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The
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A Qualitative Study
on Language Teachers using
Process Drama
in L2 Didactic Contexts

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Abstract

This research focuses on teachers of English and Italian as L2 adopting process drama pedagogy in their teaching practices. Numerous studies have analyzed the positive effects of process drama on students' language learning, particularly with regard to the acquisition of intercultural awareness and communication skills, the improvement of learner autonomy, and the lowering of language anxiety. Yet, there appears to be a paucity of data-based research studies analyzing the effects of process drama on teachers, the challenges encountered during the training and the implementation of such approach in class, as well as a lack of knowledge about the factors that may induce L2 teachers to learn and then apply the process drama pedagogy in their teaching practices. After outlining the definitions and the main features of process drama, an overview of existing studies proving its benefits on students is provided. The theoretical discourse is then funneled into the teacher/artist's perspective, given its centrality in the students' learning outcomes. In order to achieve the primary objective of this basic qualitative research, i.e. to contribute to a greater understanding of this professional figure, data were collected through semi-structured online written interviews. The results confirmed the initial hypothesis according to which there are certain characteristics whereby teachers are more inclined to use a performative approach for language teaching within their didactic routines.

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Introduction

The literature abounds with studies that have evidenced the positive effects of process drama, an improvisational and drama-based approach, on students' language learning. In particular, general consensus has been reached on its value in fostering students' intercultural awareness, (Rothwell, 2014; Piazzoli, 2010), communication competence and motivation (Stinson & Freebody, 2006; Stinson, 2008), learner engagement and autonomy (Piazzoli, 2014), confidence in oral communication (Piazzoli, 2011), to name a few. Nonetheless it emerged that almost no research study has analyzed the effects of process drama on teachers.

Hence, with the present study it was sought to delve into the perspective of language teachers, focusing in particular on their learning and didactic experience with the performative approach under discussion. In particular, this research was aimed at investigating the profile of the teacher/artists who use a performative approach to language teaching. An attempt was made to contribute to the knowledge of these professional figures, by identifying the individual and contextual characteristics, the motivational factors that led these teachers to learn and apply process drama for L2[1] teaching, the challenges faced during the learning and didactic experience with process drama, and the skills acquired that contributed to their teaching efficacy.

Besides providing the key terms and a brief historical reference, Chapter One will situate process drama for L2 learning in the theoretical discourse. Hence, attention will be devoted to the theory of embodied cognition, the neuroscience contribution to the field and the second language learning theories informing this approach. Then, the chapter will zoom into the didactic structure and main features of process drama methodology, providing the description of its main strategies, i.e. the *Teacher in role* and the *Mantle of the expert*. A brief mention to the most recent empirical studies on the didactic application of process drama for language teaching will follow. After outlining the main benefits of process drama methodology on students' language learning, attention will shift to the role of the teacher adopting such didactic approach. Hence, narrowing down the theoretical framework, Chapter One will conclude introducing the figure of the teacher/artist that will be analyzed in Chapter Two.

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[1] For the purpose of this research study, the expression L2 will be adopted as an umbrella term referring to the teaching of English and Italian as both foreign and second languages.

After outlining the teacher/artist definition and the principle functions, Chapter Two will provide a review of empirical studies on process drama teacher education, in particular focusing on both experienced and novice language teachers who learned process drama pedagogy for L2 didactic purposes. The theoretical framework and the literature review provided throughout the first two chapters will prove useful to the research problem statement opening Chapter Three. Besides presenting the research purpose and the guiding questions, Chapter Three will provide the description of the design of the study and the instrument used for data collection, i.e. the written interview structure. The last part, Chapter Four, will be focused on the analysis and discussion of the results, as well as on the limits of this study and its possible future developments.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Drama in second language learning, defining the key terms

The use of drama for language instruction has been known for decades. Over time, a great number of scholars operating in the fields of drama/theatre in education have acknowledged its great pedagogical contribution for learning (Belliveau & Kim, 2013).

In her attempt to conceptualize drama in the second language classroom, McGovern (2017) refers to an extensive and diverse body of literature on drama for second language learning, which dates back to the 1990's. Reference is made to the important contribution of drama to the general L2 development, as well as to the cultural and identity exploration.

Although drama in the language classroom can take several forms, the main objective is to provide learners with a communicative activity, where students, who are the main protagonists, are required to make choices (Davies 1990). To further emphasize the link between drama and language teaching, it is claimed that 'the process of making theatre is immediately related to our concerns as language teachers, because the ability to interact and communicate in efficient ways is, after all, at the heart of language teaching and learning' (Schewe, 2002, in McGovern, 2017, p. 4).

Before venturing into the description of the various forms of drama applied to language teaching and therefore into the definition of process drama, it might be useful to focus the attention on some key terms regulating basic principles that return throughout the study.

When searching for *'drama in language education'*, it happens to encounter both the terms 'drama' and 'theatre'. It appears that these two words are used as synonyms, according to the context of use, but they do have distinct roots. Indeed, 'drama' comes from the ancient Greek word *'dran'*, meaning 'act' or 'deed', whereas 'theatre' derives from the ancient Greek *'theatron'* meaning 'a place of viewing' and *'theasthai'*, ' to observe', from *'théa'*, 'to gaze', as well as *'théama'*, 'spectacle', and *'theatès'*, 'spectator'. To overcome the binary conceptualization and resolve the 'theatre/drama' debate, which originated in England in the 1970's and 1980's, the use of *'performative language teaching'* expression has been recommended (Schewe, 2013, in Fleming, 2016, in Piazzoli, 2018). The introduction of such expression in the context of second language education implies that both 'drama' and 'theatre' are contemplated as aesthetic forms; this allows both drama and theatre to be considered as a continuum. Moreover, behind the use of *'performative language teaching'* expression is the

need to create a common terminology through which an international community of practice can feel represented (Piazzoli, 2018).

In the 90's, the term *'process drama'* appeared on the scene among drama educators in the United States and Australia, although the correspondent *'educational drama'* and *'drama in education'* expressions kept popular in Great Britain (Kao and O'Neill, 1998). The introduction of *'process drama'* was again an attempt to overcome the ancient division between theatre and drama; this expression, in fact, shares both the 'doing mode' of drama (dran) and the 'observing quality' of theatre (theasthai). Indeed, both process drama and theatre are characterized by the common acceptance of an imaginary world that is tacitly agreed by both the actors and the audience (O'Neill, 1995, in Piazzoli, 2018). *'Process drama'* was also used to identify a process-oriented approach to drama, in order to distinguish it from other approaches that were mainly focused on the performance (Kao and O'Neill, 1998).

To conclude, although *'process drama'*, *'educational drama'*, *'drama in education'* and *'performative language teaching'* might all occur when dealing with artistic forms applied to language teaching contexts, in the present study the term *'process drama'* will be preferably used to ensure uniformity and clarity to the reader.

Since the framing keywords have been determined, the next paragraph will be devoted to the brief historical overview and to the main definitions of process drama, according to the most important contributions in literature.

1.1 Process drama from a historical perspective

Process drama is an improvisational, drama-based approach to teaching and learning that established in the 1970's in England. It can further be defined as a genre of applied theatre, where the participants together with the facilitator are involved in the development of a dramatic world (Bowell and Heap 2001, in Piazzoli 2012). Indeed, through the exploration of this dramatic world, both teacher and learners can immerse themselves in fictional roles and different situations. This guarantees language learners chances to improve their language skills as well as to strengthen their abilities to understand themselves in the target language (Liu, 2002).

The origins of process drama date back to the '50s and '60, when the British Peter Slade and Brian Way started promoting theatrical techniques in primary schools, in order to favor the development of children's creativity and maximize their individual potential (Piazzoli, 2011, p. 440). They advocated the developmental aspects of drama, as they believed that through drama activities, a better individual awareness and self-expression, as well as a boost in creativity could be achieved.

Later, in the 70's, through the collaboration of the British drama educator Dorothy Heathcote and the theatre director Gavin Bolton, attention was shifted from drama for personal development to drama for learning process. In particular, they committed to understand how specific subject matter insights, language development and the search for knowledge could be facilitated by employing specific drama activities in the classroom. Their efforts to understand how drama activities could be crafted and structured in classroom to foster language learning led drama to be endorsed both as an educational tool and as a separate subject in the curriculum (Kao & O'Neill, 1998, p.9). At that time, their approach was known as 'drama in education' or 'educational drama', for the term 'process drama' will appear only in the 90's.

In the 1980's and 90's, with the establishment of the theories of communicative approach to learning of foreign and second language, supporters of educational drama together with professionals and specialists in foreign language teaching committed themselves to bridging the gap between their respective disciplines, i.e. theatre and language teaching, (Schewe, 2013, p.8).

As a matter of fact, it was the publication of the first empirical research study, 'Words into Worlds', by Shin-Mei Kao and Cecily O'Neill in 1998, an empirical study conducted at the

University of Taiwan with a group of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students, that marked the very first step towards an integrated additional language- process drama approach. The researchers defined process drama 'as a liberating approach, consistent with the communicative principles of language teaching' (Piazzoli, 2012, p. 29).

Although the present study is not aimed at delving into the description of all the different forms of drama for foreign and second language teaching, it is possible to adventure into process drama definition by referring to some classifications that have been proposed by field scholars. Scholars have used different criteria to classify drama activities. Schewe (2013), for example, contributed to the definition of process drama by adopting a temporal criterion, namely differentiating between *large-scale* and *small-scale forms* of drama-based teaching and learning. According to the author, the *large-scale forms* comprise product-oriented projects such as the staging of a play in a foreign language and the 'Theatre in Education'-Projects. These require an extended classroom activity, stretching over several weeks or months.

On the other hand, the *small-scale forms* are those process-oriented performative activities that unfold in a shorter time (3 to 5 classes) and are not devoted to the realization of a staged performance but rather focus on the meaningful experience of its participants. As the name itself suggests, process drama falls into this last category.

Kao & O'Neill (1998) categorized drama activities by adopting other criteria, i.e. by considering the teaching objective, the organization, the context, the student roles as well as the teacher function. Their analysis, as it is summarized in Table 1, was inspired by the *continuum of classroom interaction* proposed by Kramsch (1985) which distinguished between teacher-centered and student-centered methodologies. They produced a new continuum ranging from the *controlled communication language exercises*, such as scripted role-plays, to the *open communication language exercises* typical of process drama (Kao & O'Neill, 1998, in Piazzoli, 2011).

Table 1 - *Adapted from Kao & O'Neill Continuum of Drama Approaches (1998, p. 16)*

	Drama approaches
	Controlled Communication *Open Communication*

It continues in the following page

Key aspects	Controlled communication	Open communication
Objectives	Accuracy Practice Confidence	Fluency Authenticity Confidence Challenge New classroom relation
Organization	Pair work Small groups Rehearsal	Usually begins with large group Pair work and small groups as work continues
Context	Simple Naturalistic Teacher-selected	Launched by teacher in role Developed with students' input
Roles	Individual Teacher-determined Fixed attitudes	Generalized at first Becoming individualized at students' own choice later
Decisions	None	Negotiated by students
Tension	To produce accuracy of language and vocabulary	Arising from the dramatic situation and the intentions of the roles
Teacher Functions	To set up exercises To provide resource To be evaluator	In role As model To support To provide resource To challenges

If on the one hand process drama differentiates from the product-oriented activities where students rehearse and perform a scripted play for an audience, as previously mentioned by Schewe, on the other hand it also differs from those activities that explicitly involve role-play games and improvisations in L2 classrooms. In fact, Kao and O'Neill (1998) claim that closed communication activities such as *language games*, *dramatized stories* and *scripted role-plays*, besides being mainly teacher-centered, are mostly focused on language accuracy in performance rather than on language fluency in communication.

To support their thesis, the researchers mention how, for example, L2 course books for spoken skills do often include scripted role-plays in order to help students to reach certain linguistic goals with precise sentence patterns. Through the constant practice of pre-scripted dialogues, for instance between a post office clerk and a customer while exchanging information for a particular need, students should internalize the correct linguistic patterns. Teachers who adopt these types of exercises should be aware that although the students' repeated rehearsal and their simple interactions might give the illusion of a fluent and accurate language production, it is their retention and learning transfer that may be discouraging, due to the lack of self-generated communication (Kao & O'Neill, 1998).

As far as *improvisation* is concerned, Paul (2015) in McGovern (2017) encourages teachers to always rely on a large repertoire of games, especially on those deriving from Boal (1992) and Spolin (1986) which draw on the actors' training tradition and were later adapted for the L2 classroom. In fact, both communicative approach and improvisational theatre techniques do share similar goals (McGovern, 2017). Nonetheless, process drama overcomes these 'short-term, teacher-dominated drama exercises, by extending the drama over time and building it up from the ideas, negotiations, and responses of all the participants, in order to foster social, intellectual and linguistic development' (Kao & O'Neill 1998, in Stinson 2006). As a matter of fact, by working within a significant context with relevant as well as complex roles, students may feel the urgency to 'do things with words' and therefore to use the language purposefully. It is this need that should promote their language acquisition (Kao & O' Neill, 1998).

Besides the product and process dichotomy which outlines process drama as an extended dramatic exploration that differs from theatre games, improvisation and script representation, another important difference lies in its structure. Starting with a pre-text, not with a predetermined script, process drama always unfolds through a sequence of intertwined episodes and ends with a final reflection phase. All the participants, i.e. students and teacher, simultaneously become actors, directors and spectators (O'Neill, 1995, in Piazzoli, 2014).

By situating process drama on a continuum of dramatic approaches, this paragraph was intended to gradually guide the reader towards a broaden understanding of process drama conceptual framework. In order to further define the underlying theoretical foundation, the following section will be devoted to the definition of process drama as an embodied approach.

1.2 Process drama as an embodied approach in second language education

The literature review has highlighted the lack of a distinct and clear-cut definition of process drama. Indeed, process drama itself turns out to be a multi-faceted subject and, when it is applied to second and foreign language learning/teaching contexts, assumes even further nuances. Since the present study revolves on process drama for language teaching, it was deemed appropriate to mainly focus on the theories advanced by field experts operating in second and foreign language education.

As a matter of fact, Piazzoli (2018) contributes to broadening the discourse by focusing on process drama as an *embodied approach* in second language education.

To this end, she defines embodiment as:

> A way of constructing knowledge through direct engagement in bodily experiences, "inhabiting one's body through a felt sense of being-in-the-world" (Freiler, 2008, p.40). Accordingly, performative language learning is an embodied experience based on the simplex premise 'we feel, therefore we learn', as put forth by educational neuroscientist Immordino-Yang and Damasio (2016, p. 27, in Piazzoli, 2018, p. 322)

Piazzoli (2018), by borrowing the 'simplexity' paradigm from the educational theory, i.e. by actively committing to translate a complex concept without underestimating its depth, defines embodiment in education as a learning experience which is 'grounded in *mind*, *senses*, *body*, *imagination*, *reflection* and *social sphere*' (Piazzoli, 2018, p. 25).

To further frame the *embodiment in education* theory, in Piazzoli (2018), particular attention is devoted to the first influential authors, such as for example John Dewey (1859-1952), who elaborated the notion of *body* and *mind* as interconnected. In particular, he developed the concept of "senses as avenues of knowledge", shifting the perspective of knowledge as a product exclusively of cognition to knowledge as a result of embodiment.

By taking a temporal leap, it is possible to notice how Dewey's original notion has been confirmed by contemporary educational neuroscientists, Damasio and Immordino-Yang (2016), who replaced the Cartesian principle 'cogito ergo sum' with the new formula "we feel therefore we learn" (Immordino-Yang, 2016, p. 27, in Piazzoli, 2018).

Hence, from an embodied standpoint, learning is not to be intended only on a cognitive level but also through perception, senses and emotions, with reflection as the foundation of the whole experience (Varela, Thompson, Rosch, 1991, in Piazzoli, 2018, p. 26). For the authors,

'reflection' is a form of experience itself which is characterized by the encounter of body and mind. As a matter of fact, reflection is part of all the three main phases of process drama, i.e. during the initial phase, the experiential phase and the reflexive phase. Through reflection, students are encouraged to think about the contents, the linguistic expressions and most importantly the emotions felt during their role interpretation within the dramatic activity.

This type of reflection corresponds to a metacognition process, which is technically defined as *metaxis, i.e.* the ability to reflect on 'being the actor and the spectator at the same time'. This reflecting process allows students to voice their thoughts and therefore 'through their voice they embody cognition' (Morosin, 2018, p. 59).

On the above basis, one might notice how process drama, as a performative approach for language learning, shares several elements that are inherent in embodied learning. Thus, in considering the implications of process drama as an embodied approach for language teachers, the neuroscience contribution is worth mentioning.

From what has been exposed so far, it can be inferred that process drama for language education entails the body to function as a learning system, triggering a multisensory learning experience. As a matter of fact, according to neuroscientists, embodied learning is responsible for the activation of *non-verbal communication* that improves linguistic ability as a result of the combination of visual, auditory and kinesthetic information. Besides, as above mentioned, it triggers *reflection* and *metacognition* that require language to be expressed. The result is a multisensory discovery and exploration of meaning. (Morosin, 2018, p. 58).

Moreover, from a neuroscience standpoint, during performative learning activities the body engagement leads to the activation of brain regions that are dedicated to movement, which are connected both to language processing and to emotions. The reason lies on the fact that when the movement is intended to express meaning and emotions, such as during a performance or dance to express a particular feeling, that sequence of actions acquires an additional meaning (Morosin, 2018, p. 102). Hence, by adopting a process drama approach to language teaching, learners are offered the chance to use their body as a means of expression.

Another important aspect of process drama as an embodied learning experience is *imagination*. To this end, worth mentioning is the Vygotskyan 'what if' feature of drama, i.e. the imaginative domain. Imagination enables participants to integrate elements belonging to reality into the imaginative sphere, hence triggering a drive for action and embodiment that will ultimately culminate in an impulse for language (Vygotsky 1930/2004, in Piazzoli, 2018, p. 27).

Imagination contributes to the interrelation of both affective and cognitive realms, fostering an 'emotional experience'. Students involved in process drama activities are prompted to feel and then express emotions through different forms and means. This emotional experience, in turn, impacts on individual learning but also on student social development (Davis, 2015, p. 64) Furthermore, the advantage of engaging in lifelike situations during process drama activities lies on the fact that participants are free to feel and express their emotions and ideas, but are protected from the real-life consequences (Davies, 2015).

The capacity to live an emotional experience, a "felt-like experience" has been ascribed to the Vygotskyan notion of *perezhivanie*2 which, in turn, draws on Stanislavski's concept of 'creative process of experiencing' (Piazzoli, 2018, p. 27).

In brief, as clearly remarked in Morosin (2018), learners engaged in process drama activities for language learning are given the chance to construct knowledge through an embodied experience that integrates body, mind, senses, emotions and imagination. A performative approach to language teaching enables students to build knowledge thanks to a multi-sensory and embodied learning experience which leads students to focus on linguistic, visual and auditory inputs but also on feeling emotions and exploring sensations. Student interaction, sustained by both the real and fictional surrounding worlds, as well as their embodied emotional experience are all part and parcel of their cognitive process.

To conclude, adopting a process drama embodied approach to L2 teaching allows the language to emerge spontaneously, for it is activated by movement, body and imagination. 'In drama we let the body drive and use language to express what the body is communicating. Language is thus guided by the purpose of an action' (Piazzoli, 2018, p. 95).

To add to the current contextualization of process drama for language teaching contexts, the next paragraph will address the second-language learning theories supporting the performative approach under discussion.

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2 *Perezhivanie* is a Russian term that does not hold a correspondent English translation (Ferholt, 2015, in Davis, 2015, p. 64). This term, which refers to a concept that is fundamental for the understanding of learning and meaning making, concerns the child's emotional experience, how he/she "becomes aware of, interprets and emotionally relates to a certain event" (Vygotsky, 1934/1944, p .341, in Davis, 2015, p. 64).

1.3. Process drama grounded in second language learning theories

To ground process drama in its theoretical basis, worth mentioning is the *Strategic Interaction theory* (Di Pietro, 1987, in Liu, 2002), according to which language learning is both a personal and social behavior. This theory implicates the ability of language to involve students in new worlds, where learners engage in new roles and situations that are characterized by dynamic tension and unexpectedness. In order to achieve a certain goal, a strategic type of language is acquired by students, who are encouraged to interact in groups within a specific context. Hence, learners use the target language purposefully and skillfully in order to find a certain resolution to the real-life situations in which they are immersed. All these features, which lie at the core of the Strategic Interaction theory, do pertain to process drama as well. The only difference lies in the fact that process drama focuses even more on improvisation, student involvement and student autonomy, with the teacher holding specific functions (Liu, 2002, p. 5).

To further contextualize the conceptual frame underlying process drama for additional language teaching and therefore contribute to the understanding of its rationale, a quick mention to the main second and foreign language teaching approaches is deemed useful. To this end, the classification of language acquisition theories proposed by Goh and Silver (2006) mentioned in Stinson and Winston (2011) will follow.

The *Focus on FormS* approach, which stems from the *behaviorist theory* of language acquisition and remained popular until the 1960s, is characterized by teaching practices that are mainly teacher-centered and based on imitation, as the main purpose is promoting imitation and habit formation to foster accuracy rather than focus on the language learning process. Hence, technically, through explicit grammar rules and the memorization of short dialogues, the focus of the behaviorist approach is mainly on linguistic items to be mastered almost at a native-speaker level, with little emphasis on communicative language. Thus, as pointed out by O'Toole et al. (2009), drama activities informed by the behaviorist approach are aimed at demonstrating the correct use of language.

Nonetheless, following on the *innatist theories* advanced by Chomsky (1981), according to which language learning is possible thanks to an inborn mental ability and a universal grammar, and on Krashen (1982) who defined the language acquisition as a subconscious process that cannot be directly controlled by either the student or the teacher, the new *Focus on Meaning* approach appears on the scene (Liu, 2002). According to such approach, since first and second

language learning both happen unintentionally and implicitly (Krashen, 1982), additional language learning can be guaranteed by restoring similar conditions for first language acquisition, i.e. through a full exposure to the target language and through communicative-based lessons that are mainly focused on fluency rather than on accuracy (Liu, 2002).

As far as drama activities for immersion are concerned, worth mentioning is the fact that every drama activity could, in theory, serve this purpose, for 'drama provides live models of language in naturalistic contexts' (O'Toole et al., 2009, p .65). Yet, an exclusive use of the target language, to comply with the immersion requirements, implies that the language must be adjusted to the student language proficiency. This can therefore limit the conversation topics and the dramatic contexts to be employed (O'Toole et al., 2009, p .65).

At this point, it can be inferred that both the aforementioned approaches, i.e. the Focus on Forms and the Focus on Meaning, disclose some drawbacks. On the one hand, with the former, no attention is given to student learning styles and preferences. Besides, due to the explicit grammar and vocabulary teaching, which can result in boring lessons, a lack of attention and motivation from students is likely to occur (Liu, 2002).

On the other hand, with the latter, despite the extended language immersion, students' language production skills fail to reach a desired level of accuracy, due to an unsatisfactory grammatical competence (Liu, 2002).

