THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE
IN PROCESS DRAMA FOR L2 LEARNING:
VOICE, IDENTITY & INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS

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OVERVIEW

The Aesthetic Experience in process drama for L2 learning

- Aesthetics in Education (Abbs, 1989; Dewey, 1934)
- Aesthetics in L2 Learning (Van Lier, 2004; Kramsch, 2004)
- Process Drama (O’Neill, 1995; 2006)
- L2 Process Drama (Kao & O’Neill, 1998; Stinson & Winson, 2014)
- Aesthetics in Process Drama (O’Toole, 1998; O’Mara, 2006)

FOCUS:
Voice, Identity & Intercultural Awareness
AESTHETICS in L2 LEARNING

Build on students’ memories, emotions, perceptions, fantasies linked to sounds, and intonations. Ask the students: What does this word evoke for YOU? What does it remind YOU of? Bring back the emotional and the aesthetic dimension of language

Kramsch, 2008, p. 405
(original emphasis)
Ecological perspectives on Foreign Language education.
AESTHETICS

Philosophy

Plato (370BC)  Baumgarten (1750)  Kant (1781)
Schopenhauer  Hegel
Wittgenstein  Heidegger

Psychology

Merleau Ponty
Freud  Lacan  Jung

Education

Dewey  Abbs  Vygotstky  Nietzsche  Marcuse
AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE in EDUCATION

~ Greek *aistetika*: things perceptible through the senses
‘All that works through and on **feeling**, sensation and **perception**; symbolically expressed through the arts’
(Abbs, 1989)

Aesthetic engagement: the transformation of **feeling** and **perception** into new meanings; a creative act, in a social environment (Vygotsky, 1925/1971)

Aesthetic experience: creating & perceiving - To **perceive**, the beholder *creates* his own **experience** (Dewey, 1934)

ARTISTIC: PRODUCTION

AESTHETIC: PERCEPTION
Language use requires an investment of voice, and there is an aesthetic element in language use from this perspective.

IDENTITY
A projection of the self in interaction with social groups: “We can only speak the second language when thoughts, identities and self are aligned.

VOICE
Infusing one’s words with emotions, thoughts, identity and actions.

AGENCY
Learners being self-regulated, the agents of their own actions.

When learning a language, students might be feeling tongue-tied... unable to speak the foreign language from the depth of their self... they may not be able to make their mouth utter sounds in the language, if the new cultural identity that has been allotted to them creates a barrier between their thoughts and their selves....

PROCESS DRAMA


- 1990s: O’Neill coins the term ‘process drama’:
  - No final performance; No script; No external audience
  - Participants create a collective story
  - The teacher plays a role (Teacher in Role)
  - Made up of scenic units (episodes)
  - Stems from a pre-text
‘THE SEAL WIFE’ DRAMA

Drama Worlds: A Framework for Process Drama
O’Neill (1995)
Chapter 5: The Seal Wife

Pre-text and Story Drama: The Artistry of Cecily O’Neill
Taylor (Ed.) (1995)
Participants **experience** the context through different drama strategies - driven by dramatic tension.

One or more strategies for participants to **reflect** on their experience

**Pre-text**
- Image, film, song, myth, article – a stimulus to *launch* the dramatic world

**Initiation phase**
- One or more strategies where participants **identify** with roles and situation

**Experiential phase**
- Participants **experience** the context through different drama strategies - driven by dramatic tension

**Reflective phase**
- One or more strategies for participants to **reflect** on their experience
DRAMA STRUCTURE

pre-text

initiation phase

experiential phase

reflective phase

L2 DRAMA STRUCTURE

INITIAL
L2 SCAFFOLDING

PRE-EPIsODE
L2 SCAFFOLDING

POST-EPIsODE
L2 REFLECTION

FINAL
L2 REFLECTION

- Pre-text: Folk tale
- Role on the wall
- Role creation
- Hot seating
- 3D postcard
- Gossip mill
- Teacher-in-role
- Tableaux (Freeze Frame)
- Role play
- In-role writing
- De brief

Language Alive: Teaching English through Process Drama
Chan, Y.-L., & Lam, Y. K. (2010)
In process drama we are simultaneously creating & perceiving (O’Toole, 1998)

In process drama, the **teacher-artist** is juggling 4 roles:
- Playwright
- Actor
- Director
- Teacher

In process drama, the **student** as co-artist is juggling 4 roles:
- Playwright
- Actor
- Director
- Learner

**JUGGLING ACT:** Reflection-in-Action (O’Mara, 2006)
L₂ PROCESS DRAMA

1995: first L₂ process drama study by Kao. 33 ESL undergraduates, Taiwan.


