews<br>Stimulated recall<br>Video transcriptions<br>Student notes<br>Paraphrased scripts<br>Educational conversations | Descriptive analysis<br>Video logs patterns of activity<br>Identifying and coding indicators of key events<br>Identifying themes & relationships<br>Comparing observed indicators to those described by the participants<br>Analysis of student written artifacts |
| **What mediational affordances are facilitated by a drama approach to second language learning?** | Field notes<br>Video logs<br>Student interviews<br>Stimulated recall<br>Video transcriptions<br>Paraphrased scripts<br>Educational conversations | Descriptive analysis<br>Video logs patterns of activity<br>Identifying and coding indicators of non-traditional learning strategies<br>Identifying themes & relationships<br>Comparing observed indicators to those described by the participants |
| **What are the pedagogical implications for a drama approach to second language learning?** | Field notes<br>Video logs<br>Student interviews<br>Stimulated recall<br>Video transcriptions<br>Paraphrased scripts<br>Educational conversations | Descriptive analysis and field notes<br>Video logs patterns of activity<br>Identifying and coding indicators of pedagogy & meaning making<br>Identifying incidents of referencing outside experience<br>Comparing observed indicators to those described by the participants |

3.4.1 Coding Indicators & Video

Log Activity Patterns

72

Video logs were abridged transcriptions of the videotaped drama workshops. These logs were used to document the larger flow of activity, changing relationships, pedagogical practices, and rehearsal dynamics of the drama workshops. Various codes were employed with varying degrees of satisfaction. Some were discarded, some were modified, and some codes arose or were transformed as the data was analyzed. On four separate occasions the coded logs were color coded and displayed in chronological order in an attempt to capture a visual representation of behavior and interaction patterns. Eventually, a decision was made to focus analysis on the following coded data sources.

The difficulty of any qualitative research project is to determine what are the most salient and significant indicators on which to focus. The following coded data sources (codes) were chosen in an attempt to satisfy two needs: to provide descriptive material for a Microgenetic analysis of dialectical meaning making between participants and to examine the pedagogical implications of a drama based language learning approach. The following are definitions and rationale for the codes deemed of greatest interest for the purposes of this study.

### 3.4.2 Modeling

As the participants in both groups worked through the scripts, both John and Chizu provided extensive examples of native language use. The explicit modeling of pronunciation, intonation, prosodic features, gesture and bodily proxemics was an on-going feature of the workshops. Though it had not been the initial intention of the researchers to model role playing and speech, both groups specifically requested that John read the script aloud so they could hear and imitate his speech.

### 3.4.3 Imitation

All participants imitated the speech and mannerisms modeled by the researchers. As they worked through the decoding process, participants would take notes and repeat words and phrases as they were being modeled. The imitation often took the form of *sub rosa* speech; barely audible utterances made to oneself, allowing the learner to practice words and phrases semi-privately. Just as Vygotsky (1978) distinguished between the simple mimicry of a parrot versus the imitative learning of a child, the participants' imitation must be regarded as an integral part of their meaning making processes.

### 3.4.4 Instructional Conversations – Language

John spent a great deal of time explaining and defining words and phrases found in the texts. The decoding process involved not only defining words but discussing certain constructs of the English language. The participant's questions also concerned grammar and idiomatic usages of English. Often the conversations would lead to questions regarding usages of English that the participants had encountered outside of the workshops. These language conversations often related to their real life experiences in which they had experienced difficulty or confusion and allowed an opportunity to discuss how these situations might be handled differently in the future.

### 3.4.5 Instructional Conversations – Culture

The instructional conversations would often lead into the realm of culture. The context of a dramatic script and the relationships between characters would often prompt the participants to discuss similarities or differences in these situations with their home country. Though the participants found many of the situations to be universal in many ways, on several occasions there was disagreement on how something might be perceived

74

in their native culture. Often participants would use examples from the script to inquire about American beliefs and behaviors. Idiomatic usages of English often prompted the greatest curiosity as they attempted to make meaning of the sometimes obscure references and colloquialisms.

### 3.4.6 Rehearsal / Recursion

The participants' process of meaning-making became evident during the rehearsal process. As they proceeded from the decoding stage to increased fluency, their growing understanding was manifested through a process of recursion. By revisiting words and phrases multiple times, the participants demonstrated their understanding by chunking phrases, varying intonation, and demonstrating more native like speech patterns. This growth of understanding as they made meaning of the texts could be observed emerging over time.

### 3.4.7 Physical Embodiment

As the participants understanding of the texts increased, they began to demonstrate their understanding through physical means. This included the use of gesture, physical proxemics, gaze, and posture. They often imitated the same gestures that had been modeled by John, however, on several occasions they demonstrated their growing understanding through the use of novel gestures and physical responses. As they grew more aware of addressivity issues between characters, they began to engage in forms of physicalization to indicate assertion, defense, and other attitudes.

75

## 3.5 Field Notes & Observations

Not all interactions were captured on videotape and analysis also entailed reviewing field notes and discussing observations. Both John and Chizu had recorded their observations in reflective notes after the workshop sessions. Conversations about the events of individual workshops led to further reflection and shaped the planned activities for future sessions. On occasion, John would review the videotapes to confirm aspects of interaction that had been discussed. Descriptive analysis of the events often led to reflection as John would struggle to describe in detail the participants behaviors and interactions.

## 3.6 Comparing Observed Indicators
## with Participant Feedback

An important aspect of the data analysis involved participant feedback regarding what had taken place during the drama workshops. Stimulated recalls were employed in which the participants were shown segments of videotape and asked to comment on their experience as they remembered it. These comments were then compared to John's impressions of what was taking place to see if both researcher and participant were in agreement.

Exit interviews were also conducted with all of the participants to both solicit advice regarding the effectiveness of the workshops and to determine if both researcher and participant agreed regarding the educational outcomes of the drama activities. In addition to the formal, videotaped interviews, casual conversations between John and the participants often led to further insights into the students' impressions of the workshops.

These are considered to be instructional conversations as they often related to the

students' desires for shaping the course of their learning experience.


## 3.7 Learning Strategies and Outside Referencing

The video logs were analyzed for examples of the participants' active use of learning

strategies as they attempted to make meaning of their language encounters. These

included the instructional conversations and their questioning strategies as well as

specific requests for modeling of communication. Written artifacts were also examined,

thought these consisted mostly of short notations in their scripts and short paraphrases.

As the video logs were examined, John noticed a pattern of outside referencing as the

students' began to recognize lexical phrases and usages from the scripts being used by

others in their day to day experiences outside of the workshops. After becoming aware of

this apparent schema building taking place, John re-examined the logs for further

evidence.


## 3.8 Research from a Sociocultural
## Theoretical Perspective

If we accept an SCT perspective on L2 development, then language learning is not

merely the mastery of formal grammars and lexicon. Rather, language development is a

process of meaning regulation or developing awareness and self-control during the

internalization of communication concepts and strategies. L2 development then, is the

revolutionary process of developing agency while working through the Zone of Proximal

Development.

77

Agency is connected to motives which are the driving force behind our actions and interests. Motives are dynamic and constantly changing depending upon the situation and context of our activity. Motives are inexorably intertwined with emotions which arise within the context of any activity. Therefore, from an SCT perspective, it is important to try to understand participants' motives in order to understand the dynamics taking place between the social and the individual.

Researchers in a number of social sciences have historically been concerned with the extent that the researchers' presence might contaminate or bias the data. Relying heavily upon the legacy of empirical research bequeathed to us by the physical sciences, researchers strive to distance themselves from the actual process of data collection by minimizing bias and writing in the passive voice, as if the data is something which merely happened, and they were fortunate enough to record it.

Sociocultural theory raises serious challenges to the appropriateness of this approach. Several researchers have argued that individual human beings cannot be treated as laboratories subjects, but must be seen as individuals with unique sociocultural histories and agency (Roebuck, 2000; Lantolf, 2000). If we accept Vygotsky's premise that all learning is mediated between individuals using cultural tools and social interactions, then data collection itself must be seen as social constructs that arise from the interactions of the researcher participants and others.

78

CHAPTER 4


RESULTS

4.1 Introduction and Organization

of the Chapter

This data analysis chapter is organized topically, and the sections that divide the

chapter are based upon the coding and categories that arose as a framework from the

analysis of participant interactions. The organization is designed to examine the degree

of success and effectiveness of drama in second language learning. Data are presented in

each section that is specific to the topic explored in that section. The first section will be

a description of the drama workshop itself. This will also include a description of the

process that eventually arose from the participants' interactions. The next section will

examine modeling and imitation and how it related to various aspects of speech and

language learning. The third section documents some of the instructional conversations

that arose from the drama workshops and how they addressed issues of both language and

intercultural communication. The fourth section will investigate the effect of educational

drama upon the participants' motives and goals. The final section will graphically

illustrate the frequency of the coded categories and the similarities and differences

between the two groups in their interactions.

## 4.2 Overview of the Workshop Process

Examination of the videotaped sessions revealed how the students moved from simple decoding to meaning making and greater understanding of the texts and character relationships. This was evidenced by their questions, our instructional conversations, and their declarations of their new understandings. This understanding was demonstrated as their pronunciation, intonation, prosody, and paralinguistic communication gained fluency and clarity through a process of rehearsing and imitating the modeled speech and communication patterns of the workshop leaders and of the other participants. As the students encountered new scripts, the following pattern or process of meaning making began to emerge.

When a new script was introduced, the students would read through simply decoding the words, but reported that they did not understand what they were saying. A line by line analysis of the script would then follow, with the researcher explaining usages and modeling pronunciation, intonation, gestures, and prosodic features. This analysis was a combination of explanatory conversation and the direct modeling of the words, phrases, and idiomatic usages. The students often imitated the modeled phrases by repeating them in a *sub rosa* voice, or almost inaudibly to themselves, as well as with full voice. In addition, the students took notes of word meanings and pronunciations in their scripts and notebooks. Subsequent rehearsals often brought new questions and a return to the pattern of conversation and modeling/imitation. This pattern of recursion, or re-visiting words and phrases, provided multiple opportunities to rehearse words and phrases and to build meaning together. As their textual understanding grew, the students began to engage in higher order thinking as they would conjecture about and analyze the characters

80

interactions and motivations. This new understanding often gave rise to novel readings as they constructed meaning together through the rehearsal process.

## 4.3 Modeling and Imitation

The two overarching features of meaning-making examined in this study were modeling and imitation, and instructional conversations. Also, it should be noted that these two features are inextricably linked and interconnected; modeling led to conversations about meaning and conversations involved modeling usages and meanings while the students imitated, questioned, and conversed throughout. However, by concentrating on specific interactions, the processes can be discreetly documented as transformation in pronunciation, intonation, prosody, and paralinguistic elements of communication occurred. In the following sections each of these features will be examined through transcriptions and descriptions of the participants' interactions. Transcription conventions can be found in the appendix.

### 4.3.1 Pronunciation

Modeling the correct pronunciation of different words was an ongoing aspect of the workshops. It was often difficult for the participants to recognize the subtle differences in various sounds, particularly vowel sounds. Tongue twisters proved to be a very effective means of differentiating between vowel sounds. The following is a short verse taken from an on-line tongue twister database (Appendix) which gave occasion to the transcribed pronunciation intervention which follows.

81

Betty Botter bought some butter,

"But," she said, "this butter's bitter.

If I bake this bitter butter,

It will make my batter bitter.

But a bit of better butter -

That would make my batter better."

So she bought a bit of butter,

Better than her bitter butter,

And she baked it in her batter,

And the batter was not bitter.

So 'twas better Betty Botter

Bought a bit of better butter.

The two Russian students in Group One (Hand M) had been taking turns reading the verse and listening to each other. Both were experiencing difficulty distinguishing between the short o sound (/a/, pot) and the short a sound (/æ/, bat), and M claimed that she could not hear the difference between "better" and "batter". In the following transcription, John had gone to the whiteboard where he has written 'bit, bet, but, bat, and bought'. For several minutes John had modeled the different vowel sounds and the women have imitated. He explained the difference between synonyms like cake batter, as in the verse, and a batter in baseball, and then he mentioned Batman. This led to the following conversation in which M discussed the difficulty of distinguishing between the words man and men.

82

Tape 15     44:30

J       [Modeling] Man, men. A-e-a-e [continuous glissading between the two vowel

sounds]

M      [following along making sound simultaneously] a-e-a-e [begins laughing and

point to her chin] But how am I going to do…

H      [imitating the sounds more quietly] a-e-a-e

M     Man.

J      Man

M     Man

J      Men

M     Men.  It is a much wider mouth, [H is repeating also, but much more quietly. M is

gesturing, both hands in front of mouth, palms facing each other making a small

megaphone, physically mimicking with her hands the megaphone widening and

narrowing. H does a similar gesture using one hand, but widening and narrowing

as well.]

J      It's a much wider mouth, yeah, it's that long A, that Aaa [mistakenly refers to

short A sound as long]

H&M Aaa

M     Man, and men…. And bat, bet, right?

H      [sub rosa] Man, men.

J      [writing on the board] Man.. Main.

M     Main. It's understandable, right?

83

J That's easier, huh,

M It's easier, of course, but...

J But the Aa, eh, is a little harder, yeah? [a, æ]

M Uh huh, yes. And especially when you hear, because people speaking very fast...

H [unintelligible, but agreeing]

J Yes

M ...and you just absolutely cannot predict about what this is.