To compensate for the shortcomings of the above-mentioned approaches, the *Focus on Form*, or *Focus on meaningful form* approach (Liu, 2002) appears on the scene. It is inspired by the *social interaction theory* (Long, 1996, in Piazzoli, 2011) according to which, as the name itself suggests, social interactions are considered the core of language learning. For this reason, the *interactionist theory* has often been linked to the *Communicative Language Teaching Approach* (Goh and Silver 2006, p. 58, in Stinson and Winston, 2011). These student-centered approaches imply that attention is given to contextualized linguistic elements, as they randomly appear in class. In fact, for this reason, 'the study of the form is based on meaningful contexts rather than a predetermined and decontextualized linguistic form' (Liu, 2002, p 3). Grammar and vocabulary choices are made in the act of speaking and result therefore filtered by culture, as an intrinsic element of language (Piazzoli, 2011). Besides, another important element, which is taken into consideration by advocates of this third approach, is the *affective filter hypothesis* (Krashen, 1981), according to which unlike the study of other subjects, learning a language is different as it requires public practice. This implies that there is an emotional sphere that may

promote or hamper the language acquisition process and therefore it must be taken into account (Stinson and Winston, 2011). Among the drama activities that are used in this approach it is possible to find structured and unstructured improvisations, and process drama (O'Toole et al., 2009).

Even this third approach does not seem to be free from some critical factors. If, on the one hand, it is claimed that the main purpose of the communicative approach is to provide an authentic context that can trigger a spontaneous communication in the target language through the use of authentic materials (Piazzoli, 2011), yet, in practice, it seems that students' desire to communicate might be discouraged by the short-term and exercise-based nature of the communicative activities which often times remain teacher-oriented, thus undermining the authenticity of communication (Liu, 2002). As a matter of fact, studies on learner participation during language activities have demonstrated that language classrooms are often teacher-controlled environment to the point that the teacher talking time far outweighs that of the students (Kao and O'Neill, 1998, p.41, in O'Toole et al., 2009). To this end, even Piazzoli (2010) points out that the activities proposed by additional language teachers are still reminiscently influenced by the task-based and fragmented scripts of the communicative approach that do not uphold students' critical thinking. Furthermore, communicative tasks tend to privilege spontaneous language neglecting purposeful language. As a result, the language interaction that occurs without purpose is likely to become 'sterile' (Scarino and Liddicoat, 2009, p.38 in Piazzoli, 2010, p. 386).

Through the contribution of latest research studies, it has been evidenced that process drama pedagogy for language teaching can reduce the gap between the teacher-controlled and the authentic communication environment, triggering a real desire to communicate in the target language, without neglecting students' language fluency and engagement (Piazzoli, 2011).

Indeed, on the one hand process drama incorporates communicative activities drawing from the *Focus on form* tradition and, on the other hand, promotes reflection on the linguistic expressions and on the whole experience, as required by the *Focus on meaning* approach. Hence, process drama perfectly fulfills both the language accuracy requirement of the Focus on Form tradition and the language fluency need of the Focus on Meaning approach (Liu, 2002).

To promote a further understanding of such performative approach, the next paragraph will provide a close insight into the didactic structure of process drama for second language learning.

1.4. A look into the didactic structure of process drama

When considering the option of carrying out a process drama for language teaching, some variables, which may considerably impact on the whole learning and didactic experience, should be evaluated. In particular, during the *initial phase* of process drama, choices need to be made about the materials to outline a specific context, the precise learning objective that needs to be achieved within a certain time frame, the students' age and their competence in the target language (Liu, 2002).

As far as the learning material is concerned, the teacher can either draw on the wide range of process drama pre-existing teaching units, adapting them to the specific learning needs, or create new ones by inventing a sort of script. In this last option, it is important to highlight that the canvas prepared by the teacher should resemble a sort of screenplay whose lines are replaced by direct instructions that will serve the teacher to guide students through the space. As a matter of fact, the script cannot be established a priori, as it has to emerge in action through the students' and teacher's improvisation. Among the other essential features of the screenplay is the theme, the characters and the dramatic strategies that are chosen to create, explore and also edit the story. In fact, the dramatic strategies should unfold throughout all the episodes that represent the narrative units of the plot (Piazzoli, 2011).

Despite process drama has been previously defined as a student-centered and open communication approach, where students are let free to negotiate their decisions, it can be commonly inferred that it follows a quite precise and rigorous structure. In fact, it seems that the structure of process drama provides a sort of anchor for the teacher while honing his/her risk-taking ability that is essential to cope with all the unpredictable outcomes that process drama can generate. Moreover, worth reminding is that process drama is not about the staging of a play for an audience but rather about the process, i.e. the reflection on the experience and the linguistic expression used to carry out the work. For this reason, the plot resolution is not included within the story provided by the teacher, as it will be developed by the learners or intentionally left suspended, for an open ending is possible too (Liu, 2002).

The very first step the language teacher who wants to experiment process drama has to undertake is the choice of a *pre-text* that suits a precise context. The choice of the context, in turn, can range from realistic themes to aspirational and imaginary ones and must take into account students' age, their language proficiency, as well as their sociocultural background

(Liu, 2002). It can be noticed how the pre-text plays a pivotal role in the unfolding of the whole process drama. Indeed, it represents the fil rouge that unites all the narrative units throughout the plot, besides sustaining students' motivation. During the choice of the pre-text, the teacher should verify it can trigger open questions, for students will be soon required to observe or read the pre-text in order to formulate appropriate questions about it (Piazzoli, 2011).

Worth mentioning is that the pre-text should not be confused with a stimulus. A stimulus is aimed at introducing a topic such as for example a picture of a living room to introduce the language for the house description and is then ignored. On the other hand, the pre-text introduces the theme and brings inspiration that lasts throughout the whole experience (Piazzoli, 2018). Indeed, the pre-text serves to activate the narrative framework well before it actually takes form. It serves the purpose of starting the action, setting the location and the overall atmosphere, introducing the roles and providing the clue that allows to predict the sequence of actions in advance (Liu, 2002). So, in a nutshell, the pre-text, besides corresponding to the didactic structure, functions as a meaningful, linguistic and emotional starting point for the students to develop the dramatic world (O'Neill 1995, in Liu, 2002).

The structure connecting all the episodes unfolds from the pre-text through three main phases, namely the *initiation*, the *experiential* and the *reflective* phases (O' Toole and Dunn, 2015, in Piazzoli, 2018). Besides the choice of the pre-text, during the *initial phase*, the teacher, as a guide, leads on to the co-creation of roles among students. By engaging in group works and exploring the dramatic world that was introduced with the aid of the pre-text, students spontaneously construct their roles together 'as a result of meaning negotiation and dramatic creativity' (Liu, 2002, p. 10). As a matter of fact, role assignment is not the teacher's responsibility, is rather the outcome of both the linguistic and non-linguistic speculation of students who try to approach the fictional world. Their meaning negotiation is the gateway to their identity construction within the dramatic framework and the teacher, rather than being an external mediator, undertakes a role too, through which he/she partakes in the unfolding of the dramatic action together with the students. It is important to highlight that despite students' great autonomy in the role-creating process, the teacher already holds a general intuition of the possible characters based on the students' background. Her/his ability is, in fact, to carefully lead students to experiment roles that transcend their pre-existing classroom roles and rather venture into those ones that allow students to argue, solve problems, ask questions, in a nutshell to cover the broadest range of language functions (Kao & O'Neill, 1998).

The second phase, the *experiential one,* is the crucial part of process drama. It is the moment in which the action is moved forward by all the participants in their roles. Even during this central phase, *tension*, which is the essential element underlying the entire process drama, proves to be fundamental. Tension originates from the pre-text and then unfolds throughout the dramatic process. Liu (2002, p. 12) defines tension as 'the result between what is known and what is unknown, between what is anticipated and what actually happens'. It is this driving force that prompts the students to make questions and negotiate meaning in order to fill in the knowledge gap provided by the pre-text. As the drama proceeds during the learning process, students are encouraged to develop solutions, exchange ideas, and deal with time pressure (Liu, 2002). Hence, tension is responsible for students' linguistic output but also for students' compensatory strategies to overcome their language shortages. As a matter of fact, during an embodied approach to language learning, students might rely on *non-verbal communication* to compensate for their lack of linguistic expressions, drawing on their creative thoughts and resources. Body language turns out to be extremely helpful also with students at low-intermediate language competence, for it prevents the stop of the dramatic tension or the intervention of the teacher for his/her linguistic support. Accordingly, through non-verbal communication strategies such as 'freeze frame' or 'frozen picture'[3], students can recreate an intended thought. On the teacher's standpoint, when such compensatory strategies are enacted by students, he/she is offered the chance to notice all the linguistic forms that students do not master yet but need in order to improve their linguistic communicative competence (Liu, 2002). Another strategy that can help students to overcome their lack of language knowledge is *questioning*. Indeed, during process drama students are constantly given the chance to interact and ask questions not only to fix their language register but also to obtain information, fill in their knowledge gap, and make decisions as for the necessary steps to undertake in order to proceed with the dramatic world. Unlike questions asked by the teacher in traditional language classrooms, whose answers are often already known, questions during process drama function differently. Indeed, they are not a-priori but rather unpredictable questions for the teacher, who is '[…] dependent on students' answers in order to move the drama forward' (Kao & O'Neill, 1998, p.31).

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[3] *Freeze frame*, also called *frozen picture*, is a theatrical technique which allows students to use the body as a means of expression. By using the body on different levels, learners can show a scene, portray an image or spell words to form sentences.

From the above mentioned, it is possible to understand how the experiential phase offers students the chance to experience the language in context. In fact, students in roles are guided by the teacher in role and all together contribute to the co-construction of the story. The unfolding of the dramatic world and therefore the language learning experience is made possible by the collaboration of all its participants; on the one hand, the students' contribution through improvisation and meaning negotiation and, on the other hand, the teacher guidance through the dramatic strategies contained in the pre-text directions. In fact, there are almost eighty drama strategies, also called dramatic conventions, which can be used during process drama. Each of them serves a specific purpose, such as promote distance or empathy (Piazzoli, 2012). Although examining the process drama conventions and its functioning is not the purpose of this study, a brief outline of the *teacher in role*, the most crucial strategy of the experiential phase of process drama will be later discussed.

The present paragraph concludes with the description of the *reflection phase*, the final and quintessential moment of process drama experience. As a matter of fact, it has been previously claimed that process drama is the reflection on the experience and on the linguistic expression used in the fictional world. Indeed, in this final phase it is possible to discern three interconnected moments of reflection, namely a reflection on the dramatic experience, a group discussion and a linguistic overview (Piazzoli, 2011).

Through *reflection on the dramatic experience*, students are given the chance to think on their roles within the dramatic story, i.e. to reflect on their feelings and on their reactions to the challenges during the learning experience. This moment of reflection is accompanied by a *group discussion* during which the salient moments of the entire dramatic experience are reviewed together in order to analyze them from an intercultural perspective (Piazzoli, 2011). Last, during the *linguistic reflection* moment, grammar, vocabulary and the linguistic structures that inductively emerged during the process drama are reviewed and analyzed together. Language reflection is extremely important and needs to be skillfully and positively handled by the teacher in order to focus on students' language achievements without emphasizing too much on the evaluative aspects of their linguistic performance, as this may discourage the class in the future process drama involvement (Kao & O'Neill, 1998).

Although teacher's learning feedback is fundamental, process drama offers students the chance to analyze their own learning experience through:

self-reflecting, peer-commenting, and discovering what happens in learning that might be unknown to the learner in the process. Although gaining experiences of learning through process drama is important, deeper learning occurs only when such experiences are critically examined and reflected (Liu, 2002, p. 14)

Before proceeding with the exploration of the empirical studies of process drama didactic application in L2 contexts, a mention to the most crucial strategies that are used to unfold process drama activities, i.e. *teacher in role* and *mantle of the expert,* will be discussed in the next paragraph.

1.4.1 Everyone interprets a role: Teacher in Role and Mantle of the Expert

As above anticipated, *Teacher in role* is the hallmark of process drama. Field experts define teacher in role a learning strategy and a teaching principle. Such ground-breaking pedagogical strategy was invented by Dorothy Heathcote (1973), who systematically elaborated it.

As far as its connotation of didactic principle is concerned, *Teacher in role* allows for the traditional power relationship in the classroom to be subverted. Indeed, the teacher's function, within the pedagogical context, is completely different from that of traditional learning settings. The student-teacher hierarchy is reversed as there occurs a 'status change' (Piazzoli, 2014, p. 31). As a matter of fact, the teacher steps out of his/her traditional role in order to interpret a new one. Besides, taking on a role whose status is lower than that of the students (e.g. the role of a patient with students enacting the roles of doctors) is a worth option, for it can trigger interesting dynamics. It is important to highlight that the purpose of the *Teacher in role* is not for the teacher to display acting skills nor to engage in the process drama experience on the same level as the students, for that would completely compromise the educational characteristics of such strategy (Kao and O'Neill, 1998). The educational aim is instead that of 'taking on a role whose attitude, status and purpose within the drama provoke the students' reactions' (Piazzoli, 2018, p. 171).

In practice, with reference to the process drama didactic structure seen above, the teacher may choose an object to represent his/her role, always taking into consideration the initial pre-text. Through that object, the teacher can guide students in the dramatic context and share important information in order to trigger a dramatic tension. All these actions are pedagogically intended to challenge students' reasoning and prompt their narrative creation. Indeed, 'students are invited not only to enter the dramatic world but to transform it; not merely to take on roles but to create and transcend them' (Kao and O'Neill, 1998, p. 27).

The detailed explanation of *Teacher in role* provided by Piazzoli (2018) is deemed essential to the general comprehension of such crucial aspect of process drama. In particular, she defines the pre- and-post teacher-in-role phases within process drama in L2 teaching contexts.

As for the *pre-teacher in role phase*, Piazzoli (2018) suggests that teachers who are new to such learning strategy preliminarily prepare students on the functioning of teacher in role not to surprise them with an uncommon conduct from their teacher. Besides, before undertaking the role, the teacher should train the students to improvise within the dramatic context. To do so,

the teacher is recommended to provide learners with key words that will be helpful in the subsequent phases of process drama and discuss how to best formulate the questions that will be addressed by the students in role to the teacher in role, and therefore prepare students' language register for the interaction with the teacher in role. This kind of teacher scaffolding allows students to be introduced into the 'languaging process' (Swain, 2006, in Piazzoli, 2018, p. 171), according to which students discuss in the target language about the most appropriate linguistic expressions to be used in the drama (Piazzoli, 2018). On a theoretical level, learning to master a new language register offers students the chance to experiment with 'authentic registers of communication' (Van Lier, 1996, in Piazzoli, 2014) which are not commonly practiced in traditional foreign/second language classrooms.

After the *pre-teacher in role*, comes the actual *teacher-in-role phase* that corresponds to the proper taking on role by the teacher who leaves her/his normal behavior and language behind to play her/his new role through improvisation. With regard to this phase, Piazzoli (2018) reminds that the teacher, while being on the role, should not stop the conversation flow to check for students' mistakes or provide them with missing vocabulary. However, the teacher should be able to notice and supervise the linguistic expressions emerging from the students, as they will be reviewed and analyzed during the post-teacher-in-role phase (Piazzoli, 2018, p. 172).

In the last phase, *the post-teacher in role,* the teacher, by stepping out of the role, should verify students' general comprehension of what came out from the improvisation. This time for clarification is fundamental as students need to feel at ease within the unfolding of the dramatic narrative. However, since process drama is always a student-centered approach, it is the classroom that, through a collaborative negotiation, will be responsible for the reconstruction of what was being said during the improvisation. To coordinate students' discussion is the teacher's efforts. To this end, the teacher can rely on an important strategy that has been mentioned in the previous chapter, when discussing about process drama experiential phase, i.e. *questioning*. Making questions is an important tool that serves students but teachers too. As a matter of fact, questions posed by the teacher contribute to

> shape the story, unveil the details, sequence the scenes, create a beneficial linguistic environment to elicit student output and promote meaning negotiation in the target language (Kao, Carkin, and Hsu 2011, p. 489, in Piazzoli, 2018, p. 173).

Furthermore, it is important to mention that questions are fundamental to guarantee a productive dramatic tension that in turn triggers students' active participation. Besides, considering that questions will be followed by students' answers, the teacher will have to skillfully react on their unpredictable responses, in order to maintain the dramatic tension and the play context alive (Piazzoli, 2018).

There exists another strategy through which the student/teacher interaction order can be inverted, i.e. *The mantle of the expert* created by Heathcote and Bolton. According to this strategy, students are required to interpret the role of experts in order to fulfil a task in the drama. For example, they can take on the role of journalists or scientists who have to solve a tricky situation, by completing a project within the drama. Through this strategy, students are encouraged to use the language spontaneously and to actively construct knowledge without being passively instructed (Piazzoli, 2014).

Indeed, both the *Teacher in role* and the *Mantle of the expert* are theoretically grounded in constructivist learning theories. In fact, according to such strategies, cognition is considered a process that transcends the individual learner but develops in the learning environment and within the participant learning activities (Barab and Squire 2004, in Piazzoli 2012). The strategies under discussion also conform to the Vygotskyan concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD[4]), according to which learners who are involved in symbolic play and impersonate another character are given the chance to 'reach a developmental level above their actual level' (Piazzoli, 2014, p. 32). Hence, through the *Teacher in role* and *Mantle of the expert*, foreign and second language teachers are afforded the chance to actively operate within students' zone of proximal development to be able to work on students' language and provide them with the necessary scaffolding (Piazzoli, 2014). Moreover, students in role are allowed to experiment and take risks with their emerging vocabulary and language phraseology in a protected environment, for interpreting a role 'protects the student's self-esteem by de-personalizing a process which is, in reality, an extremely personal and sensitive part of a child's self-perception' (Clipson-Boyles, 1998, p. 56 in Stinson and Freebody, 2006, p.29).

From the above main distinctive features, the next paragraph moves on with an overview of the most significant research studies on the didactic application of process drama in L2 contexts.

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[4] ZPD, i.e. the zone of proximal development, is the concept elaborated by Vygotsky (1978, p. 86) according to which, in order to develop children's learning, educators should intervene in the space between what learners can already do autonomously and what could they be able to accomplish with a more experienced guidance. By operating in this zone, educators have the chance to recognize and improve children's learning.

1.5 Process drama didactic application in second language learning contexts

The literature holds numerous empirical studies attesting the benefits of process drama on students' foreign and second language learning. These studies can be categorized by taking into account different aspects, e.g. students' origin, their language proficiency, the language being learned, their age, whether the target language corresponds to the medium of instruction of their school, the process drama experience held by the teachers, the research methodology adopted by the researcher, to name a few.

The criterion here chosen is the language didactic educational aim pursued by the teacher that often times corresponds to the researcher5. It will be possible to notice that although the following research studies are grouped according to their initial precise research objective, their ultimate findings may disclose some thematic connections with other research studies, whose initial research objective was targeted towards other fields of investigation.

Nonetheless, the present study is not aimed at thoroughly mapping the worldwide research literature on process drama for L2/FL education6. However, a review of the most authoritative empirical studies highlighting the benefits of process drama on students' additional language learning is deemed important as it proved to be necessary to identify the research gap in which this study is inserted.

To this end, the numerous pioneering research studies from South-East Asia contribute to shed light onto how process drama practices can provide support to second language learning.

As a matter of fact, among those studies that have revealed process drama potential to promote students' motivation to develop *communicative competence* in the target language, worth mentioning is the multiple-site case study *Drama and Oral Language (DOL) project*, by Stinson and Freebody (2006). The project involved 140 sixteen-years-old Normal Technical students i.e. 'the lowest ranked stream of the Singaporean education system' (Stinson and Freebody, 2006, p. 28), from four schools in Singapore, in a series of 10-one-hour English as a second language process drama lessons. According to the statistical analysis of pre and post intervention tests, to which students were subjected, those learners who were part of the process drama intervention group showed a significant English language oral communication improvement, whereas learners of the comparison group, who instead took part in regular

5 Empirical studies on process drama for language education are mainly action researches.
6 For a more thorough literature review, the reader is advised to consult Belliveau and Kim (2014).

English classes, did not evidence any language change. In addition, improvements on students' motivation and self-confidence towards the oral communication in the target language as well as a significant power change from teacher to students have been perceived by the participants of the project (Stinson and Freebody, 2006).

Another significant research study about the effects of process drama on students' language learning improvement has been conducted by Kao, Carkin and Hsu (2011). Discourse analysis has been used to investigate the effectiveness of different types of questions addressed by L2 teachers in and out of role during process drama sessions with 30 Taiwanese college students of English language, at an intermediate proficiency level (Stinson and Winston, 2011). According to the study findings, among the different questioning patterns used by the teacher during the process drama (e.g. questions intended for instruction, communication, checking understanding, and promoting inquiry) informing questions were the most employed ones. Precisely, informing questions were raised to obtain new information and content from the students in order to construct the drama scenes (Kao et al, 2011). Indeed, 'the unknown elements in drama empowered the teachers to raise inform questions, which are otherwise rarely found in the speech of regular EFL teachers […]' (Weng, 2009, Lin, 2011 in Kao et al. 2011, p. 509). Through the above-mentioned result, evidence was given to the potential of process drama to offer a wide range of questioning patterns within language classrooms in order to trigger a need for communication in real social contexts (Kao et al., 2011, p. 503).

Besides research studies on process drama contribution to students' oral competence, worth mentioning are also those aimed at discovering the impact of process drama pedagogy on improving students' *intercultural awareness* (Rothwell, 2011, Piazzoli, 2010, Donnery 2014). Indeed, the action research project of Rothwell (2011) investigated how through the exploration of the body communicative function among 12-13 years old students of German as an additional language at a beginner level, in Australia, their *intercultural language learning* was guaranteed. In particular, the researcher demonstrated how the conscious integration of a kinesthetic mode within the language classroom, made possible by process drama application, provided learners with a meaningful context and space that allowed to boost their overall commitment and verbal linguistic participation. Video and commentary data were used to provide evidence of the 'increasing comfort of students with the physicality of the process' (Rothwell, 2011, p. 591) and their gaining confidence with a communication practice situated in a meaningful and socio-cultural context.

Similarly, an important participatory action-research project about the synergy of process drama and students' intercultural language learning has been carried out by Piazzoli (2010) with adult proficient students of Italian as a second language, in Australia. Besides supporting previous findings attesting the overall benefits of process drama for language learning (Kao and O'Neill 1998, Stinson, 2007, 2008 in Piazzoli, 2010), the study evidenced that students' involvement in an 'intercultural growth' could be achieved through the application of strategies that allowed learners to empathize with the characters and situations of the story in the process dramas.

Among the research studies that are focused on the positive impact of process drama on students' *affective factors*, such as students' motivation and confidence in the language learning process (Santucci 2019, Bloomington 2017, Piazzoli 2011), in Piazzoli (2011) a strong argument is provided on how the safe space that is generated by process drama, i.e. the affective space, has an important impact on reducing adult students' language anxiety during their oral communication in the target language. Her participatory action research project with university students with an advanced level of Italian as a second language was initially aimed at ascertaining the general effects of process drama strategies on students with a high proficiency level of Italian language. The results, besides confirming the positive outcome as far as students' enhanced engagement and increased spontaneous communication in the target language were concerned, also revealed how a certain level of language anxiety of some participants was reduced thanks to process drama affective space, namely the 'safe physical, cognitive and emotional space to express ideas in a foreign language' (Stinson, 2008, p. 201 in Piazzoli, 2011, p. 563).