2000-2016 research projects:

- Araki-Metcalfe (2008) ESL (in Japan); Japanese FL (in Australia)
- Rothwell (2011) German FL (in Australia)
- Stinson (2008) ESL (in Singapore)
- Bournot-Trites et. al. (2007) French (in Canada)
- Chan et al (2010); ESL (in Hong Kong)
- Yaman-Ngeinteu (2011) ESL (in Canada)
- Kao, Carkin and Hsu (2011) ESL (in Hong Kong)
- Piazzoli (2014) Italian FL (in Australia); Italian L₂ (In Italy)
PIAZZOLI PhD RESEARCH (2009 – 2013)

Griffith University, Brisbane (Australia)
School of Education + School of Languages & Linguistics

• 3 Case Studies – International Students learning Italian (L2) in Milan, Italy – *Università degli Studi di Milano*
• Design & facilitate 5x process drama L2 classes (45 hours)

PARTICIPANTS
• 3 x groups of teachers of L2 Italian (observing)
• 3 x groups of students of Italian (B1-B2 level) from: China, Japan, Russia, US, Brazil, Switzerland, Taiwan, Iran
RESEARCH AIMS

To explore the constructs of teacher artistry and learner engagement in L2 process drama

- RQ1. What is the nature of engagement in L2 process drama?
- RQ2. How can an L2 teacher develop and harness process drama artistry to facilitate learner engagement?

→ 3 domains: Second Language Acquisition, Intercultural Education and Aesthetic Learning
RESEARCH METHODS

- Students’ engagement surveys (communicative; intercultural; affective engagement / 1 – 10)
- Teachers’ written observations (on engagement)
- T’ interviews (before & after the observations)
- Sts’ interviews
- T’ focus group (Video Stimulated Recall, VSR)
- Sts’ focus groups (VSR & kinaesthetic interviewing)
- Reflective journal (translingual writing, Piazzoli 2015)
Interviewer: What’s the moment you remember more vividly [in the drama]?

Jun: the moment, you asked us to think about... the way one person called us. Because I have, I was... eh I started learning English when I was... 12 or something and in Taiwan everyone create English name, for learning English... and then, so I was using that English name for quite some time; and then that name- Johanna, yeah; and then I went to London and then I realised, around the world no one is changing their name - so then I switched back to my own name; but my name is so difficult for foreigners to pronounce so at the beginning I was really confused. You know what it’s... the thing, calling others, my identity... and also I am from Taiwan but I never want to... stay there, so I’m a Taiwanese, I’m a Chinese but what... I don’t know how to explain to people: like, ok I don’t want to stay in my country because I don’t feel home there, I feel at home in London; so... that that thing... I have a really strong sense... (Jun, p.2-3)
INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS

Experience

Acting upon the insights into self and other

Awareness of experiencing 'otherness'

Reflection (Analysis of the experience)

AGENCY & VOICE

Tommaso: [Doing process drama makes it] easier... easier to accept.
Erika: To accept... what?
T: To accept... speaking the language, to accept getting used to using the language.

Rebecca: we have... many... many occasions ... for speak, for communicate; but with other teachers usually they only teach grammar. They teach and teach. We don’t have an opportunity for speak. This is very important.
E: and do you like having an opportunity-
R: -yes I like it... I like it a lot. I’ve such a desire to speak Italian! [...] Usually [laughs] we have to always study the grammar because it’s very different of Chinese language, therefore... ehm... we study the grammar and remember new words. There’s no occasion to talk.

Viola: I think that process drama is an art form to feel the culture and the language. That’s it.

Interviewer: in these three workshops has anything changed in your perception of Italian culture or being Chinese?
Rachele: yes ehm before... I don’t talk a lot; actually I don’t talk nothing [laughs]; I understand but... but I don’t, I don’t know how to open my mouth [embarrassed laughter]. So... but through these three workshops, ehm... I talk more... naturally.
Interviewer: What have you learnt on yourself [during the drama]?

Alessia: I found out... that I have a lot of energy inside, that I don’t understand... I mean before –maybe I don’t know myself! Now I’ve known myself anew! I mean, I opened... a bit different, maybe I can be... a real journalist [i.e., the role she played in the drama] ... it makes me learn... discover some new things, which is not only what I studied, learnt... in terms of lexicon, grammar... it’s not! Not just that; I find myself really... something unique!

Interviewer: is this a new discovery for you?

Alessia: exactly, exactly... on myself, as if there were truly a mirror in front of me: [surprised] ‘Oh! That’s what Alessia’s like!’ I mean, you are playing another person but really, it’s the aspects... different [quietly] than yourself

(Alessia, p.5)
In J. P. Lantolf & M. E. Poehner (Eds.),
Sociocultural theory and the Teaching of Second Languages
AGENCY as PLAYFULNESS

Process drama created a conducive environment for students to exercise agency at levels 5-6.

This agency manifested as PLAYFULNESS, i.e., the basic instinct to play with the relationships between symbols and their orthodox meaning.

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<th>PLAYFULNESS</th>
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<tr>
<td>WITH LANGUAGE: manipulating language (puns); paralanguage (gesture, tone)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WITH FORM: manipulating roles, status, tension, time, symbol, weaving irony in the plot</td>
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<tr>
<td>CULTURAL NORMS: manipulating cultural norms to create dramatic irony</td>
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LEVEL (5) Learners volunteer to assist or instruct other learners and create a collaborative agency event.

LEVEL (6) Learners voluntarily enter into debate with one another and create a collaborative agency event.
In the streets of Beijing. An Italian couple is lost. They stop a passer-by to ask for directions. After the local gives directions, the Italian tourist kisses the Chinese local, to thank him. The locals are shocked and outraged at ‘the wrong kiss’. The Italians run away from China out of shame.
THANK YOU!

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REFERENCES