As this transcription demonstrates, the students were explicitly attempting to imitate the physical movements of John's mouth. They were intently observing and listening as he modeled the different vowel sounds. Part of the conversation revolved around the physical sensations of creating the different sounds. The students' continued imitation and practice was both publicly vocal and *sub rosa*. It should be noted that this entire pronunciation intervention, concerned with just vowel sounds, exceeded 12 minutes. This is an indication of how the students often directed the nature of language instruction.

Interestingly, Group Two engaged in a very similar pronunciation lesson when they met directly after this session. N & A were reading the script, *The Teacher*, and came across the word 'buttocks' (*You sit your buttocks down in that chair!*) and asked what it was. John explained the word, to the students' great delight and much laughter. Then A mentioned that it sounded like 'Botox', the cosmetic injection, which she said is used widely in South Korea. John went to the board to demonstrate the different spellings. The 'bit, bet, but, bat, and bought' exercise was still on the board from Group One's session, and the participants' engaged in a similar exercise of John modeling the different vowel

84

sounds as the students' imitated. Chizu was attending this session as well, modeling and

explaining usages, and in the explanation process John had also written the word 'battle'.

Tape 16        28:06

J       [Modeling] bit, bet, but, bat, bought.

A&N   Bit, bet but, bat, bought.

J       I, eh, uh, aa, ou

A&N   I, eh, uh, aa, ou

Ch      'Cause you have to be careful of the word 'bottle', bottle, like Coca Cola [mimes

        drinking from bottle] bottle, is the 'aw' sound. Battle is 'aa'.

A&N   Battle, bottle, battle.

J       Batman.

N       Batman [A makes a mask with her hands over her face to demonstrate Batman]

J       Not Botmon.

A       Botmon.

N       Batman.

J       Batman

N       B-a-t? [spelling]

J       B-a-t.

N       Batman.


Here again the script gave rise to what educators refer to as a 'teachable moment',

entailing both aspects of speech and of culture. Though the second group was not as

85

attuned to the physical means of creating the different vowel sounds, they were involved in the imitation and recursion process as they learned to differentiate the sounds and their meanings. They also accessed prior knowledge or schema, as when A imitated Batman by forming a mask with hands and responded to the television theme song which Chizu sang. They also drew parallels to similar words, as when A compared buttocks to Botox, a word she was familiar with.

<div align="center">4.3.2 Intonation</div>

Tape 2. 33:00 *Heads* – J models opening of scene, girls repeat.

The following excerpts are intended to illustrate how the participants' English language fluency and intonation improved as their understanding of the text improved. The text was a short play entitled *Heads* (Dixon & Engelman, 1998). The script concerns three college women who are roommates. One roommate, Kristin, has run out of money and must leave college. She's discussing this with her roommate when suddenly Rose enters, greatly excited because she's discovered a lost wallet beside her car. The wallet belongs to a young man who attends their college and they discover that he is the son of a multi-billionaire. Rose attempts to persuade her roommates that one of them should court the awkward young man in the hope of marrying a billionaire. The scene climaxes with the rich young man knocking at their door as Rose forces her roommates to decide who will take him by flipping a coin.

This short excerpt will be examined to demonstrate how the readings changed as the participants made meaning of the script and imitated John's modeling of words and phrases. We will look at how fluency grew over a three week period of multiple readings and rehearsals. Each of the participants read all three of the characters' roles and

<div align="center">86</div>

developed an understanding of the interactions taking place between the characters. They also learned to imitate each other as they listened to their different readings of the scene. Rehearsals were interspersed with instructional conversations in which language was paraphrased, modeled, and repeated in an effort to bring meaning to the utterances.

As was typical during the initial reading of the script, the students were struggling decoding the words and had very little comprehension. In addition to the very slow reading of the script, the intonation was flat with little inflection. There was no eye contact or directional gaze as the students kept both hands on the script, made no gestures, and almost never raised their eyes. There was frequent stumbling over the pronunciation of unfamiliar words and only very occasional recognition of phrases that resulted in somewhat more natural sounding lexical phrases. Upon completing the first read through, the students admitted not understanding words, phrases, or any sense of what the text was about.

The familiar pattern of meaning making was repeated with John presenting an overview of what the scene was about. This was followed by a line by line interpretation of the script, during which the students took notes and imitated John's pronunciations and usages. Recursion then followed as the participants rehearsed and continued their readings, often stopping for further questions and clarifications.

The following week the students returned to the script. After reading through once again, the participants returned to a line by line reading, allowing the students to ask questions as we proceeded. These exchanges involved a great deal of modeling, imitation, and repetition on both the *sub rosa* and publicly audible levels. As issues were discussed, the students often vocalized their growing understanding with such private

87

speech acts as Oh!, aha!, and "Now I understand!" There was increased laughter as they began to understand some of the humor and the implications of what their characters were saying. The following section is representative of the process of meaning making and how the students imitated John's intonation and inflections.

Tape 11 – Price section, 3<sup>rd</sup> reading  15:20

[W pauses to verify which actress is playing which role so she can address her questions to the proper character.]

1    W    *You don't have your price?*

2    A    *What a yucky thing to say!*

3    W    *You don't have YOUR price?*

4    N    *I'm engaged, nuh--nuh--*

5    J    *nutso.*

6    N    [Imitating intonation] *nutso.* What is this?

7    J    Crazy. You nut! ... Wacko. Nutso.

8    W    So you don't have your price means...you don't have enough money.

9    J    What would it take to buy you? She's saying everybody has their price.

10   W    Ah! It's like...

11   J    If I offered you a million dollars to do something, if I offered you a

        million dollars. One million dollars. No? Two million? Here's five

88

million. Wow, five million. A billion. Okay. What's your price? What's your price?

| 12 | W | Aah, so how much money do you want to have to... |

| 13 | J | Right. These girls are still trying to stand on their principles, saying, Oh! I'm married, I'm going to get married. I'm going to do this. No, you have your price. What's it going to take? Five million, ten million? |

| 14 | W | Aah! Okay I understand. |

| 15 | J | How about you; a million? [A laughs] |

| 16 | W | How much do you want to choose right? |

| 17 | J | What's it take for you to put away your ideals for a while, to think about, think about... |

| 18 | W | *Dump him*, dump him means... |

| 19 | J | Dump him means get rid of him, dump your boyfriend. Just forget about, about.. dump him means to lose your boyfriend, get rid of your boyfriend lose your boyfriend. Say bye-bye! |

| 20 | W | Just forget about... |

```
         *  __  _\
21   J   Dump him!
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                                                        *  __  _\
22   W   Dump him [Self corrects to imitate J's intonation] Dump him!
         [Leans in toward N and ad libs the character's name]

         ___      *  _    _\
         Margaret, dump him.
```

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         _  __  _/  \   /
23   N   Is this a joke, or what? [Taking cues from punctuation for rising and
```

falling intonation.]

24    W    *Call it off!*

Cancel!? [W turns to J, verifying that the phrase has the meaning she

thinks it has.]

25    J    Yes.

26    N    *I'm in love!*

27    W    [Laughs] *You were in love last year.*

28    N    *That was different.*

29    W    *Six times!*

30    N    *Okay, six times.*

31    W    *And three weeks ago you went out with someone else.*

32    N    *For .. coffee!*

33    W    *Right, coffee.* [Sarcastic]

In the preceding excerpt we are beginning to notice how the students are chunking

lexical phrases together in meaningful ways and communicating their character's

intentions. W finally understands the phrase 'dump him' and self corrects her reading to

more closely imitate J's intonation and inflection. She even ad libs the character's name

in her plea, "Margaret! Dump him!" Her rising tone on "Call it off!" is nearly identical to

90

John's example and she adopts his condescendingly sarcastic tone and rising/falling pitch on "Right, coffee."

Another striking example of imitation occurred with a line that all of the students had difficulty interpreting. Near the end of the scene the character Kristin is desperate, almost panicky, as Rose is pressuring the girls to choose heads or tails as the rich young man is knocking at their door. John had read the scene early in the session and a half hour later W imitated his intonation almost perfectly.

```
                       * \____   /*    _/    ___ /  /*
14:11  J       I can't do this! How can I do this?

                       * \____   /*    _/    ___ /  /*
44:58  W       I can't do this! How can I do this?
```

Her rendering of the line was nearly identical to John's previous reading, but it should be noted that this was not simple mimicry. Her new understanding of how the character was torn and conflicted about what she was about to do permitted her to take ownership of the utterance and feel the sense of urgency involved. At the end of the scene W laughed and with a sense of incredulity said, "Oh my God! They choose!" She had made meaning of the situation and this allowed her to render a genuinely felt delivery of the line.

The following week the students were again working with the *Heads* script. By this time they had read through the script numerous times and appeared to have come to a deeper understanding of the script. Even N, the lowest level speaker of the three, was speaking with greater ease and was reacting to the intonations and inflections of the others. The students' readings began to exhibit subtleties of emotion and inflection and had acquired a fluency nearing that of spontaneous speech. They had largely given up

91

asking for clarification of the script as they engaged in higher order thinking and our conversations turned to larger issues of the dramatic situation and the characters involved. The following excerpt will demonstrate how the students' intonation and conveyance of emotion and meaning had matured over the course of rehearsal and recursion.


Tape 14, Price section, *Heads* (8:37)

[W asks J which participant is playing Kristin, so she can direct her scripted question to the right person.]

1    W    *You don't have your price?*

2    J    *What a yucky thing to say!* [High pitched, indignation.]

3    W    *You don't have YOUR price?* [Looking at and addressing A. Leans toward her. Changes reading of line to emphasize she is addressing a different character]

4    A    *I'm engaged, nut--.*

4a    J    [modeling] *Nutso*

4b    A    *Nutso.* [Imitating]

5    W    *Dump him!*

6    A    *Is this a joke, or what?*

```
                    \
7   W   Call it off!


                  \
8   A   I'm in love! [Defensive]


              \     \
9   W   You were in love last year. [Dismissive.]


          \   /   \
10  A   That was different. [Defensive]


              \
11  W   Six times!


        /     \
12  A   Okay, six times.


            /     \         /           \
13  W   And three weeks ago you went out with someone else.


          /\
14  A   For coffee!


        /\
15  W   Right, coffee. [Sarcastic]
```

Several of the lines indicated new and increased levels of intonation and inflection. For example, the following two lines are contrasted to demonstrate the increase in intonation variation. The same student is speaking on the two separate occasions two weeks apart.

```
                                                    \
31  W   And three weeks ago you went out with someone else.