The research study conducted by To, Chan, Lam and Tsang (2011) with 38 primary schools in Hong Kong was aimed at instructing English teachers to adopt process drama for English learning in order to foster students' oral communication in the target language. Through both individual and focus group interviews with teachers, students, parents and the schools' principals, the main benefits previously acknowledged to process drama were reinforced. In particular, students' overall motivation and confidence in the oral communication, an improved students' engagement and active participation in the classroom, a growth of students' talk, and the positive teachers' transformation from 'knowledge transmitters' to 'facilitators' (To et al., 2011, p. 528) were evidenced by both students and teachers. Interestingly, the researchers emphasized that teachers who were initially reluctant to apply process drama, eventually

showed a significant change in the interviews as a result of their appreciation of the students' positive reactions to the process drama learning experience.

To conclude, the aforementioned studies allowed to gain insight into the positive effects of process drama on students' language learning. In particular, evidence has been proven on students' oral communication achievements, learning autonomy and motivation strengthening, intercultural communicative competence acquisition and oral communication anxiety reduction. In fact, although aiming at different learning objectives, all the above-mentioned empirical studies are linked by the positive outcomes on students' language learning. Besides, even if just partially, the figure of the teacher applying process drama is highlighted too. In particular, it is acknowledged that the teacher plays an important role in the smooth running of process drama and her/his ability to coordinate students within the different specific moments of the dramatic action can impact on students' overall learning outcomes as well. Nonetheless, the professional figure of teacher applying process drama for language education remains quite enigmatic, for it appears that the teacher should be able to draw on different skills stemming from both language and drama didactic realms. In addition, it is argued that 'the process drama teacher functions as an *artist*, working alongside the participants in a process of dramatic exploration; […]in fact, the teacher is likely to function most effectively from within the experience as a co/artist with his/her participants, rather than remaining on the outside of the work' (O'Neill, 1995, p. 64 in Piazzoli, 2018, p.9).

So far, Chapter One has been drawn towards the general exploration of process drama, starting from its historical origin. Through its key terms and main features, an attempt to provide an exhaustive definition was undertaken. It could be shortened as an embodied improvisational performative approach that is coherent with the communicative principles of language teaching. Then, a theoretical conceptualization, according to the most significant second language learning theories, has been provided to contribute to the overall understanding of such approach. The last paragraph has been devoted to anchor theory in the educational practice by introducing an overview of the most significant research studies that have dealt with process drama didactic application in L2 contexts. Besides ascertaining the process drama positive impact on students' language learning, the last paragraph brought to the professional figure of the language teacher/artist using process drama, the subject that will characterize Chapter Two.

CHAPTER TWO
2. The teacher/artist

As mentioned in Chapter One, the ability of the language teacher to efficiently coordinate process drama activities may have a significant impact on students' language learning outcomes. In turn, as argued by process drama teacher educators, the fundamental artistic role played by the teacher, within the creative practice of process drama, has important consequences even on teacher training (Bowell and Heap, 2005).

In order to better comprehend the functions and skills of language teachers applying process drama to their teaching practices, a brief reference to the concept of teaching as an art form is deemed appropriate. Teaching can in fact be considered *an art form*, for its aesthetic, spontaneous and process-based dimension (Eisner, 1985, in Piazzoli, 2018). In this light, the teaching experience of any discipline can be considered an art form, as teachers' practice 'is not dominated by prescriptions or routines but is influenced by qualities and contingencies which are unpredicted and […] this tension between automaticity and inventiveness makes teaching, like any other art, so complex an undertaking' (Piazzoli, 2018, p.5).

The notion of teaching as an aesthetic form is further developed by the concept of teachers as *crafters of experience*, according to which teachers are expected to model the same environment that is commonly shared by their students (Eisner, 2002, in Piazzoli, 2018, p. 7). In this view, teachers are not expected to blindly and unconditionally obey to the planned curriculum but rather to allow for improvisation, whenever unpredicted events and unforeseen circumstances occur along the didactic experience. It is in this space between the 'curriculum as planned and the curriculum as lived' that resides the core teaching activity (Berghetto and Kaufman, 2011, in Piazzoli, 2018, p. 3).

At this point, it may be wondered at the connection between the concept of teaching as an aesthetic form and the pedagogical approach of process drama. Eisner (1985) clarifies this connection by sustaining that 'the teacher who functions artistically provides learners with sources of aesthetic experiences that can foster exploration, risk-taking and disposition to play' (Eisner, 1985, p. 183, in Piazzoli, 2012, p. 33). In fact, Eisner's theory aligns well with language teaching through process drama, since *exploring*, being able to *take risks* and *play* are the cornerstones of *improvisation*, the medium through which both process-drama teacher in role and students in role interact and contribute to the co-construction of the language learning

experience (Piazzoli, 2012, p.33). Accordingly, Piazzoli (2018) refers to the process drama-language classroom as 'an ecosystem in which the teacher/artist engages students as co-artists in a process involving not only cognition, but also affect, imagery, sensation, different forms of memory, emotion and embodiment' (p. 8).

Furthermore, it is important to remark that whatever artistic practice the teacher may use, it must not be an end in itself but should instead be employed to connect with other areas of life (Booth, 2003, p. 6, in Piazzoli, 2018, p. 8). In addition, teacher/artists share the quality of being process-oriented and display an ability to trigger participation. The teacher functions as an artist because of his/her generative contribution of 'creative thinking and learning interest' (Booth, 2015, in Piazzoli, 2018, p. 9), and therefore because of his/her co-creation of knowledge rather than his/her teaching content.

From the above, it is possible to discern multiple connections with process drama didactic approach. Indeed, as seen in Chapter One, process drama is a dramatic exploration where the teacher works within the experience, as a co-artist together with her/his students (O'Neill, 1995). In fact, according to the *Teacher in role* teaching principle, the teacher is able to challenge and guide students' reasoning, while actively engaging them in the dramatic experience through improvisation.

Although it has been repeatedly pointed out that the purpose of the language teacher using process drama is not to display acting nor entertaining skills, but rather engage students in the co-construction of a fictional world, an artistic inclination is a desirable trait for the teacher to efficiently embody a performative approach to teaching (Schewe, 2017, in Piazzoli, 2018). Indeed, since the purpose of performative foreign language didactics is to focus on linguistic forms while triggering a desire and pleasure to play with words through a whole sensory experience, involving emotions, language, body movements and voice, the teacher holding an artistic inclination will be able to demonstrate a certain degree of 'fluidity' (Lutzker, 2007, in Piazzoli, 2018). Moreover, to be able to improvise and respond creatively to students, the teacher/artist who adopts a performative approach is required to refine his/her *listening ability*, namely 'being acutely receptive to everything that is occurring both outside and within' (Lutzker, 2007, in Piazzoli, 2018, p. 11).

In this light, the notion of teacher/artist could be intimidating for some L2 language teachers, as they may not recognize themselves as artists, nor view their lesson as a work of art (Piazzoli,

2018); notwithstanding, through a closer look, it might be suggested that many of the abilities proper of the teacher/artist correspond to those of the effective teacher. For instance, the teacher artist's ability of listening to students, their responses, the general context and his/her own inner pedagogical intuitions can be recognized as a distinctive feature of the effective teacher as well. In fact, to this end, it might be useful to embrace a 'teacher/artistry continuum for teachers as artists and artists as teachers, with experience fluctuating as we further our training, and deepen our knowledge and creative doing […]' (Schewe, 2017, in Piazzoli, 2018, p.9).

Practice, in fact, is fundamental for teachers to develop their artistry that is crucial to guide students towards embodying language in action. In addition, when both language and performative fields join forces towards the establishment of an interdisciplinary language didactic approach, it is desirable that the teacher masters a pedagogical and content knowledge in both domains and, as it might be inferred, this could represent quite a challenge.

As a matter of fact, 'when language-learning experiences are planned and implemented by teachers who are aware of the nuances of both language learning and drama learning, then the results achieved will be optimized' (Dunn and Stinson, 2011, p. 630). In addition, it has been claimed that only when teachers are able to cope with both the artistry of process drama and the intended language learning objectives, can 'the full promise of working with drama and additional language learning be realized' (Dunn and Stinson, 2011, p. 618).

Finally, it could be concluded that teachers should be able to rely on specific process drama training programs in order to acquire the aforementioned drama artistry and then implement it in the language-teaching practices but this will be discussed later in the following subparagraphs.

For the time being, the breakdown of the main functions of the teacher/artist could contribute to a further clarification of this professional figure. In fact, to refine the theorical definition of the teacher/artist, the following section will examine the specific functions that are important to wisely manage both the drama and language domains.

2.1. The functions of the teacher/artist

As it can be inferred from the above, there are multiple functions that the teacher/artist fulfills while process drama unfolds in action. In particular, 'the successful teacher-artist in process drama needs to function as *playwright*, *director*, and *actor*, as well as *teacher*' (Bowell and Heap, 2005, p, 60). Since these four functions work simultaneously, the teacher/artist is required to think in a '*quadripartite manner*' (Bowell and Heap, 2005) in order to successfully manage the creative process.

This demanding combination of roles becomes even more challenging when drama is used to achieve additional/second language learning outcomes, for two domains merge together with their specific content and pedagogical features. Moreover, the teacher/artist facilitating a process drama is required to interpret all the above four roles while moving between the fictional and the real worlds in which the process drama develops (Bowell and Heap, 2005).

Not to forget is the interrelation between teacher and students along the action, reaction and interaction dynamics characterizing process drama. The teacher, in fact, should be focused on the students' progressive understanding and on their increasing confidence in the aesthetic involvement with process drama, always maintaining the attention on the overall structure underpinning the dramatic experience and at the same time refining his/her ability to facilitate the process drama itself (Bowell and Heap, 2005). Furthermore, since process drama involves the co-construction of knowledge with both students and teacher engaging in a dramatic form, the quadripartite thinking performed by the teacher is simultaneously accompanied by students' quadripartite response, with students functioning as playwrights, directors, actors and learners (Bowell and Heap, 2005).

In this light, given also the improvisatory nature of process drama, it may happen that the teacher primarily focuses on the learning objective to be achieved through the dramatic experience, whereas the students primarily focus on the narrative. So, the teacher's quadripartite thinking and the students' quadripartite response may respectively be triggered by their different needs (Bowell and Heap, 2005). Hence, the teacher should be able to simultaneously combine the curricular aim with the unfolding of the dramatic narrative and the improvisatory nature of process drama (Bowell and Heap, 2005).

To return to the teacher/artist's quadripartite thinking and contribute to the further comprehension of this notion, a brief explanation of each constituent parts is now deemed

useful. Hence, the teacher, as *playwright,* should be able to guide students to craft the narrative in a way that the learning objectives are met throughout the unfolding of the story, and as *director*, he/she should be able to guarantee the achievement of learning outcomes through a valid dramatic performance. Moreover, as *actor*, the teacher should give her/his contribution to engage and enchant students in the dramatic action besides supporting them in the creation of roles. Last, as *teacher*, besides bearing in mind all the above viewpoints, he/she should account for the students and classroom real-world context, as well as the school culture and curriculum (Bowell and Heap, 2005, p.64).

As anticipated before, being process drama a constant exchange among its participants, to the teacher's quadripartite thinking corresponds students' quadripartite response. Such interplay is known as *'spiral of creative exchange',* according to which a reciprocal exchange of actions, reactions, ideas and emotions occurs between students and teacher (Bowell and Heap, 2005, p.66). For a thorough comprehension, Figure 1 below provides a visual example of such interactive discourse between process drama facilitator and its participants.

Figure 1- *Spiral of Creative Exchange, (Bowell and Heap, 2005, p. 67)*

Teacher/Facilitator-quadripartite thinking	Participant- Quadripartite response
Spectator-Playwright: helps craft narrative- story unfolds and carries the learning	**Spectator-Playwright:** learns how to contribute to the extensions/deepening of the play they are in and to feel sufficiently empowered to initiate further developments of narrative – feeds back to teacher…
who is challenged to establish consensus on the next step and feed back to the pupils	
Spectator- Director: Steers participants to learning through best dramatic structure	**Spectator- Director:** learns by acquiring knowledge of the art form by engaging in it (and of content) and applied skills of directing to fictional circumstances– feeds back to teacher…
…who is further challenged to weave pupil response into drama and feed back to pupils	
It continues in the following page	

Spectator- Actor:
gives a performance which engages, beguiles, supports
and challenges the pupils

Spectator-Actor:
learns how to respond and adjust
behavior within fictional circumstances,
demonstrating behavior–feeds back to
teacher…

…who is further challenged to respond
with her performance (and possibly new
set of negotiations) and feed back to participants

Spectator- Teacher:
holding everything together–the real context of pupils,
classroom, school and curriculum

Spectator- Learner:
makes sense of what is going on and
refines knowledge, skills, attitudes and,
in being transformed, feeds something of
this back to the teacher through
performance…

…who is further challenged to evaluate, extend that
transformation and feed back to participants

As it can be noticed, the four functions respectively performed by teacher and students are furtherly integrated by a fifth dimension, i.e. the dimension of *self-spectator*. Process drama does not involve the presence of an external audience but rather implies its participants to be spectators of themselves. As a matter of fact, it is through self-reflexivity that it is possible '[…] to be engaged in a process of education for self-direction' (Heathcote, 1995, in Bowell and Heap, 2005, p. 66). Hence, in this artistic partnership, while operating as playwright, director, actor, and teacher/students, a certain degree of critical self-awareness is demanded of both teacher and students (Bowell and Heap, 2005).

According to what has emerged so far, it can be concluded that skillfully managing both the form and the intended learning objectives may represent a real *challenge* for the teacher/artist, for it requires the ability to combine four different roles, while holding a complete understanding of the dramatic elements, the dramatic strategies and how these intertwine along the narrative. In addition, worth underlining is that the teacher/artist is expected to wisely juggle the above drama pedagogy and the second/additional-language didactic.

In this regard, it seems reasonable to investigate the learning experience language teachers undertake to familiarize with process drama. In fact, the following paragraph will provide an overview of the most significant research studies that focused on the learning perspective of both experienced and beginner language teachers.

2.2 Process drama aesthetic education: a review of empirical studies

As compared to the numerous empirical studies attesting process drama positive effects on students' second/additional language acquisition, the literature appears to be coy about studies focusing on L2 teachers learning to integrate process drama pedagogy into their language teaching practices. Indeed, how to combine teachers' language didactic expertise with the ability of 'transforming the language classroom into a dramatic world' (Piazzoli, 2014, p. 110) seems to remain a crucial but an unresolved issue.

As regards existing studies dealing with teachers' practical experience with process drama in class, it appears that these are primarily research in action; in fact, it could be argued that process drama pedagogy is particularly apt to be investigated and tested directly in the field, since the teacher who adopts such pedagogy is himself/herself involved in the ongoing process of experimentation of knowledge co-construction, through improvisation and creativity. Furthermore, 'action research allows researchers to address problems on both a personal and social level from an insider's perspective. […] It provides a cyclical process of investigating and improving teaching and learning' (Metcalfe, 2007, p.51). Yet, as a major published research contribution was provided by process drama experts who are also involved in process drama teacher training, intervention research studies conducted by teacher trainers will be taken into account in the following literature review.

Before proceeding with the mapping of existing studies on process drama teacher education, a brief mention to the criterion adopted for the research classification is deemed useful. Indeed, through a cross comparison of the research studies, it appeared that the participants' background professional experience is a key aspect through which evaluate study results. On this basis, research studies on process drama learning experience will be classified according to language teachers' background didactic practice and therefore the distinction between experienced teachers and beginner/pre-service teachers will be applied in the following sub-paragraphs.

2.2.1 Experienced language teachers and their learning of process drama

In this sub-paragraph, a brief summary of the most significant research studies that focused on experienced language teachers and their training practice in process drama is provided. This is functional to the elaboration of the main threads that were used to frame the research gap and develop the research questions underpinning the present inquiry.

The first to be examined is a longitudinal participatory case study over a seven-year period, which focused on five experienced teachers of Italian (L2) from the Società Dante Alighieri in Brisbane, Australia, learning to integrate process drama pedagogy in their practice (Piazzoli, 2016). In particular, the researcher delved into how teachers express themselves in their reflective practice when learning to use the performative approach, emphasizing the constraints they encountered to integrate process drama into their teaching routines. To underpin the author's research is the evidence, proved by previous research studies (Stinson, 2009; Metcalfe, 2007), that despite the general agreement on the educational potential of process drama, teachers show resistance towards its use in class, once the professional support provided by drama educators is concluded. Hence, the author claimed that although the effectiveness of such pedagogy for L2 learning, without strategies to support L2 teachers to integrate this performative approach over time, process drama would lose its value.

For this reason, the researcher adopted a series of instruments to explore the participants' development of reflective practice, in order to raise awareness of the 'knowing in action', defined as the intuitive choices that are usually implicit in our pattern of acquisition (Schön, 1983, p.49, in Piazzoli, 2016, p. 97). Indeed, it has been stressed that such reflective practice is extremely important, as the 'knowing in action' often remains tacit (Piazzoli, 2016, p.99). This experiential knowledge, which may be difficult to express and share, can instead be explained through reflection, practice and interaction (Polanyi, 1997, in Piazzoli, 2016, p. 99) and experienced teachers in particular draw on this tacit knowledge which 'feeds into teachers' pedagogical content knowledge' (Shulman, 2004, in Piazzoli, 2016, p. 99). As a matter of fact, as it was also pointed out in an empirical research study conducted in a Japanese school context (Metcalfe, 2007), teachers often times show concerns towards the adoption of a performative educational approach because they perceive they have an insufficient understanding of drama

and its functions, but in reality the reason is 'because much of this understanding is tacit; […] they have acquired it without learning how to articulate it' (Metcalfe, 2007, p. 53).

Piazzoli, instead, managed to capture participants' *reflection in action*, namely 'the kind of inventiveness, flexible decision-making that enables practitioners to respond to challenges in real time'(Piazzoli, 2018, p. 111) and *reflection on action*, in other words 'the reflection occurring in hindsight, after a class has finished' (Piazzoli, 2016), through questionnaires, flash interviews, focus groups, teachers' reflections on the lesson plans and email correspondence to follow up on their use of process drama in the language practice.

From data analysis emerged that the participant teachers, despite having previously experienced process drama, when asked to anticipate the kind of challenges they may have faced during the intervention and how they could handle them, referred to management and control issues; indeed, as confirmed by the researcher, part of the teacher process drama training is truly learning to hand over control in class. Notwithstanding, through the interview and focus group appeared that teachers demonstrated the ability to successfully facilitate the teacher in role situation, guiding students through the dramatic strategies and conventions to be used in order to progress with the story without losing the dramatic tension. As a matter of fact, having previously brainstormed and practiced the teacher in role strategy during the training workshop proved to be necessary for teachers. In fact, this demonstrated how the teacher's knowing in action was necessary and how 'tacit knowledge feeds into pedagogical content knowledge' (Piazzoli, 2016, p. 105).

Another important finding was that one teacher's knowledge of drama remained tacit, while another's participant knowledge turned out to be more explicit. Nonetheless, the importance of the reflective practice and co-teaching for process drama application to language teaching was confirmed. In fact, the researcher ascertained L2 teachers' acquisition of process drama unpredictability and development of facilitation skills; in particular, from data discussion, three teacher categories emerged, namely teachers who were at times 'object-regulated', i.e. consistently depending on the lesson plan, at times 'other-regulated', i.e. by depending on more experienced colleagues, and other times self-regulated (Piazzoli, 2016).

In conclusion of the study was the researcher's claim that introducing teachers to in action and on action reflective practice, supporting their drama planning and learning through drama, providing them with guidance on themes, pre-text and roles brainstorming, as well as allowing

teachers to both engage as process drama participants and as process drama facilitators, proved to be necessary to map their ethnography of change.

The researcher's call to action concerns the importance to focus on teacher education research, in order to comprehend experienced language teachers' needs when learning to familiarize with a performative approach because, if process drama efficiently supports second language learning, then 'investing energy into teacher education is important' (Piazzoli, 2016, p. 111). As elsewhere observed by the researcher, the real challenge for the language teacher is to assimilate the process drama pedagogical aesthetic; in particular, the challenge lies in the ability to deal with students' emotions during the dramatic actions, the teachers' combination of four different roles and the ability to wisely orchestrate the dramatic elements with the support of in-the-moment decisions, while remaining conscious of the didactic aim (Piazzoli, 2011, p. 449); in other words, the real challenge is acquiring the artistry.

To this end, an important research contribution on the acquisition of process drama artistry was provided by Dunn and Stinson (2011). Through the analysis of two research studies, which were set in Singaporean secondary schools, the authors investigated the concept of teacher artistry within process drama applied to second and additional language teaching.

Besides sharing the same rationale underpinning the aforementioned studies, i.e. the direct relationship between the overall success of students' learning experience and the teacher artistry, the authors emphasized the complexity of the teacher quadripartite thinking and roles combination in the interdisciplinary field of process drama for language teaching.

The first study analyzed, the Drama and Oral Language research project (Stinson and Freebody, 2006), involved language teachers who were experienced drama educators, whereas the second study analyzed, which corresponded to the second phase project i.e. the Speaking Out Project, involved experienced teachers of English language who did not held drama expertise.

Through a cross reference emerged that the artistry of language teachers adopting process drama pedagogy consistently affected language learners' outcomes (Dunn and Stinson, 2011). As a matter of fact, the researchers emphasized that teachers of the DOL project, being experienced drama educators, had managed to select a functional pre-text which could guarantee the dramatic tension required by process drama.

On the other hand, teachers of the Speaking Out Project had favored language-focused materials that did not share the essential characteristics of pre-texts. In fact, despite having attended a

drama induction, as required by the research design, Speaking Out teachers' choice of a pre-text that was conceived to rather foster students' language skills had compromised the dramatic action. Moreover, other teachers from the Speaking Out project showed a certain level of uncertainty when combining the dramatic conventions in order to guarantee students a meaningful learning experience. As claimed by the researchers, 'the lack of pedagogical content knowledge' hindered the ability to successfully plan the dramatic work (Dunn and Stinson, 2011).

Another important observation was that while experienced drama teachers of the DOL project succeeded in the decision-making process, inexperienced drama teachers of the Speaking Out project grappled; in particular, some showed reluctance to discard the written plan although it was overtly ineffective, other teachers focused too strongly on students' language accuracy, then compromising the students' overall engagement in the dramatic action (Dunn and Stinson, 2011). From the evidence of students' language improvements thanks to language lessons planned by expert drama educators, the researchers inferred that language learning outcomes improve when the language teachers demonstrate a thorough comprehension of 'the dual pedagogical content knowledge', namely the dramatic form and the language learning process (Dunn and Stinson, 2011, p. 630).

As for future research scope, Dunn and Stinson (2011) pointed at the importance of investigating the effect of the school context as well as the school curriculum on the teachers' approach; moreover, for the researchers, questioning the type of teachers' preparation and how this influences the pedagogical artistry in both drama and language territories is worth researching.

From the above, it could be deduced that, if teachers had access to in-depth process drama education, they would be able to apply such performative approach to language teaching in class. Interestingly, from the detailed analysis of the Speaking Out research project appeared that even after one-year coaching by theatre expert trainers, language teachers did not feel ready to use process drama on their own (Stinson, 2009). Stinson's findings have further stimulated the debate, resulting in the claim that teachers' resistance towards the use of process drama may also be due to interference with their pre-existing traditional teaching style, as well as their inability to take risks and their prejudices against theatrical approaches (Piazzoli 2011, p.446). On the other hand, such results may also reveal a lack of efficient teaching strategies for process drama language teacher education (Piazzoli, 2011).

Returning to the Speaking Out project (2009), the researcher's aim was to analyze the professional requirements and the amount of in-service that experienced English teachers, who had no familiarity with drama pedagogy, would need in order to successfully implement a performative approach in their English language learning classes. Evidence was provided by commenting on teachers' responses and shedding light on the challenges faced by both teachers and the research team during the intervention project.

The professional development model adopted by the researcher comprised models of co-planning and co-teaching, observation/demonstration practice, feedback, follow-up and mentoring. After-school workshops were carried out in order to provide teachers with the fundamentals of drama conventions and strategies (e.g. still images, teacher in role, pair and group role play), as well as guidance for process drama planning. The researcher also pointed out that after the initial professional development sessions, teachers were accompanied by a member of the research team in order to receive a customized professional support for the implementation of process drama in their English classes, also taking into account the 'comfort level of individual teachers' (Stinson, 2009, p. 229).

Data were collected through the use of research instruments such as video recordings, talk aloud reflections on follow-up video recordings and personal reflective journals.

First, it emerged that students' active engagement during the drama-based lessons had been the element of greatest attraction for the teachers. Indeed, many research participants concurred on the fact that drama-based lessons enabled teachers to detach from the more conventional teaching strategies to apply a more student-centered approach that could foster students' interaction, communication and participation (Stinson, 2009).

The researcher also offered an interesting reflection on teachers' challenges to changing existing didactic practices. In particular, it was mentioned that teachers' perception of process drama was strictly related to the idea that 'talent is a prerequisite for any drama work' (Stinson, 2009, p. 230) and that the production of humorous or moral sketches was the core of process drama. It was through workshop sessions that teachers could embrace an unequivocal conception of process drama as a process of collaborative exploration which is based on meaning-making.

Moreover, teachers stressed the difficulty of monitoring students' learning progress during drama-based lessons, as these required fewer written products and more speaking activities. Such observation was identified as part of teachers' existing beliefs and behaviors; indeed, the

researcher clearly explained that participants were all experienced teachers who were familiar with a predetermined teacher-focused didactic practice, which was supported by the school context in which they operated (Stinson, 2009). Although the research intervention required teachers to step out from their comfort zones and embrace a new pedagogical approach, this, often times, was considered as professionally risky and too personal (Stinson, 2009, p 231). As a matter of fact, the researcher claimed that the teacher-student paradigm shift and the resulting reduction in teacher's talk time during process drama English classes was rejected.

On the other hand, the researcher noticed that, as students' improved learning outcomes had emerged, many teachers started to become more positive about process drama. In particular, it was noticed how working in small groups and interpreting roles allowed students to feel more confident in the use of the target language, with a consequent improved participation and volunteered interventions. Nonetheless, teachers still preferred the use of 'drill-and practice conventional methods', for they struggled to accept that 'learning can take place in playful ways' with teachers enjoying together with students (Stinson, 2009, p. 233).

In addition, the fear of losing control of the class, as soon as it turned noisy, was perceived by teachers as a risk of being judged professionally unqualified. Consequently, this affected the choice of the drama strategies, for 'safer drama conventions' that would produce less noise were favored. In turn, 'the perceived lack of success as being a competent drama teacher diminished the desire and motivation to persist' (Stinson, 2009, p. 233). Again, to change teachers' belief more time and opportunities were needed.

The researcher also pointed out that teachers' perception of drama as a fun and alternative option to the traditional lesson led them to abandon process drama implementation and return to the familiar 'drill-and-practice approaches', as soon as it was time for examination preparation. As a matter of fact, it was clarified that teachers in Singapore are extremely responsible for their students' scores in examinations and this may justify teachers' reluctance towards a new and open approach. Interestingly, the researcher stated that out of the 40 weeks of intervention in the school, only 23 were devoted to teaching, with 17 spent for examinations, its preparation and other events. Similarly, the author also noticed the presence of 'conflicting signals' by the school management as, on the one hand the school highly focused on examination and students' performance but on the other hand encouraged teachers to experiment new teaching methods. As a consequence, despite process drama turned out to be a

constructive and inspiring experience for their students, teachers were pressed by time contingences for exam preparation and therefore shied away (Stinson, 2009).

Data also allowed the researcher to claim that process drama planning requirements further contributed to teachers' general discouragement. In fact, planning carefully through the drama conventions and reflecting on its application in order to guarantee a coherent ensemble was deemed time consuming for teachers who were accustomed to a pre-established teaching style.

From a broader picture, it was claimed that changing teacher practices is a demanding process, as this implies a change in teachers' didactic beliefs as well as a cultural change regarding the teaching concept among the school and the community of reference (Stinson, 2009, p. 236). If, on the one hand, 'the imperative for teachers is to see a need for change and to desire to be part of the change process', on the other hand, the research project, which was part of the school curriculum innovation initiative, was not perceived as in-service nor a chance for professional development but was rather felt as additional and imposed work (Stinson, 2009, p. 236). Nonetheless, since the initiative was commissioned by the principal and head of department, it was important that teachers showed enthusiasm and proactiveness. Such incongruence, driven by school circumstances, represented quite a challenge for the research team (Stinson, 2009). In fact, the researcher recommended that, for future intervention-research, the informed consent should be negotiated openly with all stakeholders, in order to avoid obstacles to the research and thereby ensure mutual benefits.

As concerns teachers' resistance to an educational drama approach to language teaching, the already-mentioned research study, based on the Japanese school-context, evidenced that the cultural and educational background can affect teachers' orientations in the pedagogical and educational approach to be adopted (Metcalfe, 2007, p. 55). Precisely, Asian-oriented teachers would be more inclined towards the use of traditional pedagogical approaches, as a consequence of the structured and controlled teacher education, whereas non-Asian teachers trained in Australia would be keener towards a process drama approach for language teaching (Metcalfe, 2007). In this light, one might discern a connection with the Singaporean school context described in Stinson's research (2009), where a tendency towards a 'drill-and-practice' approach for language teaching is favored. It is for this reason that, when it happens to introduce and implement non-traditional teaching methods into Eastern countries, 'it is essential to make

some adjustments and amendments according to the local culture and its people' (Metcalfe, 2007, p. 55).

If in the previous study the process drama training experience was part of an initiative commissioned by the principal and the head of department, the following study concerns a process drama non-formal training initiative which was voluntary.

As a matter of fact, the research study by Alvarez and Beaven (2014), which was grounded on the evidenced positive impact of non-formal teacher education towards the implementation of a performative approach in the language teaching practices, emphasized the effects of process drama on language teachers on both personal and professional level.

In line with the studies above examined, the researchers claimed that in order to assure students a worthwhile language and intercultural learning experience, language teachers should be able to draw on educational chances to be trained in drama methodology and pedagogy (Alvarez and Beaven, 2014).

The researchers, in fact, recognized the fundamental role played by teachers in the sustainability and success of drama-based language classes. Thus, they focused their research on how drama-based pedagogy can sustain teachers' personal and professional improvement. Their research project was inspired by the lack of explicit description of the transformative impact of process drama on language teachers. In particular, they focused on non-formal education opportunities, as opposed to formal and institutionalized ones, as the former can provide in-service language teachers with life-long learning skills (Alvarez and Beaven, 2014, p.8). Thus, a distinction between formal and non-formal teacher education was operated, with the former being characterized by a prescribed-program that teachers need to follow, and the latter as being more flexible for it allows teachers to adjust the learning programme to their needs (Rogers, 2004, in Alvarez and Beaven, 2014, p. 8). In fact, to the researchers, non-formal training can have a positive impact on language teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of drama practices in their teaching routines.

The research project involved 13 volunteer experienced language teachers, from the Open University in the United Kingdom, with no formal drama training, taking part in the European Lifelong Learning Performing Languages project, from August 2011 to July 2013. Participants were actively engaged in non-formal training activities based on small- and large-scale drama practices, in order to broaden their pedagogical repertoire.

The researchers particularly focused on the impact of those drama activities and reflective practices on the language teachers. In particular, it emerged that the use of voice, movement, improvisation, and performance of imagined situations allowed participants to step out from their roles of language teachers and rather engage as language and drama learners (Alvarez and Beaven, 2014). The programme in fact required its participants to be learner of either French, Spanish or Italian, for a visit to one of these different destination countries was part and parcel of the project. Hence, teachers were asked to gain multilingual and multicultural self-awareness, as they were involved in intercultural communication within an international context. Indeed, the project required teachers to interact with their local hosts during the training session. By allowing teachers to experience activities that could foster the connection between movement, emotions, thoughts and verbal expressions within an interpersonal and international context, it was hoped to inspire them in their future teaching practices (Alvarez and Beaven, 2014).

The impact of the short-term intervention was evidenced by participants' feedback; in particular, it emerged how the drama workshops were fundamental for teachers to gain awareness of the emotional engagement triggered by drama for language teaching. Indeed, they worked to enact emotions and draw on their intercultural, discovery and interaction skills. This allowed to raise participants' awareness on cultural differences and to foster cultural empathy (Alvarez and Beaven, 2014). Moreover, despite suspending their beliefs and judgment as teachers to purely embrace a learner perspective was deemed difficult, teachers reported on how their participation as drama and language learners allowed them to 'empathize with feelings of inadequateness, of being lost and not understanding instructions, with which students can experience in classroom situations' (Alvarez and Beaven, 2014, p. 13).

Such gained awareness prompted teachers' reflection on how to transform their language teaching practices in order to afford students a more interactive and enjoyable learning experience, and therefore a whole rethinking process was put in agenda.

In light of the positive effects of the language teacher training experience, a concern on the implementation of drama in the language curriculum was underlined by participants. In particular, the importance to acquire the 'teacher artistry' in order to achieve 'a well-balanced preparation in both domains-language and drama teaching' was emphasized (Dunn and Stinson,

2011, in Alvarez and Beaven, 2014, p. 14). Hence, a prolonged training was recommended in order to reach better levels of teaching artistry.

The researchers called for future non-formal partnerships between language teachers and drama experts also in virtual contexts. Future investigations in the impact of drama-based training on language teachers' personal level, rather than professional one, were recommended as well.

So far, attention has been devoted to research studies that analyzed experienced language teachers approaching process drama in both formal and non-formal educational contexts. Despite teachers' initial positive enthusiasm, triggered by students' engagement during process drama-based language classes, teachers' perplexity for a long-lasting implementation of a performative approach has been consistent throughout all the studies.

Reasons are ascribed to interference with pre-existing teaching styles, hindrances within the school community, teachers' lack of confidence and risk-taking disposition, prejudices about drama-based approaches, and conviction of process drama as an inadequate approach to be used in an examination-based school environment.

On the other hand, research studies have also concurred on the importance of teacher education to enable the development of process drama teaching artistry. In particular, emphasis has been placed on the priority of guiding teachers in the reflective practice in order to enable teacher/artists to achieve the knowing-in-action and on-action skills that are pivotal for the development of the experiential knowledge.

From the above, it might perhaps be assumed that language student-teachers, who have not yet developed their teaching style and who are not yet influenced by a school environment and its respective requirements, are more incline to explore and experiment with a performative teaching approach.

In order to further examine how certain contextual factors such as teachers' background didactic experience can impact on their disposition to process drama instruction, the following paragraph will provide an overview of selected research studies that focused on process drama learning experience of novice/beginner language teachers.

2.2.2 Beginner language teachers and their learning of process drama

As far as research studies dealing with process drama education for beginner language teachers, Hulse and Owens' action research study (2019) is worth mentioning, particularly because of its rationale according to which student teachers are more open to innovative teaching practices than experienced professionals (Trent, 2014, in Hulse and Owens, 2019).

The research project under discussion was aimed at delving into the experiences of language student-teachers with the unconventional pedagogical model of process drama, in order to understand how innovative practices can be assimilated into didactic methods. In particular, data were gathered during the post-graduate initial teacher education programme in a university in England, which prepares student-teachers to teach French, German and Spanish at secondary schools. Student teachers attended process drama workshops applied to modern language teaching and then experimented it in a one-hour process drama session in their language classes.

The theoretical assumption informing the research study was the effectiveness of process drama as a learning tool for fostering spontaneous language production and the lack of evidence suggesting its common use. Researchers ascribed such scarce process drama application on teachers' inexperience to engage students with limited foreign language skills in unscripted drama works, teachers' belonging to an examination-based culture which privileges accuracy over fluency, and their inability of using unconventional pedagogical approaches that subvert the traditional teacher-student power hierarchy (Kao and O'Neill, 1998, in Hulse and Owens, 2019).

The first research question underpinning the study concerned student teachers' view of process drama as a possible tool for foreign language teaching. Results showed a 100% positive agreement on the application of process drama techniques for modern language teaching, for process drama is considered an appropriate instrument to foster innovation, creativity and meaningful language production (Hulse and Owens, 2019).

On the other hand, the second research question was aimed at identifying the barriers that student-teachers using process drama for language teaching had to face. Data indicated teachers' inexperience and lack of skills, emphasizing how this has hindered their ability to cope with unexpected results and to evaluate the linguistic content of the lesson; it also revealed

participants' fear of losing control of the classroom behavior and, above all, the lack of time as lesson planning was considered particularly time consuming (Hulse and Owens, 2019).

In response to the third research question aimed at investigating participants' opinion on how to overcome the barriers when using process drama for language teaching, results highlighted the importance of the implementation of cross subject seminars, as well as the cooperation between drama and modern language trainees in order to achieve a balanced drama and language content. Hence, receiving specialist support from tutors, mentors and peers was identified as the principle factor determining a successful implementation of process drama in foreign language classes. Indeed, researchers notably emphasized how important differences between the pedagogical approaches of both drama and language teaching represent a great challenge for its practitioners. As a matter of fact, researchers claimed that to be able to fit a less teacher-centric role as required by process drama pedagogy, language teachers should adapt their practices. Such adjustment proves easier for experienced practitioners than for student teachers, for the former can count on a more solid knowledge of their subject discipline (Hulse and Owens, 2019). Hence, the importance of providing the necessary scaffolding for student teachers' professional learning (Hulse and Owens, 2019, p. 21).

Among researchers' final considerations on student teachers' capacity to use process drama for modern language teaching, particular emphasis was placed on the fundamental role of student teachers' personal experience and dispositions, as well as the support received by the school community. Moreover, in line with the rationale of the aforementioned studies, researchers claimed that student teachers were more inclined to persevere with process drama, when they were able to perceive its value for the achievement of the linguistic outcomes within the prescribed curriculum (Hulse and Owens, 2019, p. 28).

The researchers' final claim underlined that to be able to state whether such performative approach is a valuable tool, it is essential to acknowledge its benefits while also highlighting the constraints 'in crossing the boundaries between subject pedagogies for the student teacher'. This is essential to reach the common interest of both learners and teachers, i.e. experiencing a more motivating and pleasant language learning and teaching practice (Hulse and Owens, 2019, p. 28).

Similarly, the last research that will be examined is a qualitative case study which was focused on the implementation of process drama teacher-training programs in pre-service teaching contexts (Athiemoolam, 2013). The research study involved 63-first year intermediate phase teachers in a series of drama-in-education workshops and aimed at investigating their opinions about whether process drama could improve English oral communication skills and whether pre-service teachers would be prepared to use such creative approach.

Through feedback sessions, dramatic presentations and both written and oral reflections, participants could reflect on their hands-on experiences as well as the application of process drama techniques in a classroom context, as future potential teachers. The study demonstrated that having experienced in person an improvement in the foreign language oral communication skills, as well as increased self-confidence during the process drama education program, strengthened the motivation and reflection of student-teachers on the future implementation of such interactive pedagogical approach (Athiemoolam, 2013).

It can be concluded that the research studies above examined have concurred on student-teachers' positive disposition to a performative approach for language teaching.

In particular, their first-hand experience with process drama and therefore their involvement in the meaning co-construction and negotiation process allowed student-teachers to reflect on the potential of a performative teaching approach that fosters a participatory and culturally contextualized language learning experience.

On the other hand, it can be argued that the research participants from both studies shared similar concerns when asked to reflect on the possible implementation of process drama for language learning in their future teaching practices. In particular, perplexities were advanced in terms of class control, time organization, lesson planning and dramatic forms' management. This may indicate that such uncertainties could be ascribed on the one hand on the intrinsic unconventional nature of process drama pedagogy but on the other hand on student-teachers' potential vulnerability and insecurity because of their initial professional identity.

Nonetheless, it is almost a truism that in presence of a strong personal interest and predisposition towards drama and its dynamics, there is a greater chance that the implementation of this interdisciplinary approach will have a long-term impact.

In this light, it may be agreed that if such research studies on novice teachers were followed up by further investigation on the perception of process drama by participants themselves once

they became teachers, an even more comprehensive picture of process drama applicability would be obtained.

Moreover, the identification of particular factors which may exercise some influence over language teachers' initial curiosity and subsequent application of process drama pedagogy, as well its transformative impact on teachers' professional identity could contribute to further delve into the teacher/artist professional figure.

In Chapter Two, the theoretical discourse has been funneled into the figure of the teacher/artists, as their artistic role has an impact on students' language learning outcomes.

From the initial definition of the teacher/artist, emphasis was then placed on their functions, particularly on the quintessential quadripartite thinking. It emerged that the learning process, characterized by an extensive reflective practice, despite being quite challenging is crucial for teacher/artists to acquire the needed expertise that enables them to skillfully manage both the form and the language learning objectives.

Contextually, in Chapter Two particular attention was drawn to the empirical research studies that focused on the importance of language teachers' learning experiences with process drama and the constraints they encountered when crossing pedagogical boundaries. In particular, the distinction between experienced language teachers and beginner/pre-service teachers was adopted as a functional criterion that proved useful for the literature review.

Not only was Chapter Two designed to introduce other key concepts for the underlying theoretical framework of process drama teacher/artists, but it will prove functional for Chapter Three, especially for the elaboration of the main threads supporting the research gap.

To this end, in the next chapter a general introduction to the research problem and an explanation of its significance will be provided, before moving on the purpose statement and the research questions informing the present inquiry.

CHAPTER THREE
3. The research study

In Chapter One, an overview of the theories underpinning process drama for L2 educational contexts has been provided alongside the identification of its main features and the examination of the most significant empirical studies proving process drama positive impact on students' language learning outcomes.

As regards Chapter Two, the theoretical discourse has been focused on the figure of the *teacher/artist* adopting a performative approach to L2 teaching, given both the strategic importance of such role and the more limited research contribution on the artistry of teachers adopting process drama to L2 teaching practices.

The *language teacher using process drama pedagogy* has been defined as an artist using his/her generative contribution in order to co-create and co-learn in the process of dramatic exploration with students. In particular, the teacher/artist is *process-oriented* and owns the ability to guide students' reasoning and engage them as co-artists in the co-construction of a dramatic world, which turns into a multisensory language learning experience involving cognition, emotions, embodiment and imagination. To juggle the artistry of process drama and the intended language learning objectives requires the teacher/artist be given the chance to master a pedagogical and content knowledge in both domains. In particular, it is desirable that the teacher/artist simultaneously functions as *playwright*, *director*, *actor* and *teacher*, in order to be able to comply with the language curricular aim and the unfolding of the dramatic narrative. For the above-described quadripartite thinking function to be realized, teachers need to be able to possess the knowing-in action, namely the intuitive choices that are made while in action. To acquire the knowing-in action, teachers are required to develop the ability of *reflecting in action*, while carrying out the process drama activities, and *reflecting on action*, after the activities are finished.

From the previously examined literature review, it has been acknowledged that the acquisition of teacher's artistry is of crucial importance, as the quality of students' language learning experience is extensively influenced by teachers' artistry level (Stinson and Freebody, 2006;

Stinson, 2009; Dunn and Stinson, 2011; Alvarez and Beaven, 2014). Hence, the importance of adequate teacher training.

It also emerged that the assimilation of such pedagogical aesthetic among educators is a complex process, requiring teachers' commitment to a constant reflective practice in order to develop the experiential knowledge, i.e. the pedagogical content knowledge, which contributes to teachers' confidence with process drama in classroom practice. To this end, a synergy between teachers adopting such performative approach and the school community in which they operate is a valuable asset.

On the other hand, there seems to exist an obstacle to the overall process drama implementation. In other words, it emerged that although teachers commonly agree on process drama benefits on students' language learning, when it comes to autonomously try process drama in class, it seems that the possibility of failure combined with the difficulty of thinking in the aforementioned quadripartite manner, as well as school constraints such as exam preparation, hinder teachers from practicing process drama for language teaching in class. Subsequently, the missed opportunity to experience the gap between process drama induction and teachers' on-site practice, which corresponds to the place of invention (Stronach 2009, p. 165, in Hulse and Owens, 2019, p. 20) leads to the persisting teachers' inexperience which culminates in the final abandonment of process drama practice. However, it might be commonly agreed that teachers' belief about the implementation of process drama can change if teachers are given the chance to step out of their conventional roles to explore the benefits of a process drama experience as students. Besides, it could be inferred that if the training on process drama is a voluntary undertaking, this will imply teachers' greater disposition to try a process drama approach and therefore acquire the necessary teaching artistry (Alvarez and Beaven, 2014).

In this regard, significant questions still remain about L2 teachers' learning experience of process drama approach. Indeed, there is little research on the underlying reasons for L2 teachers to approach process drama pedagogy and therefore, by focusing attention on the factors influencing teachers' exposure to this approach, a greater knowledge of this professional figure might be acquired. Moreover, by investigating if and how L2 teachers' enthusiasm for a performative teaching approach changes from the moment of training to the in-class implementation, meaningful results could be yielded that would confirm or corroborate the above statement on the low level of process drama in-class implementation. In this perspective,

in an attempt to address the L2 teachers' disposition towards process drama, it was deemed useful to also delve into language teachers' learning path of process drama and the consequent classroom application, as the process drama educational experience itself plays fundamental on teachers' perception of the performative approach, with important consequences on the in-site practice. Ultimately, the limited research literature suggests that there is scope for further studies on how teachers understand and respond to their learning and teaching experiences with process drama pedagogy. Through such investigation, it was expected to explore the transformative impact of process drama on L2 teachers, thereby aligning with the aforementioned empirical research studies attesting process drama positive impact on students' language learning outcomes.

The importance of gaining knowledge of L2 teachers' reasons for approaching process drama pedagogy as well as their process drama training and implementation journey is especially relevant for those professionals who seek to explore creative methodologies for L2 teaching, as well as teacher trainers. As the need for students to become proficient in spoken languages to be employable is increasing, investigations on process drama as a learner-centered effective pedagogy that fosters oral communication, intercultural language learning skills while considering affective and collaborative factors gain in importance. So, if process drama can promote a more 'holistic view of language' (Stinson and Freebody, 2006, p.28), it is crucial to contribute to the L2 teacher/artist's educational discourse. Indeed, identifying teachers' beliefs about effective teaching practices, such as the performative approach to L2 teaching under discussion, might contribute to the future development of effective training interventions.