            /     \         /           \
13  W   And three weeks ago you went OUT with someone else.
```

Examples such as this are representative of the transformations that took place as the students made meaning of the scripts and began to imbue their readings with emotion and understanding. Also, as the students began to understand the meaning of the script and the character relationships, they began to recognize lexical phrases and would engage in 'chunking', or uttering the lines in continuous and meaningful phrases.

### 4.3.3 Prosody

Though intonation is a major aspect of prosody, in this section the emphasis will be upon inflection, cadence, and the rhythm of spoken language. The student participants often referred to this as the 'music' of language. Both groups at one time or another explicitly referred to John's reading of the text and the rhythms of his voice, and both groups requested that he read aloud so that they could imitate the cadence and musicality of his speech.

In the following excerpt M. and H. had been working with a script entitled *The Teacher*. The scene is between two teachers, one of whom is a novice who has lost control of her classroom, and an older more experienced teacher has offered advice on classroom management. The students had read the script several times and had improvised the scene without using the script. Though this had demonstrated their understanding of the scene, they had returned once again to reading the script and M was voicing her frustration at stumbling over the same words again and again. She further went on to speak of her lack of native like fluency and the conversation turned to rhythm and the musicality of language.

In the following transcription M has asked John to read out loud with H so that she might listen. She wants to ask for direct modeling, but is hesitant to interfere with John's

94

research. After they have read the script, M asks John what is his 'target' for his dissertation. Specifically she wants to know if she can ask John to model English so that they might imitate. She says that they now understand the meaning of the text, but they want to hear the intonation and rhythms of a native English speaker. She says that they are able to convey emotion and meaning, but cannot capture native-like fluency and she wants to imitate John's speech as she believes it represents correct English intonation and rhythmic patterns. For the first time, M uses the word 'music' to describe the prosody of John's speech. She insists that when you hear "from the side" speech is very musical. When John states that intonation will change for different characters or different emotions, M disagrees:

Group Two     Tape 13       31:47

M       No, I'm talking English intonation. It's a little different. Alone for example, we
        heard something before, and we repeat it and it stays deep down in our brain, and
        we will be repeat like we've heard, like we understood, than like we understood
        this, understood this already. But, a lot of English, it is a little music to it, right?
        It is a little intonation.

J       Uh huh.

M       Mmm, because at times that in the construction, it has construction. In English it
        has a little music, it has intonation. It is foundation of construction, it is
        foundation of sentence. [M waves her hand up and down, moving from left to
        right, demonstrating the little hills and valleys of speech]. But in Russian it is a
        little different. With the emotion you can show everything.

95

H     Yah. [Agreeing]

M     For example you, er, you want ask something, you don't use special question

      what. We just make intonation. Emotion, giving emotion, and it will already be a

      question. Understand? It will be a little different. Therefore, we may be, we

      cannot catch music of English, understand this, of sentences, because now when I

      heard this it's big difference.

J     I know. I'm hoping that the music of the sentence, we also call this prosody,

      prosody of the sentence, it also means music.

H     Prosody

J     It's a word that means music, but it also means rhythm. Umm, fluidity.

M     Um hum.

J     I'm hoping to show that by having you rehearse and practice the scenes over and

      over, that the musical part of the language does.. the musical part of the language

      does begin to get better. That's one of the things I'm looking for.

M     Maybe sometimes, maybe not, maybe next time, maybe sometimes we just try

      to… just repeat. . follow you.

H     Uh huh. [Agreeing]

J     Do you want to do that now?

M&H   Yes, uh-huh.


John models several lines from the script with the students repeating after him and

imitating his prosodic features. He then repeats one line placing emphasis on a different

word, hoping to demonstrate that how a character interprets a line can alter the prosody.

Again Marina disagrees (quite correctly), insisting that the cadence remains the same despite emphasis:

M      But it's the same you see, just make your emphasis on *that*. [H is repeating sub rosa] but music is the same. [Gesturing, her 'conductor' gesture, hand moving left to right, undulating up & down as if traveling over a series of small hills].

J      Yeah?

H&M      Mmm hmm.

H&M      *You have the audacity to call them that?*

J      *You have the audacity to call them that?*

H&M      *You have the audacity to call them that?*

J      *That's what they are. High school students. Nothing more.*

H&M      *That's what they are. High school students. Nothing more.*

M      [marking her script] this is nice... [indicating approval of inflection/intonation and recording how J said the line].

H      [Quietly] *That's what they are. High school students. Nothing more.*

J      *That's like saying a great white shark is just a fish and nothing more.*

H      [sub rosa] *That's like saying a great white shark is just a fish and nothing more.*

M      [Conductor gesture as H reads] You see it is all the time. Ahh, I'm trying to follow you like a dizhizho, I don't know how, dizhizho, an orchestra... [Looking to H for help finding the word in English].

H      It's like...

J      Uh huh. A director, an orchestra...

M Yes.

J A conductor! Yes. [Gesturing a four point count, imitating conductor].

M Uh, yeah yeah! And all the time it is like this, you see? [Undulating gesture]. We say like emotion the, we say like this; teek teek teek teek teek teek teek teek, [M is making pointed gestures. This is an abrupt stabbing motion in the air, as opposed to the undulating musical gesture used for English]. And it is like, teek teek teek teek, teek teek.

H [Interrupting] No, I think...

M You understand? It is a little different.

H I think it is really because, it's we don't know really good text...

M No, I... [Trying to interrupt, but H does not allow it].

H ...but if you know all this period and question mark; your voice will change, no?

J I think punctuation has a lot to do with that. That's why sometimes I say, let's break it up, let's put a comma here to help you get the prosody, to help you get the music.

This exchange was indicative of the students' desire to capture the natural qualities of spoken English. They explicitly asked for direction in identifying common lexical phrases from the texts that would be used frequently in their daily speech and social interactions outside of the classroom. H had also recognized how punctuation served as a guide to the rhythms of speech and this led to an analysis of the rhythmic patterns of some of the tongue twister limericks and how the stanza help to determine rhythm.

4.3.4 Physical Instantiation of Meaning Making

As the participants engaged in meaning making their new understanding was often embodied through gesture, bodily proxemics, and other forms of body language. Initially, the participants would often imitate the gestures that John utilized in his explanations. However, as the participants created meaning through the constructed recursion of rehearsal, they began to incorporate unconscious gestures and physicalizations as they enacted the scenes. The following section revisits the transcribed scenes that were analyzed in the intonation section, but here we will concentrate on gesture and physical manifestations of understanding. The following transcription will document how the participants moved from largely imitative gesture early in the rehearsal process, to more unconscious but purposeful physicalizations as they continued rehearsing and their understanding of the script and character relationships deepened.

Tape 11 – Price section, *Heads*　　　17:00

[W pauses to verify which actress is playing which role so she can address her questions to the proper character.]

| 1 | W | *You don't have your price?* |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | A | *What a yucky thing to say!* |
| 3 | W | *You don't have YOUR price?* |
| 4 | N | *I'm engaged, nuh--nuh--* |
| 4a | J | *nutso."* |
| 4b | N | *nutso.* What is this? |
| 4c | J | Crazy. You nut! ... Wacko. Nutso. |
|  | W | So you don't have your price means... |

99

J       What does it take to buy you. Everybody has their price. If I offered you a

        million dollars to do something, if I offered you a million dollars. One

        million dollars. No? Two million? [Reaching toward actresses, as if

        offering/handing money.] Here's five million. A billion. Okay.

        What's your price? What's your price? [Pointing at each actress.]

W       Aah, so how much money do you want to have to... [Mimics pointing.]

J       Right. These girls are still trying to stand on their principles, I'm married,

        I'm going to get married. I'm going to do this. No, you have your price.

        What's it going to take? Five million, ten million?

W       Aah! Okay I understand.

J       How about you? A million?

W       How much do you want to choose right?

J       What's it take for you to put away your ideals for a while, to think about,

        think about...

W       *Dump him*, dump him means…

J       Dump him means get rid of him, dump your boyfriend. Just forget about,

        about.. dump him means to lose your boyfriend, get rid of your boyfriend

        lose your boyfriend. Say bye-bye! [Repeated dismissive gesture of

        flipping back of hand away from body, followed by waving bye-bye.]

W       Just forget about… [Mimics J's backhanded dismissive gesture.]

J       *Dump him*!

5   W   *Dump him* [Self corrects to imitate J's reading] *Dump him*!

100

[Imitating sweeping backhand away. Leans in close to N and ad libs]

Margaret, *dump him*! [Looking N directly in the face with chin beat on dump. No second dismissive gesture.]

| 6 | N | *Is this a joke, or what?* |
|---|---|---|

| 7 | W | *Call it off*! [Emphatic, said quickly, with a downward chopping movement of hand, similar to Karate chop – Iconic gesture of cutting or chopping.] |
|---|---|---|

Cancel!? [W turns to J, verifying that the phrase has the meaning she thinks it has, Pointing beat gesture toward script]

| 7a | J | Yes. |
|---|---|---|
| 8 | N | *I'm in love*! [Pulling head back, away from Rose.] |
| 9 | W | *You were in love last year.* [Nodding head in beats on *last* and *year*.] |
| 10 | N | *That was different.* |
| 11 | W | *Six times*! [Hand beat gesture.] |
| 12 | N | *Okay, six times.* |
| 13 | W | *And three weeks ago you went out with someone else.* [Hand beat on *weeks.*] |
| 14 | N | *For .. coffee*! |
| 15 | W | *Right, coffee.* |

W finally understands the phrase 'dump him' and self corrects her reading to more closely imitate J's intonation and inflection and even adopts the dismissive gesture J used in his explanation. More importantly, she uses proxemics to lean in closely to the other

101

actress and ad lib her persuasive plea to dump him by invoking the character's name. She spontaneously demonstrates her new understanding by embodying her character's speech and mannerisms in a novel way. She further embodies her newfound understanding by incorporating an iconic chopping gesture to strengthen her call to 'cut it off', and physically enacting the metaphor thus demonstrating how she has made meaning of the language.

Two weeks later the students were again working with the *Heads* script. By this time they had read through the script numerous times and appeared to have come to a deeper understanding of the script. Their readings began to exhibit subtleties of emotion and prosodic elements and lexical phrases had acquired a fluency nearing that of spontaneous speech. Additionally, they began to incorporate many more unconscious gestures, such as emphatic up-down 'beats', which were done with both the hand and with nodding the head. Though they were still holding their scripts and thus were limited from full dramatic physicality, they engaged each other more through gaze and proxemics, often leaning toward or away from the other person during their verbal contests. They had largely given up asking for clarification of the script as our conversations turned to larger issues. The following excerpt will demonstrate how the students' were increasingly, though still largely unconsciously and spontaneously, engaging in gesture and body language in order to make their characterizations more forceful and convincing.


Tape 14, Price section, *Heads* (8:37)

[W asks J which participant is playing Kristin, so she can direct her scripted question to the right person.]


102

| 1 | W | *You don't have your price?* [Looks at and addresses J while making a deictic pointing gesture in his direction.] |
| 2 | J | *What a yucky thing to say*! [High pitched, indignation.] |
| 3 | W | *You don't have YOUR price?* [Looking at and addressing A. Leans toward her, chin beat on *your*. Changes reading of line to emphasize she is addressing a different character] |
| 4 | A | *I'm engaged, nut--.* |
| 4a | J | [modeling] Nutso |
| 4b | A | Nutso. [Imitating] |
| 5 | W | *Dump him*! [Shakes her head in a 'no', attitudinal gesture.] |
| 6 | A | *Is this a joke, or what?* |
| 7 | W | *Call it off*! [Head nodding in emphatic 'beat' gesture.] |
| 8 | A | I'm in love! [Defensive] |
| 9 | W | *You were in love last year*. [Dismissive. Hand makes beat gesture on *love* and a dismissal gesture on *last year*, away with the back of her hand.] |
| 10 | A | *That was different*. [Defensive] |
| 11 | W | *Six times*! [Chin beat] |
| 12 | A | *Okay, six times.* |
| 13 | W | *And three weeks ago you went out with someone else.* [ Hand beats on *three weeks ago*. Repeats backhand dismissive gesture on *out*, ending with downward beat on *else.*] |
| 14 | A | *For coffee*! |
| 15 | W | *Right, coffee.* [Sarcastic, nodding head 'yes'.] |

103

This excerpt serves to demonstrate how the student, W, had incorporated unconscious gesture into her production of meaningful communication. In the first transcription, though incorporating some novel gesture and proxemics into her communication, she largely continued to imitate the gestures that John had made in his explanations of the script. After repeated rehearsals and recursive encounters with the script, she had greater understanding of both the meaning of the language and the interrelationships between the characters in the script. She was now incorporating novel and spontaneous gesture into her communicative strategies in her attempt to make meaning of her character's message. The instinctive use of beats and metaphoric gestures arose from her desire to make her message forceful and clear.

It was interesting to note that the participants often imitated gestures modeled in the explanation process even when they were not speaking the lines. There were several instances where a student would silently mirror gestures such as "about this high", "she squeezes me!", and "cross my heart", when another participant was enacting the scene. One participant even engaged in this mirroring behavior while watching herself on video. The gestures themselves had become a part of the meaning making process for the students.

## 4.4 Instructional Conversations

Analysis of the instructional conversations revealed that they primarily took two forms; either language issues or cultural discussion, though the two categories often overlapped. Often the conversation would begin explicitly addressing language issues,

104

but they frequently began regarding cultural issues as the researcher would explain idiomatic usages and students tested their understanding of American culture and customs. These conversations often afforded opportunities to address issues not commonly found in more traditional language classes and the social issues raised by the dramatic scripts gave rise for opportunities to enhance intercultural understandings as the students made meaning of the interrelationships between the scripted characters. As Figure 4.1 demonstrates, cultural conversations were much more prevalent with Group 2 than with Group 1, however, it must be remembered that Group 2 consisted of students from two different countries who had been in the United States only a short while. In Group 1 the two Russian women had both been in the United States for over a year and a half and perhaps had a greater understanding of their target culture.

Instructional conversations were often initiated by the students' questioning strategies. Here too, the questions regarded both language issues and cultural issues, but as Figure 4.1 reveals, language questions were far more prevalent among both groups. All of the participants engaged in questioning strategies, but the Russian women of Group 1 (H and M) had far more questions overall and often asked for explicit modeling that they could imitate. Though both groups directly asked to have language modeled in such a way that they might imitate and practice what they heard, the Russians probed deeply into aspects of prosody and intonation leading to in-depth conversations about the similarities and differences between English and Russian on several occasions. Section 4.3.3 discussing Prosody serves as an example of instructional conversation largely concerned with language issues.