This paragraph provided an overview of the research gap in which this study has been situated. The research purpose and its related research question will be presented in the following subparagraph.

3.1 Methodology: from research problem to research purpose

The purpose of this basic qualitative inquiry was to outline the professional figure of the teacher/artist and identify the factors inducing L2 teachers to learn and then apply process drama pedagogy to their teaching practices, besides raising awareness about the major difficulties encountered from process drama training to in-classroom practice. Ultimately, through the exploration of teachers' responses to their overall process drama learning experience, there was the attempt to discover insights relevant to the transformative impact of process drama approach on their personal and professional identity.

The research inquiry was based on the hypothesis that there exist certain characteristics whereby some teachers are more inclined to use process drama within their teaching routines. In particular, it was intended to verify how teachers' reasons to undertake a process drama educational path influenced the consequent in-class implementation of such performative approach for L2 teaching. The study was guided by the following research question and its related sub-questions:

➢ *What is the profile of a teacher/artist adopting process drama for L2 teaching?*

    1) What are the individual characteristics?

    2) What are the contextual characteristics?

    3) What are the factors that lead the teacher to learn and adopt such approach?

    4) What are the challenges faced by the teacher?

    5) What are the personal, relational, and professional characteristics?

These interrogatives were triggered by one of the most consistent results shared by research studies in the literature of reference, i.e. the process drama positive effects on students' language learning experience. Indeed, as the transformative impact of such performative approach on language students has been extensively evidenced by numerous empirical studies, it seemed appropriate to investigate whether this was applicable to the L2 teachers as well.

The research operationalization has been pursued through the identification of concrete issues to be investigated in practical terms, as will be gradually unfolded in the chapter.

The focus will now shift to the design of the study.

3.2 Design of the study

The research question, situated in the teacher-education applied field of practice concerning teachers' beliefs on their experiences with process drama for L2 teaching, informed the *qualitative research paradigm* for the present inquiry. Indeed, 'qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences' (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p.6). It was through an inductive process that culminated in description-based product, that the attempt to construct 'an understanding of the meaning of experience' was undertaken (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p.21). The qualitative nature of the investigation was aligned with an *interpretative paradigm*, as the understanding of the 'subjective world of human experience' was inherent in the research project.

3.2.1 Sample selection

To identify the research sample, a *criterion-based non-probability* strategy was used. In fact, participants were required to comply with the following criteria:

1) To be L2 teachers;

2) To have gained knowledge about the process drama approach through training courses, workshops or other;

3) To have used the process drama approach for L2 teaching in class at least once.

In order to ensure study validity and reliability, for the sample selection reference was made to Dr. Erika Piazzoli, as an expert in the field of process drama training for teachers. Besides, other participants were reached through the 'Drama in Language Teaching' private Facebook group, managed by Stefanie Giebert and Eva Göksel, research experts in drama and theatre in language teaching and learning.

The designated contacts were individually reached by email where they were provided with the research synthesis outlining its objectives and the informed consent module to be returned in case of participation. They were also invited to contact other colleagues, who could have met the same criteria for the research study participation, if interested in the investigation. As a matter of fact, through such *snowballing strategy*, there was the attempt to maximize the research outcome, and increase the response rate. In light of the minimum sample size of 10

units that had originally been set, the 16 final research participants were retained sufficient for this study.

3.2.2 Data collection and analysis

An *asynchronous online written interview* was adopted as data collection instrument. Such methodological choice was informed by considerations on time constraints, type of sample, type of information needed to answer the research questions, as well as the researcher's experience. The research tool was ad hoc designed for the study and developed through a recursive refinement process lasting about one month. An attempt was made to obtain a balance of questions which asked for *facts*, *experiences* and *opinions*.

The first part of the interview was aimed at retrieving participants' individual characteristics and information about the contextual background of reference, while the following parts were organized as to reflect three distinct moments of the teacher/artist's experience with process drama, in the attempt to facilitate the retrieval of anecdotes. Hence, respondents' reflection was guided through the following moments:

-Before learning process drama;

-During the training on process drama;

-After applying process drama in class.

In addition to the aforementioned time division, the following three main thematic areas, related to the figure of the teacher/artist, have been identified, i.e.:

-Motivation;

-Challenges;

-Efficacy as the outcome of the training on process drama and its classroom application.

In line with the above time division, to examine the intrinsic and extrinsic factors of teachers influencing their disposition to learn and apply process drama for L2 teaching, questions about the motivation, most of which were Likert type, were grouped as follows:

-Motivation to learn process drama;

-Motivation during the learning experience of process drama;

-Motivation after the classroom application of process drama.

Data analysis on teachers' motivation towards process drama has been informed by the basic definition of the Self Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 2000). In particular, the following dimensions have been taken into account:

-Intrinsic motivation

-Extrinsic motivation (i.e., identified or external regulation)

According to the original definition, intrinsic motivation involves 'doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable' (Deci and Ryan, 1985, p. 55) and 'the reward of the activities is the spontaneous feelings of engagement, excitement, accomplishment, or awe which accompany them' (Deci, Kasser, Ryan, 1997, p.60).

On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is defined as the instrumental motivation which is responsible for actions that involve a final recognition. In particular, it is controlled by an external locus of causality, thus by factors that are external to the individual (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Nonetheless, behaviors which are originally motivated by an external cause, can be self-determined and therefore become intrinsically motivated through internalization, i.e. '[…]the process of taking in a value or regulation' (Deci and Ryan, 2000, p.60) and integration, i.e. '[…] the process by which individuals more fully transform the regulation into their own so that it will emanate from their sense of self' (Deci and Ryan, 2000, p.60).

With reference to data analysis on teachers' approach towards process drama for L2 teaching, an attempt was undertaken to identify teachers' choice for such performative approach as either intrinsically or extrinsically driven. Besides, it was sought to further delimit extrinsic motivation as either identified regulated or external regulated.

Hence, teachers' autonomous choice towards a process drama approach for L2 teaching was considered *intrinsically motivated*, particularly when teachers identified their predisposition to curiosity and creativity as the main driver, whereas when the choice for such pedagogical approach was primarily targeted towards an external receiver, i.e. the students, teachers' disposition towards a process drama approach was considered an *identified regulation*. As a matter of fact, although the beneficiary of a process drama approach is external, i.e. the students, the choice to adopt such performative approach is the teacher's own. Teachers devoted themselves to such activity because they recognized a value and therefore identified with this activity and understood its usefulness (Deci and Ryan, 2000).

On the other hand, when teachers' decision to adopt a process drama approach was primarily controlled by external factors, such as professional prestige or economic incentives, such choice

was considered an *external regulation.* Operationally, the answers to the open-ended questions on teacher's motivation were analyzed inductively, in an attempt to identify key words and insights that could guide reflection on the data. In order to define the type of motivation that could have informed teachers' choices of a process drama approach for L2 teaching, a comparison was made between the above-mentioned conjectures and the personal profile identified through background information.

In addition, the summary model on the *effective teacher* (Concina, 2016) has been used as a categorical scheme for the whole data analysis and for the answers to the research question and its sub-questions. Such model includes the main results of the theoretical research on effective teaching and its underlying assumption is that the teaching process is characterized not only by disciplinary content and specific teaching techniques, but also by more general skills which concern different aspects of the personality and the professional abilities of the teachers (Concina, 2016, p. 21). Indeed, among the main factors that significantly impact on students' learning and that can be directly controlled by teachers are those aspects related to the teacher's *personal*, *relational* and *professional* dimension (Concina, 2016, p. 28).

Hence, adopting the theoretical perspective of the effective teacher, an attempt was made to identify the motivational factors and the challenges faced by the respondents as more relevant to a personal, relational or professional dimension. Furthermore, the personal, relational and professional characteristics of the interviewees were identified in order to understand the impact of the learning and didactic application of process drama on the teachers' efficacy.

As for the personal dimension, characteristics such as teachers' enthusiasm towards their didactic activities (Gurney, 2007; Karakas, 2013 in Concina 2016, p. 28) and their social skills (Koutrouba 2012, in Concina 2016, p. 28) were taken into account, whereas for the relational dimension, emphasis was placed on the teacher's empathic understanding and attention to the educational and personal needs of the student (Rogers, 1969; Onwuegbuzie et al. 2007, in Concina, 2016, p. 28). Lastly, as for the professional dimension, aspects related to the teacher's disciplinary knowledge and teaching skills (Zhang, 2004; Moreno Rubio, 2009, in Concina, 2016, p. 28), as well as learning activity planning and classroom management skills (DfEE, 2000, in Concina 2016, p. 28) were taken into consideration.

Participants received by e-mail all the necessary information for the written interview completion. The right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality were also guaranteed to each participant, as well as the possibility to receive a copy of the final draft upon request. The e-

mail comprised a brief research description and the direct link to the Google form with reference to its time completion (25 minutes). In the Google form, each different section of questions was marked by a brief description of its objectives, in order to recalibrate respondents' focus when switching from one topic to another. To ensure *the usability of the instrument*, this was piloted by two respondents drawn from the possible sample, who could not be included in the final one, for non-compliance with all the sample selection criteria. Hence, the refinement process of the research tool was assisted by the *tool piloting* and especially by the *thesis supervisory team*.

The last measure adopted to ensure the research tool usability concerned the *language*. Originally, a single research tool in English, to operate with a standard version suitable for all its participants, was planned. Yet, the sample selection revealed several Italian native speaker participants, hence an Italian translation was considered. Such choice was informed by the fact that 'a writer's native language is influenced by spontaneous reflexes, resulting in greater expressiveness, emotionality and visceral power [...]' (Pavlenko, 2005, in Piazzoli, 2018, p. 124). A verbatim translation from English into Italian was realized by the researcher, as English language proficient user who was also involved in the data analysis. Since the research study needed to be written up in English, answers to the Italian version of the questionnaire were translated verbatim into English in order to achieve linguistic consistency in the data analysis. Answers collected through Google Forms were automatically imported into two Excel worksheets, respectively one with data in English and one with data in Italian. Then, a single worksheet was created with all the answers translated into English. Each participant's answer was encoded with the pseudonym that has been previously assigned to each interviewee using the same initial letter as the e-mail address and taking into account the participant's nationality. As data were collected, they were explored inductively through working hypotheses and informed guesses. The preliminary analysis entailed the exploration of data on a micro level, i.e. within the experience of each individual interviewee, then further interpretations were sought on a macro level, i.e. by comparing the data previously interpreted for each participant.

3.2.3 Study participants

The participants, selected according to the aforementioned criteria, consisted of different ages, backgrounds, and language didactic experiences. Of the 75 contacts directly reached by e-mail from January to March 2020, 16 of them, namely 12 female and 4 male teachers, participated in the research inquiry. The sample was quite homogeneous age-wise, as seven of the participants were over 45, five were aged between 35 and 45, and the remaining four were between 25 and 34. The participants were of mixed *nationalities* (European, American, Asian and Middle Eastern), as shown in Table 2 below, which includes pseudonyms (assigned for privacy reasons), age and academic qualifications.

Table 2 – *Summary table of the study participants grouped by age.*

Gender	Pseudonym	Nationality	Age	Academic qualification
F	Sandy	Czech	> 45	Language and Drama (MA)
	Teresa	Italian	> 45	Language and Drama (MA)
	Nicoletta	Italian	> 45	Language and Drama (PhD)
	Rose	Irish	> 45	Drama and Education (MA)
	Florence	British/Italian	> 45	Language (MA)
M	Mark	Australian	> 45	Drama (MA)
	Gary	Irish/British	> 45	Language, Drama, Film (PhD)
F	Brenda	Czech	35-45	Language (MA)
	Peggy	Turkish	35-45	Language (PhD)
	Dakota	Irish	35-45	Language and Literature (PhD)
	Alice	Japanese/British	35-45	Language and Drama (PhD in Education)
M	Harry	Colombian/ Resident of US	35-45	Language and Drama (MA)
F	Carlotta	Italian	25-34	Language (MA)
	Greta	Italian	25-34	Language and Language Teaching (MA)
	Mildred	Irish	25 34	Language, Drama, Montessori Ed. (MA)
M	Carl	Indian	25-34	Language (MA)

As far as their *educational background* was concerned, 11 research participants held a Bachelor' s and a Master' s degree, whereas the remaining 5 participants also had a PhD. Almost half of the participants pursued academic studies in both Language and Drama fields, with the other half being specialized entirely in the Language field, and a very small minority specialized exclusively in Drama.

As regards their *professional field* (Table 3), most of the participants were teaching English as SL or FL, while the remaining participants were teaching Italian as SL or FL.

Table 3- *Language taught by the study participants and country where it was taught.*

Participant	Language taught through process drama	Country where it was taught through process drama
Sandy	EFL (English as a foreign language)	Czech Republic
Brenda	EFL (English as a foreign language)	Czech Republic
Alice	EFL (English as a foreign language)	Japan
Carl	EFL (English as a foreign language)	India
Peggy	EFL (English as a foreign language)	Turkey
Harry	ESL (English as a second language)	New York State
Dakota	ESL (English as a second language)	Japan
Mark	ESL (English as a second language)	China
Gary	ESL (English as a second language)	Germany
Mildred	ESL (English as a second language)	Ireland
Rose	ESL (English as a second language)	Ireland
Nicoletta	ITA FL (Italian as a foreign language)	Netherlands
Carlotta	ITA SL (Italian as a second language)	Italy
Greta	ITA SL (Italian as a second language)	Italy
Teresa	ITA SL (Italian as a second language)	Italy
Florence	ITA SL (Italian as a second language)	Italy

In this sub-paragraph the study participants were presented through the use of visual tables. In the following section, emphasis will be placed on the research tool used for data collection.

3.2.4 Research instrument

A written interview consisting of four thematic sub-sections was employed for data collection, for a total of 56 questions. The instrument involved multiple-choice and Likert questions accompanied by open-ended questions to allow respondents to provide examples and explanations on their previous answers. Table 4 below provides a visual breakdown of the questions in the written interview according to the different subsections.

Table 4- *Interview structure and question organization per thematic section.*
(The template used for the written interview with the full list of questions can be found in the appendix)

Thematic sections	Question number
Background information	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17, Q18, Q19
Before the training Challenges before process drama	Q20, Q21, Q22, Q23, Q24
Motivation to learn process drama	Q25 (Likert), Q26
Definition of the teacher/artist	Q27, Q28, Q29
During the training Challenges faced during the course	Q34 (Likert), Q35, Q36 (Likert), Q37, Q38 (Likert), Q39
Motivation: perception on the course	Q30, Q31, Q32 (Likert), Q33
Advice for the training	Q40, Q41, Q42
After the classroom application Challenges during the application	Q43, Q44, Q45 (Likert), Q46, Q47 (Likert), Q48
Motivation: outcome of class application	Q49 (Likert), Q50, Q51, Q52, Q53
Advice for the class application	Q54, Q55, Q56

The first section, i.e. **Background information**, included questions to retrieve respondents' personal data, particularly about their educational background and work context.

The questions in the second part, i.e. ***Before the training on process drama***, were posed to investigate:

-the teachers' desire for change and challenge before attending a process drama training;

-the factors that could have influenced teachers' choice towards the training on process drama;

-the characteristics, according to the respondents, of language teachers using process drama for didactic purposes.

As for the questions in the third part, i.e. ***During the training on process drama***, these were posed to explore:

-the teachers' challenges, i.e. the difficulties encountered during their training;

-the teachers' motivation, i.e. their perceptions of their training on process drama;

-the advice for colleagues attending a training on process drama, based on the personal experience of the respondents.

Last, questions in the fourth part, i.e. ***After the classroom application of process drama***, were aimed at investigating:

-the teachers' challenges, i.e. any possible challenges that the teachers may have encountered during their classroom implementation;

-the teachers' motivation, i.e. the motivational dimension intended as the various forms of regulation underpinning teachers' intrinsic or extrinsic choice to adopt process drama in class;

-the advice for colleagues on their process drama experiments in class, based on the personal experience of the respondents.

Chapter Three has been focused on the research methodology and the design of the study.

It opened with an overview of the research gap in which the research problem was conceived, the study purpose and the research question. The chapter proceeded with the research design, to then move to the sample selection, the study participants, and the research instrument used for data collection.

Chapter Four will be devoted to the data analysis and the discussion of the findings.

Then, to conclude the research, the last paragraph will discuss the limitations of this study and the suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 Data analysis and results for sub-questions one and two

The first phase of the data analysis, which proved functional to provide an answer to the main research question, i.e. *the identification of the profile of the teacher/artist adopting process drama for L2 teaching,* involved the breakdown of each participant's background and contextual information and the data interpretation according to the theories inferred from the theoretical framework. Through such data, an attempt was made to provide an answer to the following sub-questions on the teacher/artist:

> *1) What are the individual characteristics?*
> *2) What are the contextual characteristics?*

As regards the *individual characteristics*, the analysis of the responses concerning the experience of each individual interviewee revealed the following picture:

Table 5- *Participants' individual characteristics*

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS							
Participant	Gender	Age	Nationality	Educational background and academic qualification	Language taught	Years of language teaching	Years of language teaching through process drama
Florence	F	>45	British/ Italian	Language (MA)	ITA SL	32	3
Teresa	F	>45	Italian	Language Teaching (MA); Drama (MA)	ITA SL	>25	1
Sandy	F	>45	Czech	Language (MA);	EFL	24	19
Gary	M	>45	Irish/ British	Language (MA); Drama and Film (PhD)	ESL	23	10

It continues in the following page

Dakota	F	35-45	Irish	Language (MA); Literature (PhD)	ESL	23	10
Rose	F	>45	Irish	Education (BA) Drama (MA)	ESL	20	20
Carlotta	F	25-34	Italian	Language (MA);	ITA SL	10	10
Alice	F	25-34	Japanese/ British	Language (MA); Drama (Academic studies); PhD in Education	EFL	20	8
Peggy	F	35-45	Turkish	Language (PhD)	EFL	17	9
Mark	M	>45	Australian	Drama (MA)	ESL	16	12
Nicoletta	F	>45	Italian	Language (PhD) Drama (individual course)	ITA FL	15	5
Brenda	F	35-45	Czech	Language (MA)	EFL	15	3
Harry	M	35-45	Colombian/ Resident of US	Language (MA); Drama (Academic studies)	ESL	15	2
Greta	F	25-34	Italian	Language (BA); Language Teaching (MA)	ITA SL	6	3
Carl	M	25-34	Indian	Language (MA)	EFL	6	1
Mildred	F	25-34	Italian	Language; Drama; Montessori Ed. (MA)	ESL	3	2

According to the above data, it appeared that the teacher/artist using process drama for L2 teaching is predominantly female (twelve out of sixteen participants); the majority of participants aged over 45 were also confirmed (seven participants over 45, four participants aged between 35-45, and the remaining five participants aged between 25-34). As regards the nationality, it was found that the majority of respondents were European (twelve participants of different European nationalities and the remaining four were from Turkey, Australia, Colombia and India).

With regard to the educational background, the data revealed a larger number of participants (fourteen) specialized in the study of language, of which seven participants also specialized in drama field, and the remaining two participants specialized exclusively in drama. The main language taught was English (precisely six as ESL and five as EFL) followed by Italian (four as ITA SL, and one as ITA FL).

As far as their teaching expertise was concerned, about half of the respondents had more than 20 years of experience in language teaching (seven participants), the other half had more than 10 years of teaching experience (six participants). Three participants had less than 10 years of teaching experience.

As for their experience of language teaching through process drama, only two participants (Rose and Sandy) had about 20 years of experience. Of the other fourteen participants, seven had more than eight years of experience, five participants had two to three years of experience, and the remaining two participants (Carl and Teresa) had only one year of experience.

Consistent with the original rationale, the participants in this study should have been classified according to their teaching experience, using the criterion applied to the review of the empirical studies in Chapter Two, which distinguished between experienced teachers and beginner/pre-service teachers. However, such criterion proved to be incongruous with the narrative nature of the written interview adopted, as it was not always possible to determine from the interviewees' answers to which specific point in their teaching careers their stories about the experience with process drama referred. Nevertheless, as it will be explained late in this paragraph, on the basis of the data collected it was decided to apply a different, but still appropriate, criterion to attempt the participants' classification, namely the frequency with which teachers used process drama in their teaching routines.

As regards the *contextual characteristics* (Table 6), emphasis was placed on the country in which the participants taught the language through process drama, the grade and type of school in which it was taught, with the further distinction of the age of the students and the average number of students in class during the process drama activities.

Table 6- *Participants' contextual characteristics*

CONTEXTUAL CHARACTERISTICS					
Participant	Country where the language is taught through process drama	Type of educational institution	Educational institution	Student age	In-class students' average while using process drama
Alice	Japan	Private	University	Undergraduate students	15
Dakota	Japan	Private	University	Undergraduate students	20
Carl	India	Private	University	Undergraduate students	14
Peggy	Turkey	Public	University	Undergraduate and postgraduate students	25
		Government-funded	In-service training for English teachers	In service teachers	
Florence	Italy	Public	University	Undergraduate and postgraduate students	10
		Public	Centre for teaching Italian L2 to migrants	Adult foreign students	
Gary	Germany	Public	University	Postgraduate students	20

It continues in the following page

Sandy	Czech Republic	Public	Middle school	Students (age 11-13)	20
		Public	High school	Students (age 14-18)	
		Public	University	Undergraduate and postgraduate students	
		Public	Institute for Further Development of Teachers	Pre-service and in-service teachers	
Brenda	Czech Republic	Public	Elementary school	Students (age 6-10)	14
		Private	Language school	Students (age 7-14) Adult students	
Rose	Ireland	Public	Elementary school	Students (age 6-10)	24
Mark	China	Public	Kindergarten	Toddlers	15
Carlotta	Italy	Public	Provincial centers for adult education and training (CPIA)	Adult students	15
		Private	Language schools	Adult students	
		Private	University	Undergraduate and postgraduate students	
Teresa	Italy	Public	Italian language learning university center	Adult foreign students	10
Harry	New York State	Public	High School	Students (age 14-18)	20
		Private	School for adult learning	Adult students	
Nicoletta	Netherlands	Private	Language school	Adult students	10
Greta	Italy	Private	School of Italian as L2	Adult students	8
Mildred	Ireland	Private	English through drama school	Adult students	8

According to the above data, it emerged that most of the teacher/artists using process drama for L2 teaching worked in Italy (four participants, i.e. Florence, Carlotta, Teresa, Greta), teaching Italian mainly at private schools for adult foreign students and at both public and private university to both undergraduate and postgraduate students; other two participants worked in Japan (i.e. Alice and Dakota), teaching English at private university to undergraduate students; other two participants worked in Czech Republic (i.e. Sandy and Brenda), teaching English at public schools of all orders (from elementary to high school), at public university to both undergraduate and postgraduate students, at a public institute for teacher education, and at a private language school for both teenager and adult students; other two participants, worked in Ireland (i.e., Rose and Mildred) teaching English at a public elementary school and at private language school for adult students; Nicoletta worked in Netherlands, teaching Italian at a private language school for adult students; Gary worked in Germany, teaching English at a public university, to postgraduate students; Harry worked in New York State, teaching English at a public high school and at a private language school for adult students; Carl worked in India, teaching English at a private university, to undergraduate students; Peggy worked in Turkey, teaching English at public university, to both undergraduate and postgraduate students and at a Government-funded in-service training for English teachers; Mark worked in China, teaching English at a public kindergarten.