The following transcriptions will demonstrate how the rehearsal process of script comprehension gave rise to cultural conversations. The first transcription takes place after the initial reading of the *Heads* script and John is explaining the scene. As the participants' discussed, it was discovered that the students were unaware of the practice of flipping a coin in order to arrive a t a choice.

Tape nine - *Heads* (Group Two) 17:06

[J has been explaining the meaning of words, phrases, and relationships – students taking notes on scripts.]

W       And... at the end of the story.... it's a...

J       So Rose has already called this boy and he's coming over. And she goes through this long speech, *we're American women. We started learning how to do this...* we started learning how... like Madonna sings, I'm a material girl. We, when we started playing with our Barbies, we started wanting things. (laughs) *What this guy can do no one can do, he's Superman.* Everyone gets divorced anyway. And then, there's a knock at the door (knocks). And the girls are like "gasp"! Oh my god, now what! So Rose is like, OK, wait, wait, she flips, she pulls out a coin, she's gonna' flip a coin...

W       For which one...(laughs, pointing between two students)

N       Yes (laughs)

J       For which one gets to go out with her (him)... and Kristin is like, *I can't do this! How can I do this?* (Modeling)

W       *Oh, what the hell... hell.* (self-correcting pronunciation of hell)

106

J Rose is like, *your one and only chance!* Tails. And Margaret says, *oh what the*

  *hell, heads.*

W So heads means here... it heads

J Heads.

W  Heads means face sided? Here. Picture?

J On a coin, there's a picture. (stands and shows a coin)

W Heads is the picture, the face part, side?

J That's heads...

W Ah, that's heads

N Ah!

J ... and this is tails...

W Tails. This is.

J So when you don't know what to do, you flip a coin... (gestures)

W&N Ah... (W mimics flipping gesture)

J Call it! (flips coin, slaps onto arm with palm concealing coin)

W Heads!

J You won.

W Wow! (laughs)

J, N, A (unintelligible speech and laughter)

W tails, tails...

J tails

W tails

This conversation and demonstration of a coin toss introduced the participants to the conventions of a common American cultural tradition as well as idiomatic uses of English such as "Call it!" during the act of flipping a coin. Also, in the script, immediately after the character says *Oh, what the hell, heads!*, the lights fade to black and no one knows what the outcome of the coin toss will be. The participants now appreciated how the arbitrary coin toss might change someone's life and how this contributed to the drama of the situation, and even the significance of the play's title, *Heads*.

The following excerpt is another example of how the examination of the conversational English of a drama script introduces a variety of idiomatic usages and conversational phrases.


Tape Nine *Heads* Group Two

A     *Invite me to the wedding, will you?*

N     *Cross my heart.*

A     *What's it going to be like?*

N     *The best you can get for under a hundred dollars.*

A     *Day old cake.*

N     What means that, day old cake?

J     So she's saying, how's it going to be? Well the best we can do, cheap. *The best we can get for under a hundred dollars.*

W     What, what is *Cross my heart?*

J      Uh... Oh! That's, that's an idio... invite me to the wedding will you?  I promise,

          Cross my heart and hope to die (modeling cross heart gesture).

W     Yeah (imitating J's crossing gesture)

J      that's what we say.  Cross my heart hope to die.

W     Cross my heart hope to die.

J      I promise I will invite you.

A     Ah.

N&W  Cross my heart, hope to die (sub-rosa)

J      The best she can get for under a hundred dollars.  So she says day old cake.  The

          leftover cake because she can't afford the good cake, she's so cheap.

          (Pause as students take notes).

N     *A double pop top ceremony.*  What does this mean?

A     Pop top.

J      I have a feeling this means... instead of, usually you toast with champagne, they

          will toast with pop top beer, two beers. (Makes popping sound while gesturing

          beer opening).  So, in other words, they are not really going to have a wedding

          just sort of a...

N     Pop top.

J      Pop a beer.

A&W  (sub-rosa) Pop top, ceremony.

          (Pause with note taking & sub-rosa vocalizations)

A     *Yikes. Sit down.* Ooh, OH! Sorry! (inadvertently had said Rose's line.)

W     *Sit down*!

J       *Yikes*!

A       *Yikes*

W       *Yikes*? Is surprised expression?

J       Aaah!! (fake scream, modeling surprise, shock) Uh-huh.

ALL     *Yikes! Yikes*! (imitating, trying different readings of the word)

There was a progression from language understanding issues to cultural concerns. After the students had become familiar with the individual phrases and word meanings, their understanding grew and the conversations became concerned with larger issues. The script *Heads* alone contained the references which led to conversations about intercultural contrasts and comparisons. The following is a partial list of references from the script and some of the conversations that arose from them. Italicized references are actual lines from the script.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Throw myself on his funeral pyre* | Conversation about India's caste system, arranged marriages, and practices in Korea, Japan, and America. |
| *Cash on the barrel head* | Gambling, Las Vegas tourism industry, careers in tourism. |
| Marrying for money | Agreement that this is perhaps a universal desire in all countries and for both parents and spouses. Also, the pressure from family to marry and have children and the perception that Americans have far less pressure was debated. |
| *My dearest feminists...* | Women's' rights, changing demographics in Japan and Korea, growing aging populations, differences in retirement attitudes and communities. |
| *Knock it off!* | Debate over whether Asian women are or are not demonstrative in showing anger and other strongly felt emotions. |

| | |
|---|---|
| American women and middle class acquisition. | Comparing and contrasting the United States' consumer culture to those of Korea and Japan. |
| Wedding ceremonies | Compare and contrast wedding traditions. |
| *He can buy Sharon Stone.* | Sex work in different countries, human slave trade, moral dilemma facing the script's characters. |
| Door knock | Cultural differences in how one knocks on doors, enters homes, wear shoes or not, secret knocks used by family members. |

This partial list is meant to demonstrate the potential for a dramatic script to invite discussion on a wide variety of subjects and how the analysis of the characters' perspectives can highlight cultural differences of opinion or belief. These debates and musings served as a source for reflection and greater intercultural understanding for all involved.

## 4.5 Motives and Goals

All of the participants were volunteers and appeared to have largely positive motivation concerning the workshops. This was evidenced by a great deal of laughter and comments regarding how much they enjoyed the activities and how quickly the time seemed to pass. On several occasions the participants requested that the workshops be made part of the regular ESL curriculum. However, there were also instances of resistance. Participants were at times reluctant to engage in certain activities, or expressed anxiety at tackling a difficult task. At various times during the workshops, participants explicitly asked to engage in certain activities. Though always respectful, and asking if their requests were within the guidelines of the study, it was still clear that the participants had clear motives for what they hoped to gain from the drama workshops.

111

Stimulated recall and exit interviews were utilized in an attempt to discover what the participants' individual motives and goals were both for the overall workshops and during specific moments. One participant, O in a stimulated recall, when asked what she was feeling during an improvisation with a much more fluent English speaker explained that she didn't want the other student to "win". Though she recognized that her speaking skills were not as good as the other student's, she was very competitive and determined to complete the scene. So her motive appeared to be to match her 'opponent' and avoid embarrassment with the goal of successfully communicating and finishing her assigned task of completing the improvisation. She also commented that the laughter of the onlookers served as an affirmation that what she was saying was understood and she was successfully communicating. She further commented that she spoke more English during the 90 minute workshop than she spoke all week outside of class.

Several students expressed embarrassment regarding their language use when they saw themselves on videotape. They would note limited vocabulary, poor pronunciation, and other limitations in themselves, but invariably praised their partners and colleagues. Two students requested copies of tapes that they could take home so they could listen to themselves and try to correct pronunciation errors. Students also used the tapes to request explicit corrections that they could hear on tape, but were perhaps unaware of in performance.

All of the participants suggested that improvisation was of limited use in language learning. They seemed to feel that their vocabulary was too limited to effectively perform the scenarios unless they were very simple. When two students (N and W) were shown an improvisation they performed and were assured that they had both communicated very

112

effectively, they grudgingly agreed but were still unhappy with their personal performances. W spoke of how she was 'translating in her head' and was unable to be spontaneous during improvisation. M, in particular, was very resistant to performing improvisations and would argue during the sessions that she wasn't ready or needed to read the scene 'one more time'.

All of the students expressed a preference for written texts that could be rehearsed and studied. Though they enjoyed the limericks and tongue twisters for pronunciation, prosody, and vocabulary, they enjoyed conversational dramatic texts which they could mine for common lexical phrases to use in everyday life. M spoke of how she had memorized the rather shocking phrase "How many babies did you kill today?" and how she had used this as a basis to construct other phrases. She claimed that these lexical phrases were most beneficial in the language learning process. Incongruously though, she also claimed to have greatly enjoyed some of the language games that were played, saying that these helped her to recall vocabulary.

The participants were unanimous in their praise of the instructional conversations that arose during the workshops. They explained that they had very little opportunity to speak English with Americans and were very appreciative of the patience that the researcher displayed. The researcher also noted how the participants increasingly came to him for advice and help with other issues ranging from other classroom assignments to dealing with the Department of Motor Vehicles. Two students (H and M) agreed that the increased opportunities for conversation had bolstered their confidence for speaking with other Americans.

The participants generally felt that the workshops had been too easy in that there was no assigned homework or extra study. When John explained that he didn't feel as if he could assign homework in a voluntary workshop, especially since most of the students had other coursework to contend with, they called for the drama class to become part of the ESL curriculum at the university. One student, A, insisted that she was going to talk to the head of the ESL program about the matter. M and H both expressed disappointment with the limited opportunities to converse in their regular ESL classes. The overall emphasis that these students expressed for oral language development explained why they were attracted to the drama workshops. The flyers and classroom introductions had billed the workshops as a venue for improving speaking and listening skills, and this was clearly the participants' motive for attending.

CHAPTER 5


DISCUSSION

This chapter will address the main three research questions and the implications of

this study's findings within the theoretical framework for this dissertation. Once again,

the issues raised by the questions are interconnected and the discussion tends to reveal

several common threads that run through the findings. These threads arise in each of the

following sections as they interpenetrate and influence mediated learning, the role of the

teacher and learner, and the interactions involved in the meaning making process.

The first section will examine the unique mediational affordances a drama based

approach to second language learning provides. From the perspective of Sociocultural

theory, the nature of learning is greatly determined by the mediational means employed

and this study revealed the importance of modeling and imitation and multiple

perspective taking that arose from the recursive process of rehearsal to be instrumental in

the students' understanding and growing mastery of English. It will be further argued that

this recursion process occurs within instructional conversations which serve to level the

relations of power between teacher and learner, resulting in a more authentic learning

environment. In short, drama introduces alterity into the learning environment in ways

that serve to encourage autonomy for the learners as they slowly move from other

regulated activity to self regulation.

The second section will examine how the participants interacted within the unique learning environment created by the drama workshops and the activities. Activity theory posits that each participant arrives with a unique set of motives and goals. Section 5.2 will discuss how drama creates a learning environment and types of activity systems that accommodate these varying goals and facilitates an authentic dialogic interplay between everyone involved.

The third section will examine the pedagogical implications for utilizing drama in second language learning. Arguing that learning is first and foremost an activity, language learning will be examined as performance. Viewing language as performance serves to demonstrate how language is highly contextual to sociocultural and institutional circumstances. It will also be argued that the role of the language teacher is crucial to provide the necessary interventions and the learning environments that foster and extend the learners use of the target language. Practical suggestions regarding the use of texts, teaching pragmatics, and other tools will be offered. Also, the multi-modal nature of teaching and learning that drama affords will be discussed as well as the inherent performance based assessment and opportunities for self assessment that arise.

Finally, there is a discussion of how activity theory and language as performance coincide and support each other. A drama approach to second language learning provides a number of highly unique mediational affordances which can be actively manipulated in a seemingly endless variety of ways. It will be argued that viewing teaching and learning from the perspective of social activity opens a space for drama based learning in which language performance and language learning become a dialectical interplay and cannot

116

be separated. Language learning is embodied as the learner playing a scenario becomes a subject within a contextually situated activity system in pursuit of specific goals.

## 5.1 Question 1 - Mediational Affordances

What mediational affordances are facilitated by a drama approach to second language learning?

### 5.1.1 Modeling and Imitation

Imitation of the researcher's modeled speech and communication proved to be the most significant mediational affordances that arose from the study. The modeling was both explicit, as when the researcher was speaking lines of text and script, and implicit, as when issues arose through the explanations and instructional conversations. Imitation was crucial to provide opportunities for transformation as the students appropriated the modeled communication and made it their own. This imitation is an extremely complex affair that arises from collaborative meaning making within the Zone of Proximal Development. Vygotsky (1987) argued that the imitative behaviors of the child was much more than simple mimicry, but was eventually internalized by the child as the learned the meaning and significance of their actions. In this study imitation served as the vehicle of negotiation of meaning as the students encountered various interpretations and perspectives in their dramatic explorations.

Quite often, in a typical classroom environment, the learner is expected to produce an exact copy of what the teacher or expert has modeled. Imitation within the ZPD views the learner as a communicative being with their own agency. In this study the participants demonstrated that they had their own individual motives which then informed their

117

actions. They were not mere repeaters of what the researchers modeled, but collaboratively made meaning together. This meaning was gradually internalized as they came to a greater understanding of the scripts and their implications. As they internalized these new meanings, they gradually moved away from imitation to self-regulated behavior, demonstrated greater fluency in their speech, and grew more confident in their performances.