Hence, on a bigger picture, it emerged that the great majority of respondents within this study taught mainly to adult students in private educational institutions, with more than 10 students on average in class.

Although this study was not aimed at obtaining a general picture of the teacher/ artist, but rather at identifying the particularities within each case, a comparison was made between the individual cases in order to obtain further interpretations of both the individual and contextual characteristics of the teacher/artist. Hence, an attempt was made to identify common patterns among the participants and to substantiate these models with the theories and hypotheses derived from the theoretical framework on which this study was based.

In particular, emphasis was placed on:

- the frequency of use of process drama by teachers;
- the type of educational institution in which the language was taught through process drama;
- the cultural background of the students involved in the process drama activities;
- the language teaching experience of teachers;
- the educational background of teachers;
- the type of training on process drama which teachers have received.

As displayed in Figure 3 below, participants were organized according to the *frequency of use* of process drama for L2 teaching. Indeed, all the respondents claimed to use a process drama approach for language teaching, yet a difference in terms of its frequency emerged.

Precisely, only five of the sixteen respondents stated to use a process drama approach for language teaching 'more than half of the time', while the remaining eleven participants claimed to adopt a process drama approach for language teaching 'less than half of the time'. Thus, participants were categorized into two groups, *the regular practitioners,* i.e. teachers who often use process drama for language teaching purposes, and *the casual practitioners,* i.e. teachers who sometimes adopt process drama for language didactic purposes.

By comparing the individual and contextual characteristics between the two groups, an important distinction appeared as regards the *type of educational institution* in which teachers worked. In particular, data revealed that:

- *regular practitioners* mainly taught to adult students at *private educational institutions*;
- *casual practitioners* (most of them) taught to adult students at *public universities*.

Figure 3- *Study participants, grouped by process drama frequency of use.*
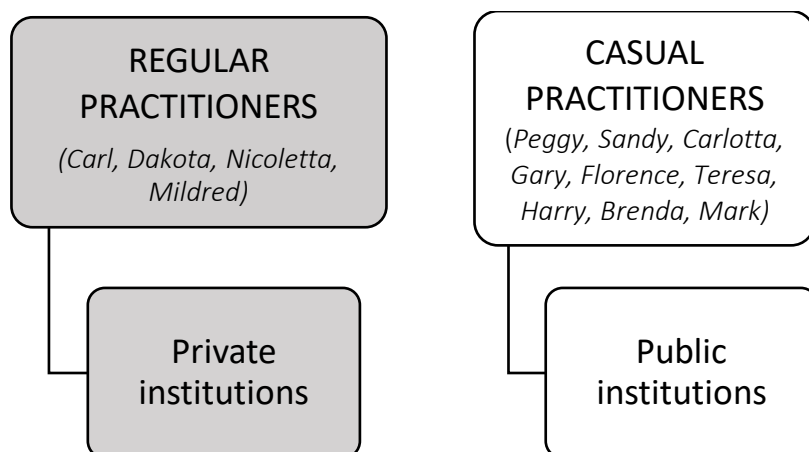
The data confirmed that *contextual features* such as the school environment may influence teachers' disposition towards a performative approach for language teaching.

Indeed, data suggested that teachers working for public educational systems were required to face with stricter contingences that would impede a more frequent use of process drama in class. Among the most quoted, was the rigid time management:

> *'Unfortunately, our schedule is paced by outside factors. I mean, it is not my decision when to finish the course; a bell rings and the lesson finishes. It is frustrating if the drama has not ended yet when the bell rings. I don't even begin if I think there is not enough time […]'. (Peggy)*

> *'The lessons were too short. 45 minutes, and it took a while before we could start, and we also had to do other things… (Brenda)*

> *'Time' (Gary; Mark); 'Managing time' (Harry)*

> *'I had a course book to follow and a strict timetable which made it difficult to include drama without a lot of planning. However, this difficulty inspired me to develop my own course to teach English entirely through drama'(Mildred)*

As a matter of fact, the last quote belonged to a study participant which started teaching ESL through process drama at a public educational institution and eventually ended up developing a specific private language course which was entirely taught through drama.

Both the cases of Alice and Greta, displayed in Table 7 below, represented an e*xception within the casual practitioners'* group, as data confirmed that both teachers worked for a private and not for a public institution, as all the other casual practitioners.

Table 7- *Exceptions within casual practitioners*

Participant	Language taught	Educational institution where the language is taught through process drama	Country where the language is taught through process drama
Alice	EFL	**Private university** (15 undergraduate students on average)	Japan
Greta	ITA SL	**Private school** of Italian as L2 for foreign adults (8 students on average)	Italy

In the above cases, *students' cultural background* seemed to be a crucial factor for the teachers' classroom application of process drama.

In particular, as regards the first case of Alice, it is known that Japanese students are accustomed to more teacher-centered teaching styles and therefore process drama, as a student-centered teaching approach, may have failed to find support from students.

> *'Japanese students are unfamiliar with drama and could misunderstand process drama as being a frivolous activity. Therefore, care was needed to ensure students understood the purpose and reasons behind its use. Students are used to teacher centered learning and thus scaffolding for student empowerment was also an issue'. (Alice)*

Indeed, 'in traditional language classrooms as in China, Japan, and Korea, the traditional stereotype of the teacher as an authority in the eyes of the learner is deeply rooted and has always been an obstacle in maximizing the effectiveness of using Process drama in language classrooms' (Liu, 2000, p. 18).

As regards the second case of Greta, a teacher of Italian as a foreign language in a private school of Italian L2 for foreign adults, students' resistance to such performative approach could be traced back to a strong multicultural component.

> *'[…] In my case it is not easy to form classes with students who want to experiment with such methods'. (Greta)*

As far as *regular practitioners* were concerned, data suggested that Rose (Table 8) proved to be an uncommon case within this group, both in terms of the type of institution where the language was taught through process drama and in terms of the age of students.

Table 8- *Rose*: *unusual case within regular practitioners*

Participant	Age	Years of language teaching	Years of language teaching through process drama	Language taught	Educational institution where the language is taught through process drama	Country where the language is taught through process drama
Rose	>45	**20**	**20**	ESL	**Public elementary school** (24 students on average)	Ireland

Data confirmed that Rose regularly used process drama for language teaching, but unlike the other regular practitioners, she taught at a public elementary school, with an average of 24 students in class. Another peculiarity within this case concerned the teacher's professional experience. In fact, the data revealed that teaching language through process drama has been a constant practice throughout her professional career (she has been teaching ESL for 20 years and has constantly been doing it through process drama). Accordingly, taking into account the teacher's professional field of expertise, it could be argued that the combination of theatrical and educational studies (i.e. a Master in Theatre Studies and a Bachelor in Education) as well as her previous personal experiences in theatre '*acting, directing, educational and forum theatre (Rose)*' have made an important contribution to her regular application of process drama for language teaching. To this end, data showed how the academic qualification in the field of education provided the teacher with pedagogical knowledge that proved useful for the application of process drama pedagogy.

> '*Adapting process drama to the subject content was not demanding. During the B. Ed I was used to adapting methodologies right across the curriculum. […] The B. Ed covered many aspects of teaching language. Process drama was one of many*' (Rose)

Teachers' *educational background* (Figure 4) was another important aspect to examine in order to delve into the figure of the teacher/artist and to understand the relationship between teacher's training and the application of process drama in class.

Figure 4 - *Study participants' field of expertise*
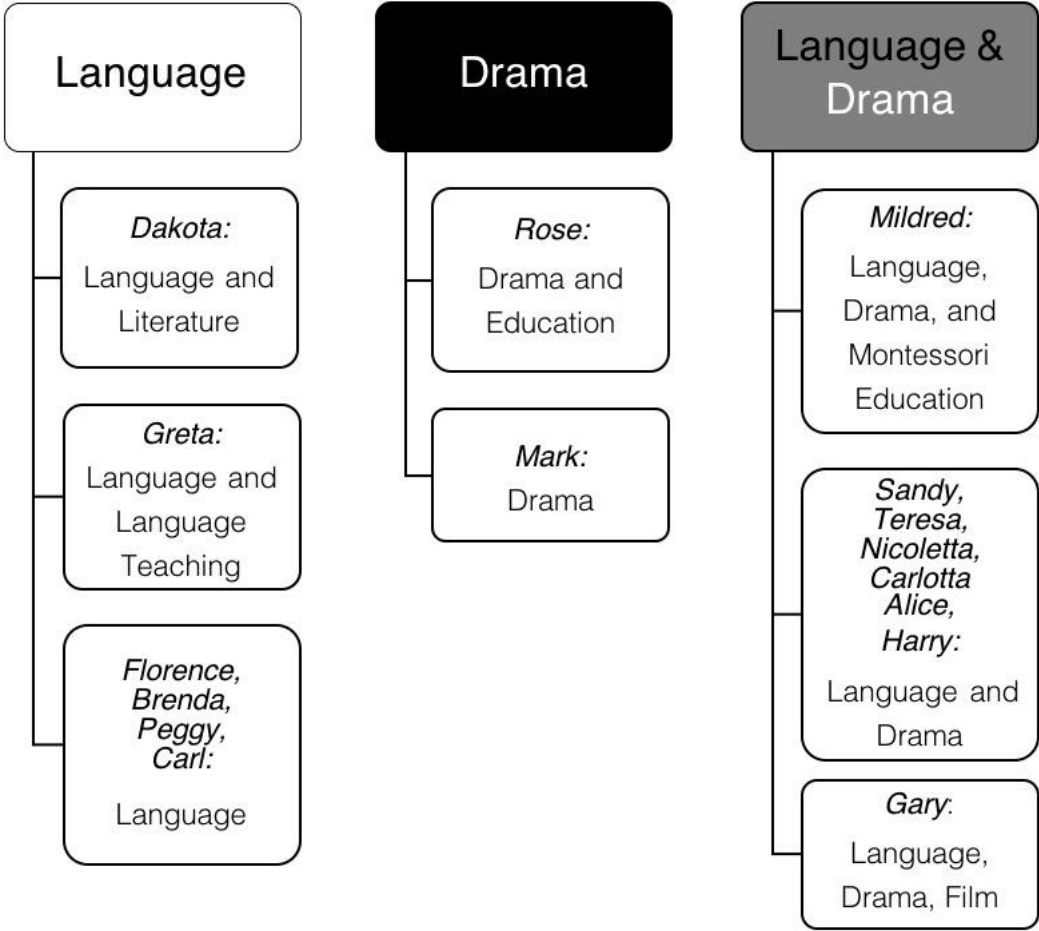
As graphically displayed, only seven participants out of sixteen pursued formal academic studies in both Language and Drama fields, and out of the remaining nine, two participants attended specific drama studies, whereas the remaining seven participants were formally specialized exclusively in the Language field.

Yet, by taking into account also *non-formal training experiences*, it emerged that almost all of the participants who did not formally major in theatres studies (everybody except for Rose and Mark) have acquired drama-based knowledge either through self-training, or hands-on amateur theatrical experiences, as well as theatre workshops.

As far as specific *process drama instruction*, data revealed that less than half of the participants, i.e. four out of sixteen, attended a formal and in-depth training on process drama (Table 9), of which two programs were specifically on process drama for language teaching. Moreover, against expectations, it emerged that those teachers who undertook a formal training on process drama were the *casual practitioners*.

Table 9- *Practitioners who attended a formal training on process drama*

Participant	Previous theatrical experiences	Before the training on process drama	Formal training on process drama
Brenda *(casual practitioner)*	-acting, directing, writing; - doing plays with children, doing workshops and summer camps with theatre; -having an amateur company.	-knowledge of techniques from seminars and conferences; -prior knowledge as former student of theatre (one year theatre studies in the US);	-3 semesters on process drama, organized by the DAMU and ARTAMA in Prague, not specific for language teaching; -3-day course 'Mantle of the Expert', organized by Mantle of the Expert in England (Tim Taylor, Luke Abbott).
Harry *(casual practitioner)*	- Boal, Devising, Musical theatre, and technical theatre.	-no prior knowledge of process drama.	-3-year program in Applied theatre at the City University of New York, on process drama in general, not specific for language teaching.
Mark *(casual practitioner)*	-practiced theatre since he was 5 years old.	-no clue as it was long time ago.	-process drama training at Queensland University of Technology as part of his undergraduate degree, with two units specific on process drama for L1 teaching.
Sandy *(casual practitioner)*	-work-related drama experience as she was an ELT teacher at a theatre university in Brno.	- no prior knowledge about process drama	-3-year process drama training, organized by the British Council in Czech Republic, with the last two years precisely about process drama for language teaching.

On the other hand, *regular practitioners* belonged to the group of teachers who did not attend a formal process drama training (Table 10). Yet they acquired process drama pedagogical content knowledge through workshops, extensive personal research and drawing on theatre-based studies which partially focused on process drama.

Table 10- *Practitioners who did not attend a formal training on process drama*

Participant	Previous theatrical experiences	Before the training on process drama	Non-formal training on process drama
Carl (*regular practitioner*)	-work related: involved with amateur school and university drama group - acting and direction.	-no prior knowledge about process drama.	-extensive research for his Ma thesis on process drama; -several workshops at various conferences.
Nicoletta (*regular practitioner*)	-several courses by professor and playwright Paolo Puppa; -several theatre courses in Amsterdam.	-no prior knowledge about process drama.	-one-week course on the use of drama for language teaching at Ca Foscari training school for teachers of Italian for foreigners (one-day on process drama for language teaching). -extensive personal research.
Dakota (*regular practitioner*)	- theatre and dance experience	-no prior knowledge about process drama.	-several workshops during the Drama-in-Education Days Conference in Zug,
Mildred (*regular practitioner*)	-improvisation course and a scene study course.	-no prior knowledge about process drama.	-research on drama for language teaching for her thesis during her master Drama in education.
Rose (*regular practitioner*)	-acting, directing, educational / forum theatre	-previous knowledge of process drama during the B. Ed.	-combination of theatre studies with education studies.
Greta (*casual practitioner*)	- amateur theatre workshops.	-no prior knowledge about process drama.	- process drama workshop for language teaching during a summer school in Padova.
Carlotta (*casual practitioner*)	-experiences in the theatrical field, both on a practical level (5 years of theatre school) and theoretical level (degree in humanities for communication).	-no prior knowledge about process drama.	-several workshops and conferences on the theme; -first-hand research on the methodology; - first-hand experience during her training courses for future teachers.

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Participant	Previous theatrical experiences	Before the process drama training	Non-formal training on process drama
Teresa (*casual practitioner*)	-Theatre of the Oppressed; - Boal workshops and theatre studies.	-readings.	-4 hours course of process drama for language teaching at the University Grenoble Faculty of Modern Languages.
Florence (*casual practitioner*)	-Workshops for full-scale theatre in L2.	-prior knowledge from a presentation at a conference; -read scientific articles.	- a one-day training course about process drama for language teaching, at the University of Padova; -various workshops at Summer Schools and conferences.
Peggy (*casual practitioner*)	-a couple of local amateur theatre attempts.	-no prior knowledge about process drama.	-several drama-for-education courses; -a 320-hour general drama for education training course, by Contemporary Drama Association in Turkey.
Gary (*casual practitioner)*	-theatrical experiences in High School and College; -Work-related workshops.	-no formal prior knowledge but experienced in person as a student in school.	- a general process drama Module on MA course in New York (CUNY).
Alice (*casual practitioner*)	- professional actor.	-no prior knowledge about process drama.	- research for her doctorate on process drama; - self-initiated process drama practitioner.

More than half of the participants did not access any content knowledge about process drama for language teaching during their academic career. Four participants out of sixteen, i.e. Brenda, Florence, Teresa and Rose, acquired information through scientific articles, conferences, seminars, and two research participants, i.e. Brenda and Gary, had experienced process drama as theatre former students. From these data it would seem that most academic language teaching curricula do not include any content on process drama pedagogy for language teaching.

> *'Process drama was never mentioned in any of my teaching training and I have a BA in linguistics and a masters in Tesol' (Harry)*

4.1.1 Discussion

The participants in this study had different *language teaching experience* and different experiences of language teaching through process drama. In two cases, in particular that of Rose and that of Sandy, the experience of language teaching and that of language teaching through process drama were almost equivalent. Nonetheless, through the data analysis of this study it was not possible to take a stand with regard to the rationale in Trent (2014, in Hulse and Owens, 2019), according to which student-teachers are more open to innovative teaching practices than experienced professionals. In fact, none of the teachers in this study was a novice teacher, as all but Carl, Greta and Mildred had more than ten years of teaching experience and all claimed to use process drama in their teaching practices. On the other hand, the results in this study rather proved that these teachers with previous teaching experience had the confidence to adjust their existing practices to the less teacher-centered role required by process drama pedagogy, relying on their solid subject knowledge.

Moreover, the data analysis showed that *the school context*, i.e. the type of educational institution where the language was taught through process drama and *the age of the students* could influence teachers' disposition towards a performative approach for language teaching. Indeed, participants who claimed to use process drama more regularly (i.e. Carl, Mildred, Dakota, Nicoletta) were teaching to adult students, both at private universities and at private language schools for adult students. Rose was an exceptional case, as it emerged that she was regularly using process drama for language teaching from the beginning of her career, but she was teaching the language to children at a public elementary school.

The cultural background of the students seems to have influenced the application of process drama to language teaching by Alice and Greta. In fact, they had to deal with students' resistance towards such performative approach for language learning, as it was perceived unusual.

As regards *the type of training on process drama received by the participants*, the available data suggested that there was no evidence of a direct relation between the type of training and the frequency of use of such performative approach in the teachers' didactic routines (Table 11).

Table 11- *Relation between the type of training on process drama and the frequency of use by the participants.*

Training on process drama	Participant	Age	Language taught	Years of language teaching	Years of language teaching through process drama	Frequency of use of process drama in class
FORMAL TRAINING	Sandy	>45	EFL	24	19	SOMETIMES
	Mark	>45	ESL	16	12	SOMETIMES
	Brenda	35-45	EFL	15	3	SOMETIMES
	Harry	35-45	ESL	15	2	SOMETIMES
NON FORMAL TRAINING	Rose	>45	ESL	20	20	OFTEN
	Dakota	35-45	ESL	23	10	OFTEN
	Nicoletta	>45	ITA FL	15	5	OFTEN
	Carl	25-34	EFL	6	1	OFTEN
	Mildred	25-34	ESL	3	2	OFTEN
	Florence	>45	ESL	32	3	SOMETIMES
	Gary	>45	ESL	23	10	SOMETIMES
	Alice	35-45	EFL	20	8	SOMETIMES
	Carlotta	25-34	ITA SL	10	10	SOMETIMES
	Teresa	>45	ITA SL	>25	1	SOMETIMES
	Peggy	35-45	EFL	17	9	SOMETIMES
	Greta	25-34	ITA SL	6	3	SOMETIMES

Regardless of the teacher's training on process drama, whether it was a prescribed program that teachers had to follow during their academic studies or a more flexible non-formal training, data suggested that there was no standard preparation for the teacher/artists of this study seeking to learn process drama for L2 teaching. As a matter of fact, Alvarez and Beaven (2014) claimed that non-formal training can have a positive impact on language teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of drama practices in their teaching routines. Similarly, most process drama practitioners of this research study proved to have acquired knowledge of process drama through conferences, workshops and self-research, i.e. through non-formal training experiences. Moreover, data revealed that all the participants, before learning process drama, had prior theatrical experience. This could suggest that teachers' hands-on experience with drama, in general, ignited their curiosity and disposition towards the study and practice of a performative approach for language teaching, either through formal or non-formal training occasions.

Nonetheless, *the educational background of teachers* contributed to teachers' disposition towards the learning and the application of such performative approach to language teaching. In fact, this study aligned with the results of Metcalfe (2007) regarding the type of education received by teachers as an element that could influence the use of certain pedagogical approaches. It has been claimed that non-Asian teachers receiving their education in non-Asian countries are more inclined to use unconventional, student-centered approaches to language teaching. Likewise, all process drama practitioners in this research study, including those teaching in Japan, received their process drama education within Western educational contexts.

4.2 Data analysis and results for sub-question three

In order to contribute to the definition of the profile of the teacher/artist adopting process drama for L2 teaching, the third sub-question aimed at identifying *the factors that lead to learning and adopting process drama for L2 teaching.*

Data analysis revealed that for every participant the choice to approach process drama was regulated by teachers' *intrinsic personal motives*. In fact, several participants claimed to have approached process drama because their disposition to curiosity and creativity. Other personal intrinsic characteristics that influenced teachers' disposition towards process drama were:

- *Positive value ascribed to the approach:*
  'I believe that process drama is a pedagogy instead of a one-off drama activity'(Carl);
  'I have always used drama to teach, even before I had any training. It seemed logical to me to include body language, emotional expression and voice work in a language class as they are already part of how we express language' (Mildred);
  'Research into PD's benefits aligned with my students' needs' (Alice);
  'I have approached process drama because I believe in drama approaches to teaching L2 and I wanted to go beyond full-scale theatre projects. I see advantages in terms of motivation, authentic language use, collaborative work, autonomy, developing learning strategies and many more'(Florence).

- *Previous positive personal experiences:*
  'I have always been attracted by theatre and I have always thought that this was a valid and important help in language teaching (having experienced the benefits on myself when learning Dutch)' (Nicoletta);
  'I trained myself in PD because of my personal positive experiences with drama' (Alice);
  'I wish there was a class like that in the world' (Harry);
  'I originally wanted to be a singer and wanted to study singing and acting' (Sandy).

Out of sixteen participants, seven (comprising all five regular practitioners, i.e. Carl, Mildred, Dakota, Nicoletta, Rose) appeared to be motivated towards a training on process drama also due to a *strong relational motive* (Table 11). Indeed, besides their disposition to curiosity and creativity, it appeared that 'the need to create a relational bond with students' was of equal significance.