Drawing upon Bakhtin's (1981) notion of heteroglossia, all speech contains echoes of other voices. No utterance is entirely unique, but contains cultural-historical properties of previous speakers and the new speaker is ventriloquating those voices. Simultaneously, the utterance is being 'peopled' by the new speaker through the interactions involved in responsive dialogue. Therefore, the mediational tool of language both constrains dialogue and affords intersubjectivity. The act of imitation is ventriloquation of the teacher's modeled speech that is internalized and transformed as the student makes meaning of the phrases through interactive performance.

### 5.1.2 Recursion though Rehearsal

A unique aspect of language learning through drama is the opportunities for recursion that it affords. Recursion, or the revisiting of ideas from multiple perspectives, is a natural outcome or by-product of the rehearsal process. As the learners made meaning and their understanding grew, they had a slightly different perspective with each subsequent reading. As noted in Chapter 4, after explaining the significance of the coin toss, W's excited exclamation; "Oh my God, they choose!" after multiple readings clearly demonstrates how this process of recursion allowed her to make meaning of the script and finally realize the implications of the characters' actions.

118

Though recursion can be constructed in other settings, working with a dramatic script automatically encompasses recursive learning because the script must be revisited several times in rehearsal. However, other drama techniques also afford opportunities for recursion. When the students were asked to improvise a scene but play the characters differently, they were forced into another perspective or voice that perhaps they had not considered previously. This process enables the learner to realize a variety of possible voices in a visceral, participatory manner. They are creating their ZPD by necessity of viewing the situation through another's eyes and having to communicate from that perspective.

Much as imitation is more than mere mimicry, recursion entails more than simple repetition. As agentive participants directing how and what they will learn, the students look at the script or scenario with fresh eyes at each encounter. Rather than merely memorizing the lines of the script (which was never done in this study) the students were revisiting the ideas contained therein as they co-constructed meaning together. From an activity theoretical perspective, this entails the students pursuing their respective goals and arriving at new understandings through this purposeful interaction. The imitation is shaped and changed through these dynamic encounters in which the players react to each other and the learning environment. The students' encounters entailed a cyclical pattern of internalization and externalization of understanding that Engstrom referred to as 'expansive learning' (1987). Meaning changed with each recursive interaction.

### 5.1.3 Authenticity

As part of Van Lier's (1996) curricular vision, he believed that three components were essential: *awareness, autonomy,* and *authenticity,* though the three components are

119

bound up as a whole and neither can stand independently of the other two. Language learning through dramatic performance makes the learner painfully *aware* of the uses and limitations of language and it goes much farther by making the learner aware of all the elements of interpersonal communication. Paralinguistic elements, such as proxemics, gesture, and gaze are an inseparable part of making ourselves understood. The necessity of communicating effectively, thinking 'on one's feet', and performing in the target language promotes *autonomy*. However, it is in the realm of *authenticity* that drama has perhaps the greatest potential. Drama necessitates genuine negotiation of meaning between the language learners.

Van Lier refers to "authenticity as a process of *authentication*, a validation of classroom events and language, and an endorsement of the *relevance* of the things said and done, and of the *ways* in which they are said and done" (pp. 133, emphasis in original). Performative language learning has the potential to reach high levels of authentication for a number of reasons.

The ability of the texts or scenarios to thrust the learners into any number of situations adds both to authenticity as well as allowing the learners to operate within their ZPD as they imagine themselves in various roles and positions. Whether the players play themselves within a scenario, or a character in a script, the possible roles are limited only by their imaginations. Indeed, scenarios can be devised based upon students' real life struggles to function within the target language. Now the huge potential of demonstrating to students how relationships of power affect their daily lives and their communication strategies can be revealed.

120

Van Lier also discussed the criteria for authentic text or authenticity of materials in terms of pragmatic authenticity. He advocated learners choosing which texts they may like to work with as much as possible and believed that found materials often have as much or greater authenticity than text aimed specifically at language learners. The participants in this study chose to work with drama texts that they found to be authentic representations of conversational English. And in accord with Van Lier's suggestion that we should constantly strive to authenticate the learning processes, drama proves to be a valuable tool for situating all the components of pragmatic authenticity. The script or scenario contains a clearly defined context and is interactive by nature, though that context can be changed by varying how the scene is to be played.

Finally, Van Lier suggested a tier of personal authenticity which dealt with the personal intrinsic motivation, genuine commitment, and interest in the activity. As a dynamic and interactive method of learning, drama would appear to hold great promise for the fostering of personal authenticity. Personal authenticity is determined by the learner who is driven by their own personal motives and goals, and the interactive nature of dramatic activity accommodates these varying goals. It is also important to note that the atmosphere engendered by the drama workshops was often high energy and fun. Risk taking was encouraged and students learned that it is permissible to make errors. Once students learn that laughter in the face of their mistakes can be supportive rather than derisive, personal authenticity may increase along with commitment and intrinsic motivation.

### 5.1.4 Drama as Alterity

121

Though the drama workshops were largely marked by supportive laughter and collaboration, there were also instances of resistance and disagreement. It must be remembered that interactions within the ZPD are not always pleasant. There exist two opposing tendencies in social interaction: intersubjectivity, or the degree to which individuals are able to share a perspective, and alterity, the conflict that arises from the multivocality of our discourses (Wertsch, 1998). Argument can be constitutive of co-construction of meaning and from an Activity Theoretical perspective the greatest innovations often arise from the conflicting interpenetrations between and from within activity systems.

Johnson (2004) claimed that SLA research should address the complex mechanisms that lead to the establishment of intersubjectivity. The disagreements, or alterity, that arose from our instructional conversations regarding both language and culture, were an essential part of the process of building intersubjectivity. As the participants debated issues they were engaged in collaborative meaning making and, even if they never came into agreement with each other, they shaped and influenced each others understanding. As stated above, the performative interactions between the participants gave rise to the cycle of internalization/externalization that result in expansive learning. Collaborative meaning making involves moving from alterity to increased intersubjectivity.

Drama has the unique ability to introduce alterity into the learning environment simply by changing the performance demands or expectations for the players. When the participants were expected to perform a scene from a different perspective or characterization, or to improvise a scene or situation without script, the nature of communication was altered in such a way that participants were forced to innovate and

create. And, as argued above (5.1.2) altering one's perspective is part of the recursion process. The altered intentionality of the performers necessitated making new meaning of the utterances, thus forcing another cycle of externalization / internalization and expansive learning.

<h3 style="text-align:center">5.1.5 Intercultural Understanding</h3>

Dramatic scripts afford a multitude of opportunities to engage in intercultural conversations. As this study demonstrated, just one ten minute play gave rise to several varied discussions ranging from the pragmatics of operating within another culture's customs to issues of morality and social justice. Though scripts could be chosen to address specific issues of concern, in this study the participants engaged in a genuine dialogic inquiry (Wells, 2000) in which the learners questions drove the discussions. The researchers could never have anticipated that a short comedy about college roommates would give rise to discussions of women's rights, the international trade of sex slaves, and forced marriage. Alterity of classroom discourse through such unanticipated outcomes was one of the more satisfying teaching and learning surprises that arose from the workshops.

The acquisition of a target language involves the acquisition of various discourse practices (speech genres) which are characteristic of different sociocultural or institutional circumstances (Johnson, 2004). Drama has great potential to demonstrate that there are many forms of discourse and appropriate uses for them all. Students can perhaps realize that entering into a new discourse does not mean they must reject the discourses they already own (Janks, 2000). Learning subtleties of register and genre in social situations, and the role we are expected to play, is a part of developing

<p style="text-align:center">123</p>

performance competence. Further, by acknowledging the heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981) or multivoicedness of society, learners are not denied access to their home discourse and their cultural worth is not subtracted from their schooling.

Language learning through dramatic explorations leads to intercultural conversation and the possibility for transformative intertextual understandings. These activities opened spaces for the negotiation of multiple perspectives and possibilities for action. As the language learner strives to become an active participant in the target language culture, these explorations served to embody intertextual learning by engaging students in physical, cognitive, and affective activity. This activity of transcultural performance resulted in authentic intercultural sharing, communication, and increased awareness and understanding.

### 5.1.6 Instructional Conversation

Instructional conversations which arose from the drama workshops proved to be a powerful teaching and learning intervention. Van Lier (1996) argued that conversation is so powerful in teaching and learning because the balance of power is symmetrical and both learner and teacher have equal rights and responsibilities. When this happens, interactions within the ZPD can take the form of collaborative dialogue in which both language use and language learning are occurring simultaneously. The students in this study expressed their appreciation on several occasions for the opportunity to simply talk. As the study continued the students recognized how the power relations between the researcher and learners had been leveled and they increasingly came to ask advice and discuss issues unrelated to the drama class. Conversation lent honesty and trust to the interpersonal relationships the participants developed over the course of the study.

124

Language learners quickly discover which the legitimate and illegitimate forms of classroom discourse are. While learning basic skills they discover that some forms of language count more than others and they devise strategies to preserve their dignity (Bourne, 2001). One of the most difficult tasks for language teachers has been apprenticing students into the language and rules of a culture while ensuring that their native culture is valued and respected. Instructional conversations appeared to be highly effective in communicating respect for the individual while at the same time providing an opportunity to practice listening and speaking in an authentic communicative atmosphere. Conversation legitimated the voice of the learner and preserved their dignity.

As outcomes are entirely unpredictable with genuine turn-by-turn discourse, conversation may be the ideal interactional form for developing the learner's autonomy (Van Lier, 1996). These conversations enable the learner to transition from other-regulated to self regulated as they negotiate meaning within their ZPDs. We witnessed this process in the drama workshops as the students, through a process of conversation and recursion, made meaning of the scripts and took command of the dialogue. Without the explanatory conversations which delved continuously deeper into the scripts, the students may have never understood completely what they were trying to express. Also, the collaborative nature of the conversations gave the students the confidence to raise any subject without fear of it being 'off-task' or irrelevant to language learning. The combined elements of the process gave rise to a dialogic community of equal opportunity learning.

125

Drama clearly offers a variety of mediational means and affordances to language learning which are unique to the medium. Opportunities for modeling and imitation, instructional conversation, and the process of recursive learning are inherent in structuring drama activities. Drama opens spaces in which the participants can create their ZPD and scaffold each other through language performance. Compound that with the cultural diversity of second language learners, the personal risks involved in performing and interacting in a communicative setting, and the alterity to discourse which arises from dramatic activity, and a truly unique and dynamic environment for learning and teaching has been created. Students are encouraged to take risks and become autonomous learners in an authentic setting. The following section will discuss how the participants reacted to the unique mediational learning affordances provided by dramatic explorations.

## 5.2 Question 2 – Participants' Mediational Means

What were the specific means of mediation utilized by participants in a drama approach to second language teaching and learning?

### 5.2.1 Motives and Actions (Self Determination)

Activity theory states that subjects approach activity with a variety of different motives and goals (Leontiev, 1981). The drama students demonstrated this by taking an active role is deciding what they wanted to learn and how the workshops would be conducted. Early on they all demonstrated a preference for working with scripts and language exercises like tongue twisters, poems, and limericks. Several stated that improvisation was difficult due to limited vocabulary, but scripted scenes gave them an

126

opportunity to practice conversational English and common phrases. At various times they would report that they had heard a line or phrase from one of the scripts used by others in daily life. As they began to recognize lexical phrases from the scripts, their awareness increased and they appeared to notice them in more regular or day to day usage. On other occasions they would draw correlations between our conversations and a line in the scripts. This heightened awareness of lexical phrases, or 'chunking', appeared to be a significant aspect of the language learning process.

The Russian students (H and M) developed a fondness for tongue twisters and limericks as their awareness of prosody issues grew. As demonstrated in Chapter 4 (4.3.3 Prosody) they were quite concerned with capturing a natural rhythmic feel in their English usage. They found limericks useful after John had explained how the stanza helped to determine rhythm and meter. One entire 90 minute workshop was spent on tongue twisters and limericks as both women found them valuable for pronunciation practice, vocabulary, and prosodic features. Their questioning strategies and interest in the exercises guided how the workshop unfolded that day. They actively took charge of their language learning by making it quite clear to the teacher / researcher what they wanted to work on.

Additionally, after a conversation in which they (H and M) had objected to several sentence structures in one script, John suggested that they paraphrase the lines. Once again M was resistant to improvisation, but they volunteered to write out paraphrased lines for the following week (Appendix C). This was followed by an intervention in which meaning was discussed and their grammar was corrected. Though participants in both groups took notes and scored their scripts, this was the only time there was anything

resembling 'homework'. While the researcher was reluctant to assign work outside of the voluntary workshops, the students had decided this was a worthwhile exercise and had once again taken control of how and what they were going to learn. This desire and ability to actively control the nature of the learning environment and activities demonstrates how drama both accommodates varying learner motives and goals and provides a pragmatically authentic learning experience as determined by the learners themselves.