Table 12- *Intrinsic motivational factors towards learning process drama*

	PERSONAL	RELATIONAL	PROFESSIONAL
Carl	√	√	√
'I have approached process drama because of my disposition to curiosity and creativity'-Agree (personal); *'I have approached process drama because of the need to create a relational bond with my students'- Agree (relational)* *'I have approached process drama because of the need to establish a professional competence'-Disagree (professional)* *'I believe that process drama is a pedagogy instead of a one-off drama activity. I find this useful as a medium for teaching language'***(professional -validity of the approach)***			
Mildred	√	√	
'I have approached process drama because of my disposition to curiosity and creativity'-Completely agree (personal); *'I have approached process drama because of the need to create a relational bond with my students'- Agree (relational)* *'I have approached process drama because of the need to establish a professional competence'-Disagree (professional)* *'I have always used drama to teach, even before I had any training. It seemed logical to me to include body language, emotional expression and voice work in a language class as they are already part of how we express language* ***(amotivation)***			
Dakota	√	√	√
'I have approached process drama because of my disposition to curiosity and creativity'-Completely agree (personal); *'I have approached process drama because of the need to create a relational bond with my students'- Completely agree (relational)* *'I have approached process drama because of the need to establish a professional competence'-Completely agree (professional)* *'I love learning from other practitioners […]' (personal)*			
Nicoletta	√	√	√
'I have approached process drama because of my disposition to curiosity and creativity'-Completely agree (personal); *'I have approached process drama because of the need to create a relational bond with my students'- Completely agree (relational)* *'I have approached process drama because of the need to establish a professional competence'-Completely agree (professional)* *'I have always been attracted by theatre and I have always thought that this was a valid and important help in language teaching (having experienced the benefits on myself when learning Dutch)' (personal)*			
Harry	√	√	√
'I have approached process drama because of my disposition to curiosity and creativity'-Completely agree (personal); *'I have approached process drama because of the need to create a relational bond with my students'- Agree (relational)* *'I have approached process drama because of the need to establish a professional competence'- Agree (professional)*			

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	PERSONAL	RELATIONAL	PROFESSIONAL
Sandy	√	√	√
'I have approached process drama because of my disposition to curiosity and creativity'- Completely agree (personal); 'I have approached process drama because of the need to create a relational bond with my students'- Completely agree (relational) 'I have approached process drama because of the need to establish a professional competence'-Completely agree (professional) 'I originally wanted to be a singer and wanted to study singing and acting' (personal)			
Rose	√	√	√
I have approached process drama because of my disposition to curiosity and creativity'- Agree (personal); 'I have approached process drama because of the need to create a relational bond with my students'- Agree (relational) 'I have approached process drama because of the need to establish a professional competence'-Agree (professional) 'I have witnessed how effective it was compared to other didactic, teacher-led approaches'(professional).			
Greta	√		√
I have approached process drama because of my disposition to curiosity and creativity'- Completely agree (personal); 'I have approached process drama because of the need to create a relational bond with my students'- Slightly agree (relational) 'I have approached process drama because of the need to establish a professional competence'-Completely agree (professional) 'Improve my professional skills' (professional)			
Teresa	√		√
I have approached process drama because of my disposition to curiosity and creativity'- Completely agree (personal); 'I have approached process drama because of the need to create a relational bond with my students'- Not answered (relational) 'I have approached process drama because of the need to establish a professional competence'-Completely agree (professional)			
Alice	√		√
I have approached process drama because of my disposition to curiosity and creativity'-Agree (personal); 'I have approached process drama because of the need to create a relational bond with my students'- Slightly disagree (relational) 'I have approached process drama because of the need to establish a professional competence'- Slightly disagree (professional) 'I trained myself in PD because of my personal positive experiences with drama. Research into PD's benefits aligned with my students' needs' *(professional -validity of the approach)*			

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	PERSONAL	RELATIONAL	PROFESSIONAL
Peggy	√		√
I have approached process drama because of my disposition to curiosity and creativity'- Completely agree (personal); *'I have approached process drama because of the need to create a relational bond with my students'- Slightly agree (relational)* *'I have approached process drama because of the need to establish a professional competence'-Slightly agree (professional)* *'Good way for contextualizing the language'* **(professional-validity of the approach)**			
Mark	√		√
I have approached process drama because of my disposition to curiosity and creativity'- Completely agree (personal); *'I have approached process drama because of the need to create a relational bond with my students'- Disagree(relational)* *'I have approached process drama because of the need to establish a professional competence'-Slightly agree (professional)* *'For research' (professional)*			
Gary	√		√
I have approached process drama because of my disposition to curiosity and creativity'- Completely agree (personal); *'I have approached process drama because of the need to create a relational bond with my students'- Slightly agree(relational)* *'I have approached process drama because of the need to establish a professional competence'-Slightly agree (professional)* *'Professional interest' (professional)*			
Florence	√		√
I have approached process drama because of my disposition to curiosity and creativity'- Completely disagree (personal); *'I have approached process drama because of the need to create a relational bond with my students'- Completely disagree(relational)* *'I have approached process drama because of the need to establish a professional competence'-Completely disagree (professional)* *'I have approached process drama because I believe in drama approaches to teaching L2 and I wanted to go beyond full-scale theatre projects. I see advantages in terms of motivation, authentic language use, collaborative work, autonomy, developing learning strategies and many more' (personal and professional value of the approach)*			
Brenda	√		
I have approached process drama because of my disposition to curiosity and creativity'-Agree (personal); *'I have approached process drama because of the need to create a relational bond with my students'- Slightly disagree(relational)* *'I have approached process drama because of the need to establish a professional competence'-Completely disagree (professional)*			

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Carlotta	√		
I have approached process drama because of my disposition to curiosity and creativity'- Completely agree (personal); *'I have approached process drama because of the need to create a relational bond with my students'- Slightly disagree(relational)* *'I have approached process drama because of the need to establish a professional competence'-Slightly agree (professional)*			

During the learning experience of process drama (Table 13), the initial intrinsic personal drive appeared to be confirmed and supported by a major intrinsic *professional motive*. In particular, during the training experience, the great majority of participants perceived the acquisition of useful professional skills and the professional value of the approach, triggered by the extremely positive example of the teacher trainer. As a matter of fact, the *talent of the trainer*, the *participants' deep involvement* and the *total immersion in the activity* proved to be important motivating factors for the teachers.

> *'I was blown away by my personal response to the process dramas we engaged in as students. The experience of learning through drama myself really demonstrated for me the value and power of the method' (Mildred)*

> *'It was a workshop that radically changed the way I see teaching' (Nicoletta)*
> *I was extremely impressed by my teacher trainer and what she could do by process drama; that was the moment when I realized that process drama was what I wanted to do' (Sandy)*

> *'I was impressed by the talent and experience of our professor. The plethora of possibilities I saw in the work.' (Harry)*

All the participants in the study, without any distinction between regular or casual practitioners, shared strong *personal* and *professional intrinsic motivational factors* during their process drama learning experience. The personal motivation to learn process drama was confirmed and galvanized during the training moment by the positive response of the teachers to the learning experience itself and the teacher trainer exemplary model. To this end, it could be agreed that from the reflection on the experiences as students emerges the importance given to the personal teacher-student relationship and the importance of mutual respect and consideration for the achievement of an effective teaching condition (Concina, 2016, p. 26).

Table 13- *Motivational factors during the training on process drama*

	PERSONAL	RELATIONAL	PROFESSIONAL
Dakota	√		√
'As a participant I felt drawn into the world of process drama'; (personal) *'We were all drama practitioners so maybe not the most authentic situation however having done it in both my first and second languages, it really does encourage higher order thinking skills'; (professional)* The process drama training was providing me with useful skills for my profession. *(professional)*			
Rose	√	√	√
I was impressed by how effective & fresh it is. Never the same because of different reactions from individual thinkers';(personal) *'The involvement with the other participants was enthusiastic'; (relational)* The process drama training was providing me with useful skills for my profession. *(professional)*			
Mildred	√	√	√
'I was blown away by my personal response to the process dramas we engaged in as students. The experience of learning through drama myself really demonstrated for me the value and power of the method';(personal) *'I made some life-long friends! The **reflection** sessions, group work and our **shared joy** in the work helped us to **bond**'; (relational)* The process drama training was providing me with useful skills for my profession. *(professional)*			
Nicoletta	√	√	√
It was a workshop that radically changed the way I see teaching';(personal) *'I was impressed by the exciting total involvement of the students in the present moment and the abandonment of qualms and fears';(relational)* The process drama training was providing me with useful skills for my profession. *(professional)*			
Peggy	√	√	√
'It helped to develop personal skills: resilience, cooperation, being kind to each other'; (personal) *'Participants suddenly begin calling themselves "a family" even after a short time, we emotionally bound together'; (relational)* The process drama training was providing me with useful skills for my profession. *(professional)*			
Sandy	√	√	√
*'I was extremely **impressed by my teacher trainer** and what she could do by process drama' (personal)* *'Very active, experiential and **deep involvement with the other participants';(relational)*** The process drama training was providing me with useful skills for my profession *(professional)*			

	PERSONAL	RELATIONAL	PROFESSIONAL
Carlotta	√	√	√

*'Strong involvement with the other participants'; **(relational)***
*'The originality and the ludic aspect of the methodology, the possibility of combining theatre and didactics in a single path'; **(personal and professional)***
The process drama training was providing me with useful skills for my profession
(professional)

	PERSONAL	RELATIONAL	PROFESSIONAL
Harry	√		√

*'I was impressed by **the talent and experience of our professor**. The plethora of possibilities I saw in the work.'**(personal and professional)***
'We had worked together for 2 years before, so we knew each other';
*The process drama training was providing me with useful skills for my profession. **(professional)***

	PERSONAL	RELATIONAL	PROFESSIONAL
Gary	√		√

*'I was impressed by the **immersion of all the participants** in the drama'; **(personal)***
The process drama training was providing me with useful skills for my profession
(professional)

	PERSONAL	RELATIONAL	PROFESSIONAL
Florence	√		√

*'I was impressed by the **creativity** that emerged in all participants'; **(personal)***
*'the **competence of the trainer**';**(personal)***
The process drama training was providing me with useful skills for my profession.
(professional)

	PERSONAL	RELATIONAL	PROFESSIONAL
Brenda	√		√

*'the way process drama can make you enter a certain period in history or a story and really make you **care** about it'; **(personal)***
*The ease with which everything flows without the teacher having to say now you are going to do this or that... because things evolve naturally from the situation'. **(personal and professional**)*

	PERSONAL	RELATIONAL	PROFESSIONAL
Greta	√		

'Personal total involvement' (personal)

	PERSONAL	RELATIONAL	PROFESSIONAL
Teresa			√

*'The process drama training was providing me with useful skills for my profession' **(professional)***

	PERSONAL	RELATIONAL	PROFESSIONAL
Mark			√

*'Ability of **the teacher** to manage the flow' **(professional)***

As regards teachers' motivation *during the application of process drama in class* (Table 14), besides the constant presence of *intrinsic personal factors*, it emerged that *intrinsic professional motivations* increased as compared to the initial phase.

Furthermore, teachers' choice to apply process drama for language teaching appeared to be strongly affected by an *identified regulation* which was categorized as *professional motivation towards students' needs.* As a matter of fact, almost all the participants claimed to have applied process drama for L2 teaching in order to enhance students' learning experience, in particular to foster students' engagement and confidence in the oral production. Other professional motivations (identified regulation) that have emerged are:

> *'To offer embodied learning to students who would benefit from it' (Florence)*
> *'To show another facet of drama for additional language' (Gary)*
> *'To promote students critical thinking and student-centered education' (Harry)*
> *'To set an example for my students (who are teachers/future teachers)' (Peggy)*

From the data, it also emerged that for few participants the choice to apply process drama for L2 teaching was also regulated by *external motives,* such as the principle's request (Florence, Gary, Mark) and school incentives (Dakota, Rose, Florence, Gary, Harry, Sandy).

Table 14- *Teachers' motivational factors during the classroom application of process drama*

Participant	INTRINSIC						IDENTIFIED REGULATION (EXTRINSIC)				EXTERNAL REGULATION (EXTRINSIC)	
	Personal		*Relational*	*Professional*			*Professional: towards students' needs*				*Contextual*	
	Challenge myself	Combine my passion for the dramatic arts with my passion for teaching	Empathize more with students	Bring novelty to my teaching routine	Expand my teaching expertise	Test what I've learned during the training	Enhance student's engagement	Improve student's language oral skills	Develop student's intercultural competence	Lower student's affective filter in the oral production and interaction	Comply with the school principal's request	For school incentives
Carl		√	√				√	√	√	√		
Dakota	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√		√
Nicoletta	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√		
Rose		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√
Mildred	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√		
Alice		√	√		√		√	√	√	√		
Brenda	√		√				√	√	√	√		
Carlotta	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√		
Florence						√					√	√
Gary	√			√							√	√
Greta	√	√		√	√		√	√		√		
Harry	√	√		√		√	√	√	√	√		√
Mark	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	
Peggy	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√		
Sandy		√		√			√	√	√	√		√
Teresa	√	√		√	√			√		√		

That teachers in this last phase appeared to be driven by an *identified regulation*, to fulfill students' learning needs, might seem a truism, as the ultimate goal of teaching is the students' learning. However, worth recalling is that the acquisition of the teaching artistry of process drama, i.e. the challenging role-combination of teacher, actor, director and playwright, is a complex undertaking (Bowell and Heap, 2005, in Dunn and Stinson 2011), and considering that only half of the sample acquired the necessary drama pedagogical knowledge through a formal theatre education, it could be inferred that the mere students' learning would not be sufficient to justify teachers' commitment to such a performative approach for language teaching. Hence, the importance of teachers' strong intrinsic personal motivational factors.

Besides the single exceptional case of Florence, whose attitude towards a performative approach to language teaching appeared to be regulated by an *extrinsic-identified regulation* (the potential benefits of process drama on students' learning experience), and by *external regulations* (school incentives and principal's request), all the other teacher/artists' disposition towards a performative approach turned out to be regulated by the constant interplay of *intrinsic personal factors* which endured throughout the training and the classroom application.

4.2.1 Discussion

The results confirmed that the factors influencing teachers' disposition to process drama are mainly inherent to the *intrinsic personal characteristics* of the teachers. As a matter of fact, all study participants' disposition to learn and adopt a performative approach to language teaching appeared to be primarily influenced by the strong enthusiasm for drama-based activities and the personal disposition to creativity and curiosity.

For several participants (i.e. Mildred, Nicoletta, Sandy, Harry, Florence), such strong intrinsic motivational drive appeared to be confirmed and enhanced during the process drama training also due to the positive example set by the teacher trainer.

During the classroom practice, in almost every case, teachers' intrinsic personal motivation was alimented also by *intrinsic professional factors*, i.e. the learning value ascribed to the performative approach, the chance to establish a professional competence and expand the teaching expertise and by *extrinsic professional factors (identified regulation),* i.e. the possibility to enhance students' language learning experience in terms of engagement, self-confidence in oral production and interaction, intercultural competence, and critical thinking skills. Only few participants, (Dakota, Florence Rose, Gary, Harry, Sandy) turned out to be also extrinsically motivated *(external regulation)* to use process drama for L2 teaching for economic incentives, whereas in other three cases (i.e. Florence, Gary, Mark) the process drama implementation was the outcome of a school request. Moreover, although the need to establish a relation with students did not figure among the main motivational factors for the learning and practice of process drama, participants acknowledged that the classroom practice boosted their ability to create a more human classroom space and a sense of community among students (Nicoletta, Mark, Harry, Florence, Alice).

In general, it could be argued that teachers who proved to be intrinsically motivated (before and during the training on process drama, as well as after the classroom application) were able to fulfill the need for self-determination, perceiving the locus of causality of their actions in personal and internal factors, the need for competence through overcoming challenges that allowed them to maintain an ongoing stimulus, and the need to feel in relation with others, in particular with the school community (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Moreover, worth mentioning is that teachers' intrinsically motivated behavior has important implications on adaptive students' behavior: 'if a teacher is perceived as more intrinsically motivated (i.e. having a genuine

commitment), this enhances the students' enjoyment of the lesson and interest in the instructional material' (Wild et al. 1992, in Dörney and Ushioda, 2010, p. 189). In the data analysis, the impact of teachers' strong intrinsic motivation on students was gathered from the teachers' perceptions of student engagement during the process drama activities. In fact, all participants agreed that student engagement, although with fluctuating intensity, remained sustained throughout.

4.3 Data analysis and results for sub-question four

As previously mentioned in this chapter, the teacher/artists of this study did not necessarily undertake a specific and standard training on process drama. In fact, the great majority of participants have trained through workshops, in-depth research, or as former theatre students. Undertaking theatre studies is unequivocally an advantage for the teacher, as he/she can draw on pedagogical theatre knowledge, however it emerged that there are many process drama non-formal training courses that teachers of every subject can access.

In addition, from the respondents' answers emerged that a common feature among teachers using process drama for language teaching is the *trial-and-error* practice, as well as the constant *overcoming of challenges*.

In this regard, the sub-question four was posed to investigate *the approach of the study participants towards the challenges,* namely the kind of challenges that these teachers faced during the learning and practice of process drama. Furthermore, in light of the above-mentioned effective teacher theory (Concina, 2016), it was sought to classify these challenges as pertaining to either the personal, relational or professional dimension of the teacher.

The data showed that *before attending a process drama training*, the participants did not encounter any particular personal or relational challenges, as almost all the teachers had previously attended general theatre workshops (Harry also attended technical theatre, Boal, devising and musical theatre; Mildred attended improvisational courses and scene studies), hence they were all familiar and inclined to the relational dynamics proper of theatre-based courses.

On the other hand, it was found that nine out of sixteen participants were facing the following *professional challenges:*

- Misconception about ludic approaches:

    'I thought that lessons cannot be fun with adult learners' (Peggy);
    'I struggled to persuade people that process drama can be helpful for students'(Dakota)

- Combination of language learning objectives with a drama approach:

    'I found difficult to combine the double aim, theatre and language, and go deep enough'(Sandy);
    'I found difficult to integrate more formally grammatical and linguistic teaching into the dynamics of the theatre workshop' (Greta)

- Overcoming students' language anxiety:

  '*I noticed students' strong reluctance to speak, especially among migrant students' (Florence)*

  '*It was hard to get students to speak and encourage their language production. My students are adults who are used to learning languages in a classical way but are not familiar with speech. The PD was my challenge to get them to speak' (Nicoletta)*

- Integration of the disparate elements of the curriculum:

  '*I was having trouble with the course books, as they break language into very separate parts. I thought that through drama we can explore the language in a much more holistic, natural way' (Mildred)*

- Creation of meaningful learning situation:
  '*I was looking for a way to help students develop language in context' (Harry)*

- Fostering students' autonomy:

  '*I wanted to give power to the students, allowing the process to be led by students as well as enabling them to communicate thoughts & perspectives with new vocab & phraseology' (Rose)*

During the process drama training, it emerged that a great number of participants faced again more hindrances on a *professional level*. Yet, in few cases, *difficulties on a relational level* were also noticed:

> '*I don't like it if someone tries to dominate the group. Everyone has the right to contribute. This happens rarely but when it does, it is frustrating for me'; (Peggy)*
>
> '*It was difficult to deal with one participant, in particular, as he was making stupid comments and joking around too much'; (Florence)*
>
> '*Some participants were resistant to the format and experience' (Gary)*

On the other hand, as far as the *relational dynamics* during the process drama training were concerned, other respondents concurred on the highly motivating and empathic feeling they experienced with the other participants of the training:

> '*Everyone on my course was open minded, fun and easy to work with;' (Mildred)*
>
> '*I found a total involvement during the course'; (Nicoletta)*
>
> '*I was lucky all the colleagues (mostly in-service teachers) were great, empathetic, highly motivate, which is probably why we had no problems'; (Sandy)*
>
> '*Process drama expedited the process of friendship' (Dakota)*

As far as the hindrances experienced on a *professional level*, these were:

- Inhibition and difficulties due to lack of theatrical practice and knowledge:

  'I was inhibited as I lacked theatre practice' (Greta)

  'I wished I had more stage practice. I wanted to act better in our group presentations. I knew it was not that important and I was doing my best, but again...I felt the deficiency'; (Peggy)

  'I was unfamiliar with any of the main theorists and practitioners, e.g. Stanislavsky, Boal, Heathcote etc.'; (Mildred)

  'The use of the body in relation to existing classroom space and the use of intonation may cause difficulties if you have never done theatre before'. (Nicoletta)

- Difficulties due to participants' different language:

  'The other participants were all English native speakers; I was the only Italian native speaker. Our language skills were certainly not the same and this can create inhibition in the non-native speaker' (Carlotta)

- Methodological difficulties:

  'It was difficult to abstract the methodology from first-person experience' (Greta)

  'The main problem was to go deeper into the topic than an ELT teacher' (Sandy)

- Integration with existing teaching style:

  'I found that my Montessori training shared most of the main philosophical points with process drama-that was a pleasant surprise! Whilst I lacked the range of theoretical knowledge about drama and theatre that my fellow students had, I was able to easily grasp the concepts behind process drama as it connected with my Montessori philosophy'. (Mildred)

The last comment offered the chance to draw an important consideration on teachers training on process drama. As previously seen in this chapter, Mildred and Rose shared a common educational academic background which, in both cases, favored them to apply process drama to language teaching on a regular basis (both resulted to be regular practitioners).

It seemed that this has enabled them to develop the pedagogical content knowledge, which is fundamental for teacher/artists, as it provides teachers with 'the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations' (Shulman, 2004, p. 203 in Dunn and Stinson, 2011, p. 625). Hence, it could be inferred that pedagogical knowledge, in general, can have an impact on teachers' regular application of process drama for language teaching.

As far as *challenges during the classroom application*, one out of sixteen participants experienced some challenges on a *personal level*. In fact, Mildred, claimed to have struggled with low self-consciousness and lack of faith in her lessons. Yet, to overcome such feeling of inadequateness she stated to have extensively focused on s*elf-reflection*, revising and adapting her lessons. Learning from her mistakes, she developed her skills until she felt truly confident.

> *'It is impossible to convince students to engage in process drama if you don't buy it yourself! It was only when I fully understood and believed in the value of what I was doing that it began to work'*

Challenges related to the teacher's *relational dimension* were encountered by almost half of the participants. In particular, these were:

- Classroom light-atmosphere:

> *'To deal with disruptive students during the dramatic activities I tried to find a way to engage them with the subject' (Dakota);*

- Students' reluctance to participate in the activities:
> *'In my case it is not easy to form classes with students who want to experiment with such methods (Greta)';*

> *'Teaching in adult classes I sometimes found students reluctant to participate in the proposed activities and sometimes I had to mediate with them; (Nicoletta)*

> *'Japanese students are unfamiliar with drama and could misunderstand PD as being a frivolous activity. Therefore, care was needed to ensure students understood the purpose and reasons behind its use. Scaffolding for student empowerment was also an issue; I began first with a discussion of PD as an approach, the theories behind its use in language teaching. I began with more teacher centered PD activities and with larger group work (students moving as a group) and slowly scaffolding the activities to be more independent of myself (the teacher) and increasingly more focused on smaller group and pair work'; (Alice)*

> *'To avoid my students felt threatened or unwilling to participate, I've started slowly, with simple activities, to then move to simple process drama'; (Sandy)*

> *'I was concerned that all would participate, so I varied expectations of each child but kept records of progress' (Rose).*

The other half of participants, instead, did not perceive any challenge on a relational level, as conducting process drama for language teaching was perceived '*as difficult as doing a normal task-based class' (Brenda, Peggy).*

The challenges faced at a *professional level* were the main difficulties encountered with process drama in the classroom and were shared by almost all participants. These involved:

- Time:
> *'Lessons were too short, so I created short sections';(Brenda)*

> *'Time' (Gary, Mark, Dakota, Harry)*

*'I sometimes force students to pass the next stage even if they are well-engaged at that moment).
If possible, I send them off at the end of the lesson with a question, unfinished mystery to think
until the next week's lesson';(Peggy)*

'Classroom work is very time consuming' (Greta)

- Design issues:

  'There is little material for process drama! All materials must be created by the teacher'; (Alice)

  'The amount of work and time required for the design phase is very high'; (Greta)

  'Scanning / articulation of the different phases; preparation / design' (Teresa)

- Classroom management:

  *'Get the students to understand that we were doing something serious and educational […]to
  deal with the discomfort due to movement in the classroom which is normally not expected'
  (Nicoletta)*

- Dealing with students' frustration:

  *'Make students understand that error and uncertainty are part of the learning process; […]; I
  was the first to put myself out there, playing down my role as a teacher and trying to create a
  relaxed and protected situation in the classroom where students did not feel uncomfortable;
  debriefing, trying to understand the students' difficulties and opening the common
  confrontation was the key to successful process dramas' (Nicoletta)*

- Adapting to different students' learning style:

  *'It takes time for students to get used to drama. Students with beginner-level language
  proficiency struggle in the beginning; So, I made use of scaffolding and clear, brief, step-by-
  step instructions, modeling, verbal encouragement during the first few sessions'; (Carl)*

  *'Everything need to be tweaked to meet the needs of different students and learning
  styles'(Dakota)*

  *'I had to deal with different levels of L2 competence, so it was necessary to provide a lot of
  scaffolding to lower level students. Trying to create a sense of community where higher level
  students would help their peers' (Florence)*

- Managing the didactic objectives with the performative pedagogy:

  *'I had to manage and channel students and their improvisation within the didactic objectives
  and the canvas created. How did I handle it? Hard to say, I'd say "art of teaching."' (Greta)*

- Planning:

  *'Planning and allowing for things to take as long as they need to take to achieve the goals set
  for each section' (Harry)*

  *'Each drama requires the background knowledge, i.e. quite a lot of reading, the right activities
  in the right order, list of needed materials, proper background music for mood, for visualization,
  for activities, etc'. (Sandy)*

- Other:

'There were many challenges I had to face. I always try to intervene in the way I think most appropriate "at the moment" since improvisation is the basis of everything in the process drama, observing the results and then reflecting on whether the intervention was appropriate or had to be modified in future similar situations. So, I always move according to a typical research/experimentation procedure: intervention hypothesis, field intervention, observation of results, reflection, adjustment'(Carlotta)

In brief, before approaching process drama, participants' main challenges were on a *professional level*, such as learning to combine specific language learning objectives with a performative approach; integrating the disparate elements of the curriculum; overcoming students' language anxiety; fostering learning autonomy.