### 5.2.2 Texts

The students developed varied means of interacting with the texts. Nearly all took notes, either in a separate notebook, on their scripts, or both (Appendix C). Notes were both in their native language and English, and were often simple phonetic spellings for pronunciation as well as notes regarding meaning. As noted above (5.2.1) two students engaged in a written paraphrasing exercise after objecting to what they considered to be awkward sentence constructions.

Tongue twisters were popular and all the participants enjoyed them for learning various synonyms and new vocabulary. As with the dramatic scripts, they much preferred having the exercises in written form to serve as a guide. Tongue twisters and limericks were usually approached by a line by line reading as the students imitated John's reading, followed by reciting the pieces in their entirety. Nearly all of the participants had examples of these sorts of exercises in their native languages and enjoyed demonstrating them for the others.

The texts often seemed to activate the students' prior knowledge or schema, as in the example of associating 'buttocks' with 'Botox' (Chapter 4). Another example occurred

128

when M thought that 'creature' had a positive connotation because it resembled the word 'create'. So the texts were an important tool for mediating the students' meaning making process, serving as a guide, an aid to building schema, and a means of association to prior knowledge and understanding.

Though the texts utilized for the study were chosen by John, the students did not hesitate to give their opinion of their worth. While most of the short scenes were greeted with enthusiasm, the students would often question or object to sentence constructions that seemed unnatural to them. The responsibility for text selection would have to fall to the teacher for most ESL situations, though the use of popular film and television scripts might allow some student choice. Though the students were quite direct in shaping the course of the workshops and their personal study goals, none offered suggestions or direction regarding student choice of texts. And, as noted above, texts can be chosen from a large variety of genres.

### 5.2.3 Student Questions and Conversations

The students' questioning strategies were the driving force behind the instructional conversations. A review of the video logs demonstrates how the questioning grew more frequent (as did the conversations) as the workshops progressed. The conversational nature of our exercises in meaning making put the students at ease as they discovered that all of their questions were legitimate and no subject was taboo. The group had successfully created an atmosphere of dialogic inquiry which led to genuine freedom of expression. As the frequency of the questioning increased, so did the depth of their questions. In the initial decoding stages of text interaction, most questions regarded vocabulary and usage. However, as the students' understanding increased, they engaged

129

in higher order questions which examined characters' motivations and gave rise to many of the cultural conversations.

As noted in Chapter 4, the Russian participants would more directly question language use, whereas Group 2 (W, A, and N) were relative newcomers to the United States and had many more cultural questions. The questions were not always directed at the researcher however; the students would converse, exchange opinions, and question each other. Interestingly, nearly always the students would address the researcher, Chizu the workshop facilitator, and each other in English, even though Chizu spoke Japanese. There appeared to be an unspoken expectation that English was the language of choice and the students rarely resorted to their L1. Even the Russians refrained from conversing in their native language except on rare occasions when they needed clarification. And even then, as a courtesy, they would explain what they had said to each other. The group seemed to have developed cohesiveness and it appeared that all participants chose to use English in an attempt to include everyone in the process.

The routine of moving from decoding to comprehension and self-regulation had, by the end of the semester, become internalized by the participants. All seemed to recognize that the process was one of dialogic inquiry comprised of instructional conversations interspersed with students questions. This dialogic approach to meaning making was inclusive, purposeful, and traditional teacher dominated power relations had been minimized. The students reported feeling comfortable and accepted and, though there were occasional disagreements, there were never any signs of animosity. This dialogic atmosphere of inquiry and exploration permitted greater student autonomy and freedom to choose how they approached questioning and learning.

130

## 5.3 Question 3 - Pedagogical Implications

What are the pedagogical implications for a drama approach to second language learning?

### 5.3.1 Language Learning as Performance

The language classroom must be viewed as a sociocultural setting where active participation in the target language is encouraged, promoted, and facilitated. Language learning is first and foremost an activity and the language learner must be actively engaged with the target language. However, the context of this active participation must reflect actual sociocultural and institutional realities that the learners will encounter. Unfortunately, the traditional classroom is a markedly artificial environment.

Johnson (2004), called for replacing the acquisition metaphor of second language acquisition (SLA) with a participation metaphor. She claimed that "Vygotsky's and Bakhtin's theories restore 'dignity' and value to the neglected part of human language – language performance" (p.171). She further argued that "a dialectical interaction between the interpersonal and the intrapersonal planes leads to the merging of language performance and language competence" (p.172). In this view, language performance cannot be separated from language learning and participating in the target language involves a performance aspect of interacting with others with intentionality and purpose.

A drama activity approach to language learning and teaching epitomizes language performance on several levels. The students have language modeled for them which they can actively imitate and internalize. They collaboratively engage in meaning making through explorations of scripts and texts with others. They experience recursion through

131

the rehearsal process and through the multiple perspectives facilitated by assuming a variety of characters and viewpoints. And they must actively perform the language in an authentic manner for themselves and others.

Language as performance further contextualizes language use as specific to the sociocultural and institutional context. We can abandon the idea of a general language ability and help the learner realize that there are multiple voices, multiple performances, and multiple roles to be played in the target language. From a pedagogical point of view, this means introducing the learner to multiple voices through speech genres. The various dramatic texts, improvisations, and scenarios available to the teacher and learner in a drama approach could supply countless genres. The learner then realizes that there are no general contexts for language use, but that all language is performed within a very specific context.

Finally, language as performance eliminates the artificiality of the traditional teacher dominated classroom. Rather than a transmission model of education, the teacher and learner are involved in the active co-construction of meaning. The activity of language performance places the student squarely in the center of learning. Further, the varying motives and goals of different students are subsumed within the actions of performance; the give and take of interactive performance accommodates differing goals in the process of building increased intersubjectivity.

### 5.3.2 Importance of Instructional Conversations

As has been argued above, instructional conversation has the capacity to level the power relations between the participants, encourage greater autonomy among the learners, and create a genuine community of learners who are engaged in collaborative

132

meaning making through dialogic explorations. The dramatic language teacher must be confident and willing to embrace the unexpected outcomes that arise from true give and take discourse.

Even more important than willingness on the part of the instructor, he or she must make a commitment to encourage and nurture these conversations. By developing what Wells (2000) called a 'register of extension', the instructor's answering strategies can encourage the student to extend their ideas, opinions, and voice and participate in a mutually constituted act of meaning making in which all ideas are valued. Kinginger (2000) claimed that to do so require a political decision on the part of the teacher to guarantee each learner his or her voice. This reverses the traditional teacher dominated classroom and creates a learner centered environment. Conversation appears to hold the key to balancing inequitable power relations within the learning environment and granting all participants equal voice.

The value of conversation to the authenticity of the learning experience has already been stated, but needs to be emphasized in regards to pedagogy. Van Lier (1996) argued for pragmatic authenticity, and in the case of instructional conversations it is especially important that the students be permitted to bring up any subject that is pragmatic to them. The teacher does not determine authenticity but the learner, because it must always be authentic for the learner and in line with their individual motives and goals. Genuine conversation within a community of learners is the embodiment of authentic learning. This study provided concrete examples of how instructional conversation became an indispensable component of collaborative meaning making.

### 5.3.3 Community and Ensemble

133

Another valuable benefit to instructional conversation is how it can serve to build community. Vygotsky recognized that affect can never be divorced from learning because it always involves social mediation. As this study demonstrated, the mediational affordances provided by drama allowed the students to come to trust and value their relationships with both the researcher and each other. The students recognized that the researcher's register of extension went beyond the confines of the drama workshops. The students grew comfortable enough to begin soliciting advice on a wide range of subjects and issues and began visiting the researcher's office outside of class time.

Theatre has always been concerned with the building of ensemble and the act of rehearsal often builds a sense of camaraderie. However, it can just as easily result in animosity and conflicts of interest. The effective drama language teacher would have to be very careful of developing, as much as possible, a democratic classroom in which all learners have a voice in how and what they learn. As activity theory postulates, and this study demonstrated, students come to the learning environment with their own motives and the participants may have very different goals for each activity, but differing motives and goals can be accommodated in a discursive learning environment. The teacher who recognizes alterity and difference as a natural consequence of dialogic interactions can allow it to shape the experience as the learners work toward greater intersubjectivity. By embracing alterity, or welcoming the unexpected, teachers and learners come to recognize all mediated interactions are learning opportunities.

Through my own experience as a high school drama teacher, I know there will be the occasional student who is reluctant to participate or attempts to disrupt the process for others. But these students are relatively few, and this is simply a classroom management

134

issue. By far, the majority of students are eager to participate and find the experience very enjoyable. This study was marked with laughter and camaraderie and all participants reported feeling more confident about using English in their daily lives. Becoming a supportive community of learners was instrumental for this particular outcome and the drama language teacher should pay attention to issues of classroom democracy and fairness. John-Steiner and Mahn (2002) argued that the 'gift of confidence' in the face of risk taking is a necessary ingredient in becoming a life-long learner. The students in this study all self-reported an increased sense of confidence that arose from the supportive community fostered within the drama workshops.

### 5.3.4 Language Genres and Pragmatics

The successful drama language teacher will need to engage the learner with many different speech genres in participatory ways. This helps to demonstrate to the language learner that all speech is highly contextual and drama can simulate a variety of contexts. Dramatic texts provide a huge wealth of possible materials with characters and situations taken from every walk of life and a myriad of possible social situations. The wealth of dramatic texts for young or adolescent actors provides material with more accessible language and settings and stories can range from the mundane to the fantastic and magical. For adult learners there are texts taken from television and film which could be accessible and video recordings of actors in performance can serve to model appropriate communication strategies, pragmatics, and other aspects of language performance.

Often the students' own experiences can serve as subject of dramatic scenarios and students can practice appropriate language genres in social situations. This was the basis of Di Pietro's (1986) Strategic Interactions, in which the students' played themselves in

135

different problem solving situations (Chapter 2). Scenarios, improvisations, and scripts can all be used to demonstrate and teach pragmatics of communication as well as introduce speech genres. All of these techniques will allow the learner to build a repertoire of appropriate communication skills for a variety of sociocultural and institutional environments and situations.

Even the act of instructional conversation entails the use of different speech registers. In these workshops sometimes the register would become deadly serious, as when we discussed the trafficking of human slaves. At other times our conversations were marked by hilarity and laughter when recounting funny stories or polite disagreement as we debated the differing social expectations for young ladies from different cultures. The students were performing in the most authentic of environments as they discussed real issues and events. By engaging the participants in a wide variety of subjects they learned to recognize appropriate tone and register in differing speech genres surrounding different subject matter.

## 5.3.5 Multi-modal Learning through
### Language Performance

Drama techniques permit mediated interaction with the target language through the traditional language arts modes of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, but also through feeling, moving, playing, interacting, and a host of physical embodiments. Though this study solicited participants by promising practice in speaking and listening skills, the students interacted with and made meaning of the target language in multi-modal ways. Note taking, decoding words, rehearsing and performing brought a variety of mediational skills to play in a natural and holistic way.

136

As noted in Chapter 2, a number of researchers believed that the incorporation of dramatic literature into the language learning process increased other literacy skills (Dodson, 2000, 2002; Moody, 2002; Via, 1976). It appears in this study that word recognition, vocabulary, and the recognition of lexical phrases certainly increased. For example, if the act of writing is approached as entering into a dialogue with others, then the two Russian participants' choice to paraphrase their text in writing was certainly an attempt to clarify meaning within that dialogue. And though several of the participants had reasonably good decoding skills, their comprehension skills were lacking. The recursive learning inherent in the rehearsal process contributed to automaticity of their textual recognition skills.

Though the focus of these workshops was upon speaking and listening skills, there are a number of ways for the teacher to incorporate other literacy practices within a drama approach to language learning. Common strategies include; 'scoring' a script, (marking beats, writing objectives, goals, and motivations of the character), writing character biographies, writing 'in role' as the character (perhaps in a letter to an imagined loved one), or describing off-stage encounters and situations the character may face. All of these techniques can engage the learner with target language literacies while simultaneously strengthening their performance and understanding.

The language teacher must not loose sight of the importance of physicalization in the drama language learning process. Via (1976) argued that drama was the perfect medium in which to teach culturally appropriate pragmatics such as bodily proxemics (how close to stand), how to stand, shake hands, and other social conventions. This study documented how the learners often imitated the demonstrative gestures that arose from

137

instructional conversation (hugging, 'cross my heart', 'about this high') and how the students eventually appropriated these gestures and made them their own. Physicalization is but one aspect of multi-modal learning and the focus of a drama approach to language learning can take many forms and incorporate a variety of strategies.

Theatre games are a time honored technique of drama and are important for a number of reasons. They serve to build community and trust, serve as physical, vocal, and mental warm-ups, and allow participants to have fun while getting to know each other. In a second language classroom they also serve as another medium in which to engage the target language and permit the students to feel free to experiment with the language in a low risk environment. The participants in this study realized that some of the language games were difficult for the native speakers as well as themselves and this realization permitted greater freedom to take risks and not fear failure. Play is an important leaning mode for both children and adults.

### 5.3.6 Assessment

Despite the current vogue for standardized testing in public schools, many educators have long recognized the value of alternative assessments, or what are widely referred to as performance based assessment. Performance based assessment (PBA) is a criterion referenced evaluation of an individual learner's understanding or mastery of a topic, concept, or idea. The learner is expected to produce a product or perform in such a way as to demonstrate their degree of accomplishment or understanding and reflect upon what they have learned.

Drama based language learning is inherently performance based in its evaluation of the learners understanding. As the learners rehearse and create meaning together, the

138

teacher can gradually step away from the process as the students grow increasingly self regulated and independent. The learner literally performs their understanding. Both teacher and learner can witness the progression, discuss what they have learned, and reflect upon the process and its strengths and weaknesses.

Student self assessment (and peer assessment) is an often overlooked aspect of PBA. If the language teacher incorporates videotape recordings of the students in rehearsal and performance, the students gains new insights into their abilities in the target language. This study demonstrated how the students had strong reactions to seeing and hearing themselves and how they even requested copies of the tapes to take home. Also, by engaging the students in stimulated recalls, they were compelled to reflect on the process and their experiences and explain this in the target language. Videotape recording is a relatively inexpensive technology that can yield huge benefits in the second language classroom.

This is only a small sampling of practical pedagogical tools and methods that can be applied in a drama based second language workshop. More important are the overall benefits of this approach in facilitating the creation of the ZPD. By recognizing the unique affordances of drama in language learning the teacher can explicitly play to the approach's strengths and foster a learning environment characterized by authentic learning and assessment. Language learning through language performance entails multi-modal interactions with varied speech genres in highly contextualized conditions and circumstances. The inventive teacher can shape the learning process through any number

139

of drama based activities and interventions. Pedagogical practices can be both responsive to learners' needs and the curricular expectations of the teacher and learning community.

## 5.4 Activity Theory, Language Performance, and Dramatic Affordances

Second language learners do not simply 'learn English', or 'learn French', but rather learn a variety of locally situated language genres that enable them to enter into a specifically contextual discourse. They must perform themselves in order for others to recognize something of their identity and intentions. Discourse then, serves as a means of mediation between people involved in activity that is always situated within specific sociocultural and institutional contexts.

The cultural tools of social mediation do not determine how or what the social actors do with them, but rather provide affordances or constraints to mediation depending upon how they have been used historically. Understanding the social interactions between beings is more than understanding the tools available, or the goals and intentions of the actors, but rather examining the tensions between the mediational means and their contextualized use within specific activities (Wertsch, 1994). Therefore, it is the use of mediational means as they are employed in activity which provides us an opportunity to examine the processes involved in second language teaching and learning.

A drama approach to second language learning provides a number of highly unique mediational affordances which can be actively manipulated in a seemingly endless variety of ways. The capacity for artificially changing the context of the social situations of scenes and interactions affords opportunities for the exploration of a number of

different registers, genre, and voices. The context of scenes is altered when the actors are asked to assume different roles or place the scene in different locations or environments. These artificial adjustments to sociocultural context within a dramatic scene both constrain what actors are expected or permitted to do and afford new opportunities for historically situated discourse genres and voice. Dramatic scenes embody the highly contextual nature of human discourse in a concrete and visceral way.

Within language, one of the most important of mediational means are what Wertsch (1994) calls voices, or the words, phrases, and means of speaking which we borrow from the historical and sociocultural environment in which we find ourselves. And as Bakhtin (1986) noted, these voices are never entirely our own, but are borrowed from the voices of others as we ventriloquate utterances we have heard before. Every utterance is both heteroglossic, or containing the many voices of our experience, and dialogic, or in concert with and responding to other voices. Drama then is the perfect medium in which to realize this dual nature of the spoken utterance. Each language performance captures the heteroglossic nature of the phrase or script while simultaneously demonstrating the responsive nature of dialogic interaction.

In addition to language being heteroglossic, or belonging partially to others, the speaker also populates the speech with their own expressive intentions. Borrowing and populating the utterance changes and transforms it into something unique to the sociocultural circumstance. Therefore, not only are our actions transformed by the tools we use, but the tools are changed by the very actions they are used to perform (Jones & Norris, 2005). Dramatic language learning and the performative nature of language captures this dialectic of tool use and transformation in concrete ways that can be

141

revisited in a recursive fashion as the sociocultural circumstance of a dramatic scene is manipulated and changed. The dialectic between tool and mediational means is demonstrated in such a way that we can directly observe learning within the ZPD as both 'tool and result' (Newman and Holzman, 1996).

Drama then is a uniquely powerful tool for language learning and teaching because it permits the manipulation of historical sociocultural context within scenes and other performance situations. The drama teacher can shape the mediational constraints and affordances of communication by altering the motives and goals of the actors and/or by altering the sociocultural or institutional environment of the players. Language performance becomes utterly contextual as the tools of drama alter the mediational means and vice versa in a dialectical communicative interaction. And as noted above, this recursive exploration of language through rehearsal of varying scenarios results in a repetitive cycle of internalization and externalization which results in expansive learning (Engestrom, 1987). The dramatic medium allows both the direct manipulation and observation of this process for both teacher and learner.

Finally, drama has the ability to situate discourse as an activity. All language performance is concerned with doing something. When actors play a scene with attention to the goals and motives of the character, they enact a microcosm of life's daily activities. When a player is directed to perform actions in pursuit of a goal, they become the embodiment of a subject acting within an activity system who is bound by the historical and sociocultural constraints and affordances of their situation. These contextual circumstances are realized through the communicative strategies that the learners employ, making the learning environment truly authentic as the players react to each other and

142

collaboratively create meaning in their attempts to communicate effectively. Learning is embodied and visceral as the players employ all of their physical and mental resources in pursuit of their goals.

## 5.5 Summary

If we view discourse as a creative performance, drama becomes the perfect medium for its manipulation and exploration. Language performance creates an expectation of full participation within the discourse community while also implying that individuals perform themselves, or present themselves in different ways in different contexts. One perspective put forth by Wittgenstein (1972) views language as a series of games that people use to construct 'forms of life', or situated ways of seeing oneself in relation to the environment and others. For Wittgenstein, the playing of these games is a creative performance determined by the constraints and affordances of the context and players. How we present ourselves to others is determined by the rules of the particular game being played. Drama allows us to change the rules by manipulating the context, thereby permitting a greater number of language explorations.

Drama is uniquely holistic in its approach to second language learning. No other instructional medium permits such flexibility and multimodality in methodology and materials. Opportunities for instructional interventions are seemingly limitless and bound only by the imagination and creativity of the participants. Language performance opens areas of exploration into how we communicate with our bodies as well as with our minds, and how even this aspect of communication is highly contextual.

143

Finally, drama has the capacity to open some of our cultural assumptions to deconstruction and interrogation. By facilitating instructional conversations and the construction of increased intertextual understandings, dramatic language learning may present opportunities for critical thinking. As learners work through the contradictions and alterity of co-constructing meaning together, increased understanding results from multiple perspective taking. More than simply fostering intercultural understanding, dramatic explorations and performative inquiry may open paths for critical analysis. These are some of the issues and implications that will be briefly explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Researcher Reflection

The nature of data collection from an SCT perspective is quite different from that of

most positivistic research paradigms. Accepting Vygotsky's premise that all learning is

mediated between individuals using cultural tools and social interactions, data collection

itself must be seen as a social construct that arises directly from the interactions of the

researchers, participants, and others who visited our workshops. However, as a

participant-observer in an educational setting that had been largely co-constructed by all

of the participants, I was unprepared for how extensive my interactions with the ESL

students would be. My interactions with the participants in this study were intimate,

continuous, and changeable during the course of the study. They were also highly

contextual and varied between individuals as well as between the two groups.

The importance of modeling and imitation came to my awareness slowly as the data

emerged. Reflecting back on the workshops, I now realize how much the students shaped

the role I was to play in their learning. By explicitly asking me to model speech and

imitating my interpretations of the scripts, they placed me in position which entailed

much more teaching through example than I had expected. The teacher in a first language

drama classroom typically resists interpreting lines for the students, preferring that they

find their own meaning. The drama teacher then helps them explore different

interpretations through improvisations and similar explorations.

145

The nature of second language drama proved quite different in some respects, with much more explicit explanation of text and meaning. The second language learner must rely much more heavily upon the teacher to assist them through the initial process of moving from decoding the text to comprehension. However, I feel that it was this very process of instructional conversation and recursive learning that makes possible many of the intercultural affordances for understanding that do not exist in a first language classroom. Second language drama is in some ways a richer experience for the learners.

My expectation for this research was to find evidence of how drama mediates language learning and to define the conditions that are optimal for enhanced learning outcomes for a diverse population. I believe this research has outlined an extensive gamut of multiple modalities of communication which are used in dramatic play and in the dramatic arts and that many of these modalities involve learning processes that are intrinsic to all learners. We live in a dramatized society and from our earliest childhood we experience the creative acts of meaning that arise from dramatic play. These creative acts can be reinvigorated in more mature learners through the collaborative nature of educational drama.

I have argued that a drama approach to second language learning provides mediational affordances that are unique to the medium and that these affordances are holistic, multimodal, and subject to great manipulability. I have also argued that activity theory provides an explanation for the learning processes that these learners engaged in. I believe these processes concretely demonstrate the social intermental / intramental cycle of externalization / internalization the learners experienced through the recursive process of collaborative meaning making. Drama activities capture expansive learning in action.

I also hoped to describe how drama shapes the educational setting for both teacher and learners. Among the unique mediational affordances of drama are qualities which contribute to authenticity of learning and learner autonomy. Drama permits multiple perspective taking through recursive explorations of text. Drama affords opportunities for educational conversation which in turn gives rise to equality, voice, and increased classroom democracy. There are implications for issues of critical pedagogy, process vs. product approaches to drama, incorporation of complementary media, and other future research which will be addressed in the next section.

## 6.2 Implications for Future Research.

### 6.2.1 Process vs. Product Drama

This study was largely concerned with a process based approach to learning. There was no expectation of public performance and the students were concerned with classroom interactions that remained private and insular. However, unlike many process approaches, this study relied very heavily upon texts and dramatic scripts. The students expressed a preference for scripted materials to serve as guide to help them acquire vocabulary and lexical phrases.

Though not addressed in this dissertation, this study differed from the dramatic language learning that I conducted with elementary students in China. In that setting vocabulary was introduced and usages were modeled, but then the children would plan and rehearse short scenes demonstrating pragmatic use of the day's vocabulary. This was a process approach that differed markedly from the university students. Rather than being other regulated by a script, these 5th graders were more self-regulated as they

147

collaboratively created new scenarios to demonstrate their understanding of the language. Future research might address questions regarding the younger students' willingness to improvise in contrast to the older students' resistance to improvisation, as well as issues of access to materials for teachers in an EFL environment.

Another area of inquiry would be to see how a performance product might affect the learning environment. If learners knew that a public performance would be the culminating experience this would have profound impacts upon learner motivations and apprehensions. As argued in Chapter 2, the dichotomy between process and product is largely overstated, because product drama entails many processes in its realization, but performance expectations would be altered as the 'stakes are raised' for the language learner. Other issues regarding the sophistication of production values and the opportunities for language interactions that these would provide could also be investigated.

### 6.2.2 Alternative Media

The incorporation of digital technologies and especially videotape recording could have important pedagogical implications for the dramatic language class. In this study the students requested copies of videotaped performances that they could study at home. Most seemed surprised to hear their own pronunciations and viewed video as an opportunity for self-correction. If students were in a learning environment in which they had hands-on access to these tools, they could engage in much more examination and critique of language use.

The students in this study found that the stimulated recalls provided an opportunity for self-reflection about their learning. Once again, if students had access to video

148

cameras, this might provide more opportunity for self-reflection. The recent advent of inexpensive digital voice recorders which are capable of holding several hours of recordings could be used to demonstrate learning trajectories over time. If students were provided time to share these recordings with each other they could also engage in peer evaluation and scaffold each others learning through discussion and conversation. More ambitiously, students could base performances around video projects that would allow them to 'perform' without the anxieties associated with live theatre. These video performances could serve as whole class vehicles for reflection and discussion and performances could be revisited and improved.

The use of film and television holds great promise for language learning. Film would provide models of different races, social class, and sex. Students would directly observe how different people present themselves in both speech and action. They would begin to understand issues of language variation within the target language and perhaps issues of power and social status among different communicators. Scripts are widely available for many popular films and students could engage with these having seen the language modeled by more performers than just the teacher.

### 6.2.3 Drama and Critical Pedagogy

Though not addressed in this study, the mediational affordances of a drama approach appear to provide many opportunities for critical reflection. The instructional conversations that originated from the dramatic scripts gave rise to issues of social injustice and inequality. In an atmosphere of dialogic inquiry students realized that they had a legitimate voice and were free to discuss anything they wished. And, as noted

149

before, instructional conversation serves to balance power relations and alter the nature of traditional teacher dominated classroom discourse.

The language drama teacher can actively promote and foster a climate of critical thought through the types of materials selected and the types of interventions chosen. A number of published dramatic scripts revolve around themes of race, gender, social inequality, and other vital issues. These materials may be dramatic, humorous, or satiric in nature, further introducing different language genres to students while simultaneously introducing varying approaches to dealing with social issues. Scenarios can be designed around current events or even personal injustices that an individual student might have suffered. Such an approach might help students realize new ways to respond if such a situation were to arise again.

It might be possible to design a language learning drama class around real life issues that immigrants face. These interventions might serve the dual purpose of helping immigrants learn the new culture's language while giving them pragmatic advice and support in dealing with the unfamiliar cultural and institutional situations they encounter in their new country. Finally, dramatic language classes could be explicitly aimed at increasing political and intercultural understanding between diverse peoples.

### 6.3 Promoting Performance Based Language Learning

Drama based language learning has the potential and capacity to be highly responsive to the needs and wishes of the language learner. By allowing the language learner autonomy and choice in what and how they learn, drama will engage learners at a much

150

higher level than any prescribed curriculum. The potential for a drama based approach, such as the one described in this study, to address the specific contextual needs of the community of learners is enormous.

It is certainly no accident that theatre performances are called 'plays'. If we can frame the complexities of language learning within the affordances of dramatic play, then educators may demonstrate that "drama, and all of the arts, may be viewed as playful activities and as such they are inherently collective and processual, and thus both socially and individually developmental" (O'Toole, 1997). An activity theoretical perspective that recognizes language as performance does not consider any collective activity as frivolous. Play is serious business, and as Vygotsky (1987) recognized, extremely important in the individuals developmental process.

In an atmosphere in which educators are increasingly pressured to demonstrate proficiencies through standardized testing and 'non-essential' classes such as creative arts are marginalized and reduced in stature, educators must demonstrate the utility and effectiveness of these interactive and performative approaches. Students can perform their understandings and demonstrate they have effectively learned through collaborative problem solving and meaning making. Performance based assessment can be highlighted as an essential element to understanding learners growth and development. Learning can be demonstrated through observing, either live or on tape, how performance improves over the course of study.

Drama based language learning serves as further support for a Vygotskian view of learning and development. By capturing the essential processes of expansive learning through recursive internalization and externalization, language performance demonstrates

151

the validity of Vygotsky's thought. Embodied language performance reveals the social

nature of teaching and learning and how meaning is expressly co-constructed through

activity. With this realization, the language teacher can engage the learners in a

seemingly endless variety of situations through the creative use of learning interventions.

Activity becomes both the medium and the result for teaching and learning.

152

APPENDIX A

TABLES AND FIGURES

153

Table 1.1  Strata of Activity within
Activity System

| Subject | Object |
|---|---|
| Activity | Motive |
| Actions | Goals |
| Operations | Actual Conditions |

Figure 2.1 Vygotsky's Mediational Triangle

Tools

Subject                                        Object

154
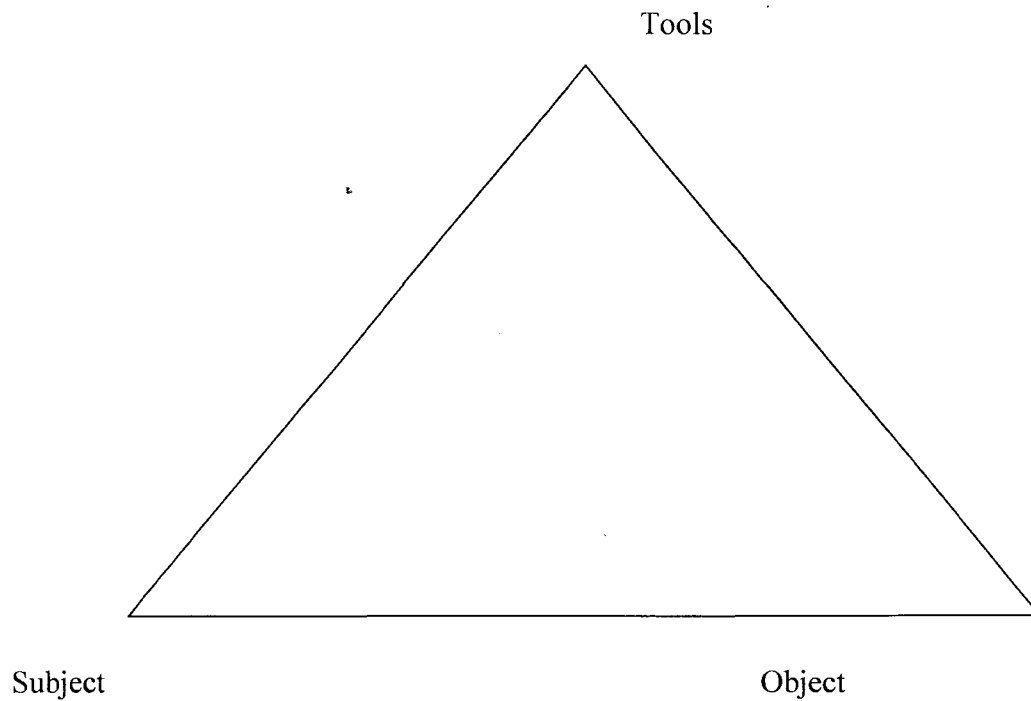
Figure 2.2 Engestrom's Model of an Activity System



Instruments

Subject    Object ➡ Outcome

Rules    Community    Division of Labor

155

Table 3.1  Participant background

| Participant | H | M | O | C | A | W | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Country of Origin | Belarus | Russia | Japan | Japan | Korea | Korea | Japan |
| Native Language | Russian | Russian | Japanese | Japanese | Korean | Korean | Japanese |
| Other Languages | None | Basic French | None | Basic Chinese | None | None | None |
| Time Studying English | 1 year 10 months | 1.5 years | 1 year | 1 month | 1 year | 7 years | 20 years |
| Time in United States | 1 year 10 months | 1.5 years | 1 year | 1 month | 1year 1month | 3 months | 3 months |
| Period of Study Participation | All | All | 3 weeks + exit interview | 3 weeks | All | All | All |
| Age | Late 20's | Early 40's | 26 | 23 | 24 | Mid 20's | 36 |
| Sex | Female | Female | Female | Female | Female | Female | Female |

156

Table 3.2 Relationship between research questions and data analysis

| Questions | Data Sources | Methods of Analysis |
|---|---|---|
| **What were the specific means of mediation utilized by participants in a drama approach to second language learning?** | Field notes<br>Video logs<br>Student interviews<br>Stimulated recall<br>Video transcriptions<br>Student notes<br>Paraphrased scripts<br>Educational conversations | Descriptive analysis<br>    Video logs patterns of activity<br>    Identifying and coding indicators of key events<br>    Identifying themes & relationships<br>    Comparing observed indicators to those described by the participants<br>    Analysis of student written artifacts |
| **What mediational affordances are facilitated by a drama approach to second language learning?** | Field notes<br>Video logs<br>Student interviews<br>Stimulated recall<br>Video transcriptions<br>Paraphrased scripts<br>Educational conversations | Descriptive analysis<br>    Video logs patterns of activity<br>    Identifying and coding indicators of non-traditional learning strategies<br>    Identifying themes & relationships<br>    Comparing observed indicators to those described by the participants |
| **What are the pedagogical implications for a drama approach to second language learning?** | Field notes<br>Video logs<br>Student interviews<br>Stimulated recall<br>Video transcriptions<br>Paraphrased scripts<br>Educational conversations | Descriptive analysis and field notes<br>    Video logs patterns of activity<br>    Identifying and coding indicators of pedagogy & meaning making<br>    Identifying incidents of referencing outside experience<br>    Comparing observed indicators to those described by the participants |

157

Table 3.3 Participant Interactions by Frequency

| Participant Interactions | John | Chizu | W | N | O | A | C | H | M | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Question | 5 | 1 | 15 | 10 | 1 | 13 | 6 | 21 | 36 | 103 (108) |
| Modeling | 98 | | | | | | | | | 98 |
| Imitation | | | 10 | 9 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 26 | 24 | 82 |
| Conversation | 41 | 1 | 12 | 16 | 1 | 13 | 4 | 23 | 22 | 92 (133) |
| Motivation | 23 | | 10 | 7 | 4 | 10 | 3 | 11 | 9 | 54 (77) |
| Cultural | 25 | | 9 | 13 | 1 | 11 | 1 | 10 | 10 | 55 (80) |
| Understanding | | | 19 | 15 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 21 | 16 | 81 |
| Decoding | | | 8 | 16 | 7 | 15 | 8 | 17 | 17 | 88 |
| Student Reg | | 1 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 22 |
| Gesture | 1 | | 5 | 2 | | 1 | 1 | 8 | 4 | 21 (22) |
| L1 Use | | 4 | | | 3 | | 1 | 4 | 4 | 8 (16) |

158

Table 4.1 Interaction Codes
Compared by Frequency between Groups

|  | Group 1 | Group 2 |
|---|---|---|
| Meaning Making | 47 | 35 |
| Decoding | 8 | 7 |
| Questions – Language | 19 | 16 |
| Questions – Cultural | 1 | 2 |
| Modeling | 46 | 33 |
| Imitation | 47 | 32 |
| Conversation – Language | 52 | 34 |
| Conversation – Culture | 18 | 41 |
| L1 Use | 12 | 2 |
| Private Speech | 2 | 6 |
| Investment | 12 | 23 |
| Gesture | 8 | 13 |

159

APPENDIX B

SURVEYS

INFORMED CONSENT

DRAMA WORKSHOP RECRUITING ANNOUNCEMENT

160

## English Drama Workshop

Name                                    Phone

Email address

Age                 Nationality                          Major

What is your native language?

Do you or your parents speak other languages?

How long have you been studying English?

How long have you been in the United States?

Why is studying/learning English important to you?

Have you ever acted or performed before?

Do you enjoy American films and television?

Are there other things you would like to tell us about yourself?

161

Informed Consent Form

# UNLV

### Informed Consent Form
### English Drama Workshops

I would like to ask you to participate in a study as part of our English drama workshops. I would like to have you play a scene with your classmates while I videotape you. Then we will watch the video and talk about how we used English during the scene. Then you or your classmates could perform again and see how our language changes. We will do this for a few weeks and see if it helps you to learn English.

I hope to use the videotape to see how drama may help English language learners improve their listening and speaking skills. It is possible that pieces of videotape may appear in papers or presentations in the future. If you would prefer not to have your footage used, then your identity will be protected. All materials will be kept in a secure place.

I hope that seeing and hearing yourself speak English on video will be fun and will help you improve how you talk and listen. But, I know some people may not feel comfortable performing in front of their friends or a camera. You are free to stop at any time and do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you change your mind you can leave the study anytime. You will need to speak with your parents and both you and they agree and sign the permission form. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have and you get to keep a copy of this agreement. You may contact me at 895-0471. You may also contact the UNLV Office for the Protection of Human Subjects at 702-895-2794 with questions regarding the rights of research participants.

Thanks!

**I have read and understand the above information and agree to participate in this study. A copy of this form has been given to me.**

Student signature

_____Date _____

Student Name (print)_____

162

# English Conversation through Drama & Role Play

## Learn English conversation and listening skills the fun way!

Theatre games, role play, and improvisation improve confidence, increase listening comprehension, and allow you to use English in authentic situations.

Chinese EFL students who participated this past summer reported feeling more confident and natural sounding in their spoken English after practicing drama role plays.

Workshops involve the rehearsal and performance of short scenes taken from real-life situations. Students are videotaped and after reviewing the performance and receiving feedback are encouraged to perform again.

## Join our free theatre workshops during the 2004 Fall semester. Workshops are held Wednesdays from 1:00 to 2:30 in room CEB 350A, in the Carlson Education Building.
(An alternative time may be arranged depending on students' schedules.)

These workshops are being conducted by an experienced theatre educator gathering information for his PhD dissertation in ESL education. For more information please contact John at
haught@unlv.nevada.edu
Or 702-895-0471

163

APPENDIX C


STUDENT NOTATIONS IN SCRIPT

STUDENT WRITTEN PARAPHRASE OF SCRIPT

TONGUE TWISTERS

164

Example of Student Script Notations

# 27. The Teacher

*(A teacher's lounge. #1 is pouring a cup of coffee. He/she then sits down, picks up a paper and starts to read. #2 comes running in and slams the door.)*

**#2:** Please hide me! Don't let them get me! *(Dives behind the couch.)*  *hell*

**#1:** *(Puts down his/her paper.)* That was a heck of an entrance. I can't wait to see how you exit.

**#2:** *(Pops up from behind the couch.)* I'm happy you find this amusing. You wouldn't be so glib if it were you they were after.  *take more seriously.*

**#1:** Who is they?

**#2:** Who do you think! Those...horrors. Those...creatures, those...vermin, those...

**#1:** Children?  *audacity*

**#2:** You have the audacity to call them that?

**#1:** That's what they are. They're high school students. Nothing more.

**#2:** That's like saying a Great White shark is a fish and nothing more.

**#1:** Well, from some people's point of view, that's correct.

**#2:** Then you must have gotten the only "students" in the school. The rest of us seem to have gotten what was left over.

**#1:** You wanna tell me what brought all this on...today.

**#2:** The usual. Why do you think anything would be different?

**#1:** Because you usually don't run shrieking from your classroom.  *screaming*

**#2:** Not usually, but I think about it a lot. *(Pause)* OK, aside from the usual noise, back talk, loud music, smoking in the bathroom, et cetera, at one point today I found a sign taped to my back.

165

Example of Student Written Paraphrase of Text

11/24

2. Please, help me! ~~Help me to let's resolve with my~~ Don't let them get me!                    ④

1. What's happened with you? I can't wait to see how you exit.

2. I am happy that you ~~have~~ having too much ~~fun. from this situation.~~ It's interesting how ~~would~~ you feel in my ~~shoes~~ ~~situation~~ (if you ~~just need deal~~) with them.

1. Who is them?

2. Who do you think "who is ~~it~~ them"?

1. Maybe children?

2. You can call them anything ~~you~~ (anyway) you like!

1. That's ~~like~~ what they are. They're high school students. Nothing more.

2. That's like saying a great white shark is a fish and nothing more.

1. Well, from some people's point of view, that's correct.

2. Then you must have ~~ontten~~ the only students

# TONGUE TWISTERS

Six sick slick slim sycamore saplings.

A box of biscuits, a batch of mixed biscuits

A skunk sat on a stump and thunk the stump stunk,
but the stump thunk the skunk stunk.

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.
Did Peter Piper pick a peck of pickled peppers?
If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,
where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

Red lorry, yellow lorry, red lorry, yellow lorry.

Unique New York.

Betty Botter had some butter,
"But," she said, "this butter's bitter.
If I bake this bitter butter,
it would make my batter bitter.
But a bit of better butter--
that would make my batter better."

So she bought a bit of butter,
better than her bitter butter,
and she baked it in her batter,
and the batter was not bitter.
So 'twas better Betty Botter
bought a bit of better butter.

Six thick thistle sticks. Six thick thistles stick.

Is this your sister's sixth zither, sir?

A big black bug bit a big black bear,
made the big black bear bleed blood.

The sixth sick sheik's sixth sheep's sick.

Toy boat. Toy boat. Toy boat.

One smart fellow, he felt smart.
Two smart fellows, they felt smart.
Three smart fellows, they all felt smart.

Pope Sixtus VI's six texts.

I slit the sheet, the sheet I slit, and on the slitted sheet I sit.

She sells sea shells by the sea shore.
The shells she sells are surely seashells.
So if she sells shells on the seashore,
I'm sure she sells seashore shells.

Mrs. Smith's Fish Sauce Shop.

"Surely Sylvia swims!" shrieked Sammy, surprised.
"Someone should show Sylvia some strokes so she shall not sink."

A Tudor who tooted a flute
tried to tutor two tooters to toot.
Said the two to their tutor,
"Is it harder to toot
or to tutor two tooters to toot?"

Shy Shelly says she shall sew sheets.

Three free throws.

I am not the pheasant plucker,
I'm the pheasant plucker's mate.
I am only plucking pheasants
'cause the pheasant plucker's running late.

Sam's shop stocks short spotted socks.

A flea and a fly flew up in a flue.
Said the flea, "Let us fly!"
Said the fly, "Let us flee!"
So they flew through a flaw in the flue.

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