During the training, participants' main challenges were on a relational level, i.e. dealing with disruptive or dominating participants, and on a professional level, i.e. inhibition and difficulties due to lack of theatrical practice and knowledge; difficulties due to participants' different language; methodological difficulties; integration with existing teaching style.

During the application in class, participants' main challenges were on a relational level, i.e. classroom light-atmosphere; students' reluctance to participate in the activities, and on professional level, i.e. time; design issues; classroom management; dealing with students' frustration; adapting to different students' learning style; managing the didactic objectives with the performative pedagogy; planning.

4.3.1 Discussion

The low presence of relational motivational factors and relational challenges by participants led to the conclusion that the teachers of the present study were already skilled in establishing student-teacher relations. On the other hand, the correlation between the numerous *professional motivational factors* and equally persistent *professional challenges* led to the assumption that most teachers in this study believed in the importance of teachers' ongoing professional development to improve their process drama didactic practices as well as their potential as educators.

In general, the results showed that, despite theatre preliminary knowledge had enabled almost all teachers to be confident in the first-person experimentation with process drama, for a great number of participants several challenges on a relational and professional level emerged during the *training* and the *classroom application*. Yet, the challenges that teachers experienced during their training proved essential to a further comprehension of what a process drama approach to language teaching entails on teachers' personal and relational level. As a matter of fact, the process drama training experience provided space for deep *reflection*, for teachers had the chance to acknowledge both pleasant and unpleasant emotions, as both students and future process drama practitioners. As a matter of fact, teaching and learning is 'a two-way process where the teacher is constantly the learner who is trying to understand the consequences of the teaching practice' (Daniels, 2016, p. 26, in Piazzoli, 2018, p. 312). Teachers improved their ability to empathize with students' needs by experiencing first-hand the complexity to identify with a role and manage the space (Nicoletta), the awkwardness due to a lack of previous stage experience (Greta), the difficulty of dealing with peers with different language levels (Carlotta), and the negotiation of meaning with disruptive peers (Florence) or with peers who like to dominate the group (Peggy).

So, the results in this study appeared to be consistent with the results of the ethnographic study of Piazzoli (2016) and with those of the research study of Alvarez and Beaven (2014) in sharing the importance for teachers to engage first as process drama participants to fully understand the dynamics of the different moments during the dramatic action and the possible constraints that students might encounter during the unfolding of the activities.

As regards the professional challenges encountered during the classroom application, from the study participants' responses it was possible to identify a common *trial-error* approach. In particular, such approach was adopted by the majority of teachers to learn how to manage the content and the form, the specific language didactic objectives with the students' improvisations, the macro planning, i.e. 'the choice made before starting the drama' (Piazzoli, 2018, p. 297) with the micro planning, i.e. 'the in-the-moment -artistry choices taken as the drama unfolds' (p. 297).

> *'I always try to intervene in the way I think most appropriate "at the moment" since improvisation is the basis of everything in the process drama, observing the results and then reflecting on whether the intervention was appropriate or had to be modified in future similar situations. So, I always move according to a typical research/experimentation procedure: intervention hypothesis, field intervention, observation of results, reflection, adjustment'(Carlotta)*

Lastly, the challenges perceived by the participants in this study during the classroom application of process drama aligned with the same perplexities expressed by the participants in the study of Hulse and Owens (2019), Piazzoli (2016) and Athiemoolam (2013), i.e. class control, time organization, lesson planning and dramatic forms' management.

Thus, from this result it can be inferred that some challenges are parts and parcel of the nature of process drama pedagogy and transcend the teachers' didactic experience. It is probably the way in which these are overcome that may differ based on the teacher's teaching experience.

4.4 Data analysis and results for sub-question five

Through the last sub-question, it was sought to inquiry how the learning and the didactic application of a process drama approach enabled instructors to be effective teachers. In particular, an attempt was made to identify the personal, relational and professional characteristics of the teacher/artists.

In fact, from the answers of the respondents it was possible to deduce that both the learning and the didactic experience with process drama contributed to the development of teacher's personal, relational and professional dimensions.

As regards the *personal characteristics* of the teacher/artists, these involved:

- Enthusiasm:
    - Desire for experimentation (Greta);
    - Search for creativity (Nicoletta, Teresa);

        'I think it should be a part of mainstream teacher training courses: process drama is a wonderful method to teach any subject, promote creativity and most importantly, encourage students to engage with the material on a deeper, more authentic level' (Mildred).

- Reflective thinking:
    - Self-awareness and confidence (Mildred, Teresa);
    - Self-reflection- the ability to think on your feet (Mildred);
    - Being vulnerable in front of the students

        '*To allow students to take over control' (Alice);*

    - Failure acceptance

        '*The ability to view mistakes as opportunities for learning and growth*'; Gary: '*to smile at mistakes' (Mildred);*

    - 'Higher awareness levels'

        '[…] *By awareness* I *mean being aware of the place that your body occupies in the space, your posture, face expression, movement […] Awareness of your own feelings and how those feelings come to be. This also makes you aware of how other peoples' feelings can be aroused' (Peggy);*

- Social skills:
  - Empathy (Nicoletta, Teresa);
  - Better comprehension of students' needs (Carlotta).

Mildred's case proved emblematic of the personal skills of the effective teacher. She claimed to have particularly developed self-awareness and confidence skills, ability to accept failure, as well as awareness of feelings and self-reflection skills.

As regards the *relational characteristics*, these comprised:
  - Being in the moment and really focus on the interactions with students (Alice);
  - Ability to create a more human classroom space and a sense of community among students (Nicoletta, Mark, Harry, Florence);
  - Ability to establish a group member feeling between students and teacher (Peggy);
  - Competence in creating supportive and judgment-free classrooms (Mark, Rose);
  - Ability to foster students' emotional connections (Alice, Sandy, Teresa);

As regards the *professional characteristics*, these concerned:
- Teaching planning and management skills:
  - Planning skills in order to focus on both themes and language objectives (Rose, Nicoletta, Greta, Teresa);
  - Time management during the dramatic sessions (Harry);
  - Competence in material choice: the ability to choose/select suitable input texts such as images, written texts (Teresa, Carlotta);
  - Being able to negotiate the main constituents of the approach with the age, interests, language level, nationality, and previous schooling of the students (Carlotta);
  - Ability to develop students' engagement and give them autonomy and decision making power (Peggy, Florence, Carl, Alice, Gary).
- Disciplinary knowledge and teaching skills:
  - Problem solving and decision making (Mark, Rose);
  - Being a facilitator/coach than a teacher (Harry, Dakota);
  - Flexibility and openness to handing over control (all participants);

- Scaffolding skills (Carl, Florence);
- Ability to reflect in and out of character (Rose);
- Teacher questioning skills (Mark);
- Pedagogical knowledge (Nicoletta);
- Ability to look at both micro and macro level processes (Carl);
- Improved knowledge of the dramatic conventions, e.g. role, tension, language, atmosphere, time, place, etc. and how to use them to structure the drama (Peggy, Harry, Sandy, Dakota);
- Further development of communication and listening skills (Brenda);
- Competence to uphold students' effort in their language production and interaction during the dramatic moments, guiding them through their difficulties (Mildred).

Important considerations on the relational dimension of the teacher/artists emerged from participants' answers. Indeed, when asked to provide suggestions for colleagues willing to undertake a process drama learning experience, the following recommendations were advanced:

- *'Be aware that it is a playful approach but at the same time a serious one'* *(Florence)*

- *'Treasure the positive and negative feelings experienced as a student'* *(Greta)*

- *'Be collaborative'* *(Carlotta, Carl)*

- *'Be open to understand colleagues' varying responses to each person's participation'* *(Gary)*

- *'Work collaboratively and ensure equal participation without trying to dominate the group as this is not a place to win/lose'* *(Peggy)*

- *'Remember that everyone's experience is unique: try not to judge or make assumptions based on the other participant's response to the drama'(Mildred)*

- *'Understand that there are many types of teachers with varying levels of interest & ability. Be patient!'* *(Rose)*

- *'Be completely open and do not take what you already know with you'.* *(Teresa)*

- *'Live the experience with curiosity and desire to put yourself out there'* *(Carlotta)*

When asked to provide useful advice for the practice of process drama, teachers were very responsive. As a matter of fact, drawing on their previous experience with process drama, the following professional suggestions were shared:

- *'Don't forget the language objectives. Make sure you know what you want to achieve in language learning, only then choose how you will use process drama. It would for sure be possible to do amazing process drama and not learn much from the language learning point of view'. (Brenda)*

- *'First understand the components of drama, particularly taking care to understand the ideas of both dramatic tension and protecting into emotion. Framing drama is a key point to focus on'. (Alice)*

- *'Plan well. Plan in detail. Plan in advance. Give the students time to get used to the activities. Repeat the activities a few times' (Carl)*

- *'Start small, first the students should learn how to work properly in drama. How to stay in role, how to respect each other's decisions, etc. Then, you can move to bigger dramas'(Peggy)*

- *'Go for a training and experience it yourself, be interested in drama, music, literature, history, events, and life itself' (Sandy)*

- *'Keep self-reflective journaling in the beginning' (Dakota)*

- *'Be prepared to change at any time if things aren't working. You have to think on your feet' (Florence)*

- *'It will fail first time, don't get disillusioned'(Mark)*

- *'Have a clear vision of what you want to achieve and how: it takes skill to weave grammar, vocab and the skills into a process drama. Try to avoid micro-managing, let the students lead and the class will be much richer'(Mildred)*

- *'Watch control. Plan carefully, even though it's open ended work it must be structured. Use a strong stimulus that has tension, opposing points of view. Challenge children but give them vocab to express themselves effectively' (Rose)*

4.4.1 Discussion

From the analysis of the data in this last section, it emerged that the teacher/artists in this study were effective teachers as they shared important personal characteristics (e.g. *enthusiasm*, *social skills* and *reflective thinking*), relational characteristics (e.g. the *ability to foster students' emotional connections)*, and professional characteristics, meant as disciplinary knowledge and teaching skills (e.g. *knowledge of dramatic conventions*, *teacher questioning skill*, *ability to reflect in and out of character*, *flexibility and openness to handing over control*), teaching planning and management skills (e.g. *time management during the dramatic sessions*, *competence in the choice of the pre texts* and *the ability to negotiate the main constituents of the approach with the students' characteristics)*.

Besides, it emerged that almost all participants in this study were *reflective practitioners*. This feature proved to be a double advantage for the teachers. On the one hand, it was functional to overcome the several challenges that the teacher/artists in this study had to face on a personal and professional level. In fact, the participants in this study, as those in the ethnographic study of Piazzoli (2016), demonstrated their ability to overcome such hindrances, by mastering their knowing in action and on action, i.e. the ability to draw on in-the-moment decisions and reflect in hindsight. On the other hand, such *reflective practice* proved to be functional to make teachers' experiential knowledge explicit, in order to integrate it in teachers' pedagogical content knowledge. In fact, among the three main orders of knowledge required by teachers, i.e. content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, 'it is the third of these that is used by the most effective teachers.' (Schulman, 2004, p.404, in Dunn and Stinson, 2011, p. 625). Through a critical self-reflection practice, teachers can develop their knowledge as well as a greater sense of self-efficacy, responsibility and enthusiasm. In general, a reflective attitude towards teaching can be considered a predictive measure of teaching efficacy (Concina, 2016, p. 24).

The results have confirmed that teachers of this study relied on a reflective practice which allowed to acquire the necessary pedagogical knowledge that enabled the application of a process drama approach for L2 didactic purposes. Hence, this study concurs with the main result of Piazzoli (2016) on the importance of the reflective practice, without which the 'knowing in action', namely the intuitive choices implicit in teachers' pattern of acquisition would remain tacit. (Schön, 1983, p.49, in Piazzoli, 2016, p. 97).

4.5 Limitations and further studies

This study focused on a small group of teachers with different educational backgrounds, teaching experiences and operating in different school contexts. In light of the numerous empirical research studies attesting the positive effects of process drama on students' language learning and the crucial implication of the teacher artistry on learning outcomes, this study suggested the importance to focus also on the language teachers' perspective. In particular, by delving into the experience of a small group of language teachers who have learned to acquire and implement a performative approach to language teaching, an attempt was made to further comprehend the common characteristics of such professional figure.

Yet, the results of this research should be treated with caution, as the small number of participants in this study represented a limit. The data collection tool used for this investigation presented some limits as well. In particular, the written interview comprised a rather large amount of questions, necessary to obtain an in-depth picture of the respondents. However, in some cases, the length of the instrument itself proved to be a limit to the quality of the answers obtained. Besides, despite questions were posed to guide participants in their reflection on ex post facto learning experiences, for few respondents retrieving anecdotes from the past was difficult. To limit the researcher's bias during the data interpretation, reverse causation and background information have been used. Yet, the use of different research tools, such as field observation and focus group interview, allowing for data triangulation, is suggested for future replications.

Future research studies could seek a comparison with teacher/artists from different countries, with different teaching experience and operating within different school orders. To expand the knowledge of process drama practices in L2 learning contexts, future research studies could address students' perceptions about the figure and the role of the teacher/artists. As a matter of fact, investigating the students' standpoint is fundamental to further understand the dynamics of effective teaching. Another suggestion arising from this study is the importance of exploring factors that instead undermine teachers' application of a performative approach to language teaching, to be able to find working solutions that could help teachers to overcome the obstacles to the process drama school implementation. In addition, it could be interesting to investigate the strategies adopted by the teacher/artists to make a performative approach for L2 teaching operational in a distance learning context.

Conclusion

In this study, an attempt was made to identify the profile of the teacher/artist, namely the language teacher who adopts a performative approach for L2 teaching. The main research question and its guiding sub-questions were:

➢ *What is the profile of a teacher/artist adopting process drama for L2 teaching?*

   1) What are the individual characteristics?

   2) What are the contextual characteristics?

   3) What are the factors that lead the teacher to learn and adopt such approach?

   4) What are the challenges faced by the teacher?

   5) What are the personal, relational, and professional characteristics?

To provide an answer to the above research questions, an *online written interview* was administered as data collection instrument to sixteen language teachers meeting the following sample selection criteria: being L2 teachers; having gained knowledge about process drama approach through training courses, workshops or other; having used a process drama approach for L2 teaching in class at least once. The interview structure, which was organized to reflect three distinct moments of the language teacher/artist's experience with process drama and facilitate respondents' anecdote retrieval, included the three following sections:

   - *Before learning process drama*;

   - *During the training on process drama*;

   - *After applying process drama in class*.

The answers to the above research questions have been summarized as follows:

1. The teacher/artists using process drama for L2 teaching in this study were predominantly female, over 35 years old and of European nationality. They had an academic qualification in the language field and had acquired drama-based knowledge both after attending formal drama studies during pre-service education, and through self-training, hands-on amateur theatrical experiences and theatre workshops. They taught English and Italian, had one to more than 32 years of experience in language teaching, and had one to twenty years of experience in teaching language through process drama. They taught English and Italian through process drama to mainly adult students, at public and private educational institutions in Europe, Asia and America. All

the teacher/artists in this study used process drama in their teaching routines, but the great majority only occasionally. The frequency of use of process drama seemed to be mainly influenced by the public or private nature of the educational institution where the language was taught, the age and cultural background of the students but did not seem to be influenced by the type of process drama training received by the teachers.

2. Teachers' disposition to learn and apply process drama for L2 teaching was mainly determined by *intrinsic personal factors*, i.e. the strong enthusiasm for drama-based activities, the personal disposition to creativity and curiosity, previous positive personal experiences, the positive example set by the teacher trainer.

    Besides, to influence teachers' disposition were also *intrinsic professional factors*, i.e. the learning value ascribed to the performative approach, the chance to establish a professional competence and expand the teaching expertise, and *extrinsic professional factors (identified regulation),* i.e. the possibility to enhance students' language learning experience in terms of engagement, self-confidence in oral production and interaction, intercultural competence, and critical thinking skills.

    Teachers' didactic application of process drama in class was only marginally influenced by *extrinsic factors*, such as economic incentives and compliance with school requests.

3. Before approaching process drama, participants' main challenges were on a *professional level*, i.e. learning to combine specific language learning objectives with a performative approach; integrating the disparate elements of the curriculum; overcoming students' language anxiety; fostering learning autonomy.

    During the training, participants' main challenges were on a *relational level*, i.e. dealing with disruptive or dominating participants, and on a *professional level*, i.e. inhibition and difficulties due to lack of theatrical practice and knowledge; difficulties due to participants' different language; methodological difficulties; integration with existing teaching style.

    During the application in class, participants' main challenges were on a *relational level*, i.e. classroom light-atmosphere; students' reluctance to participate in the activities, and on *professional level*, i.e. time and design issues; classroom space management;

adaptation of the activities to different students' learning style; managing the didactic objectives with the performative pedagogy; planning.

To overcome such challenges, the *trial-and-error* and *reflective practice* seemed to have been employed by almost all participants.

4. As a result of the learning and the didactic application of process drama to language teaching, teacher/artists emerged as effective teachers.

   In fact, the *personal characteristics* of the teacher/artists in this study were: enthusiasm; desire to experiment; self-awareness and confidence; ability to accept failure; awareness of feelings; self-reflection. As for their *relational characteristics*, these were the ability to be present in the moment and focus on the interactions with students; the ability to create a more human classroom space and a sense of community among students; the ability to establish a group member feeling between students and teacher; the competence in creating supportive and judgment-free classrooms; the ability to foster students' emotional connections.

   As regards the *professional characteristics* of the teacher/artists, these were mainly: problem solving and decision making skills; scaffolding skills; planning; time management; teacher questioning skills; pedagogical and drama knowledge; the flexibility and openness to handing over control.

   The critical practice of self-reflection allowed the language teacher/artists to develop a great sense of self-efficacy, responsibility and enthusiasm, also qualities of the effective teacher.

Beyond the initial research questions, data analysis also yielded the following conclusions:

   a. The talent of the teacher trainer contributed to the participants' deep involvement and the total immersion during the training on process drama, thus enhancing teachers' motivation.
   b. The relational dynamics emerged during the training on process drama led to a highly motivating feeling among its participants.
   c. Teachers holding a degree in educational studies could count on a strong pedagogical knowledge that may have contributed to the regular classroom application of process drama for L2 teaching.

To conclude, far from defining process drama as the language pedagogy par excellence, it can be agreed that the great empirical evidence that has attested process drama benefits on students' language learning cannot be ignored. Thus, to maximize the meaningful language learning experience of students, teachers should be able to draw on the pedagogical knowledge that enables such an embodied and creative teaching approach to be applied in the classroom. Indeed, through the personal experience of the participants in this study, the importance of being able to articulate process drama to include it in the teaching routine has been underlined. Hence, the crucial function of a constant reflective practice, the trial-and-error attitude, alongside the support of teacher trainers' mentoring.

In this light, it is hoped that teacher training programs will take a more active role in supporting the knowledge of process drama approach for language teaching.

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Appendix

A1-Written interview

THE TEACHER/ARTIST

The aim of this research project is to identify the profile of the teacher/artist, i.e. the language teacher using process drama in L2 teaching contexts. In particular, the questions were posed to collect information about the reasons, the difficulties and the advice of teachers using process drama for second/foreign language teaching.

To better contextualize the answers, the questions have been divided into three main sections corresponding to the following three distinct moments:

-Before learning process drama

-During the training on process drama

-After applying process drama in class

In each section you will find both closed and open questions; the latter, in particular, are intended to solicit further investigation, in order to obtain a more precise interpretation of the data. It will take approximately 25 minutes to complete.

The data collected will be processed anonymously and exclusively for teaching and research purposes, in full compliance with the existing privacy law, as required by the Legislative Decree 163/2017, Ex art.13 Legislative Decree 196/2003 and Ex art. 13, European Regulation 2016/679.

Thank you for your important contribution.

-Biographical and contextual information

1) Email address

2) Gender (Female/Male/Prefer not to say)

3) Nationality

4) Age (20-24; 25-34; 35-45; >45; prefer not to say)

5) Academic qualification (Bachelor's; Master's; PhD; other)

6) Educational background major (Language; Drama; other)

7) What language do you teach? Please, specify if it is L2/LS/other.

8) Is it your native language? (Yes, No)

9) How long have you been teaching the language?

10) How long have you been teaching the language through process drama?

11) Did you attend a training course on process drama? If so, can you please mention where and how long it lasted?

12) Was that course precisely about process drama for language teaching?

13) If so, do you think that the course has devoted the same attention to both linguistic aspects and those related to theatre?

14) How often do you use process drama for language teaching? (Never/Sometimes i.e. less than half of the time/Often i.e. more than half of the time/Always)

15) In what state do you teach the language through process drama?

16) In which educational institution do you teach the language through process drama? (Elementary school age 6-10/Middle school age 11-13/ High school age 14-18/ University undergraduate students/University postgraduate students; other)

17) If you answered 'other' to the previous question, please define the type of institution.

18) The institution(s) where you teach the language through process drama is/are… (Public/Private/other)

19) How many students on average are in your class when using this methodology?

20) Did you know anything about process drama for language teaching before attending a training course on process drama? (Yes/ No/ I don't remember)

21) Would you like to expand your answer?

22) Before undertaking a course on process drama, had your ever attended theatre workshops? (Yes/ No/ I don't remember)

23) Would you like to define these previous theatrical experiences?

24) Do you remember the main educational challenges before learning about process drama? Could you kindly share an example?

-Why embark on a training on process drama (The following items aim to explore the reasons for your choice to attend a training course on process drama. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements)

25) I have approached process drama (Completely disagree/Disagree/Slightly disagree/ Slightly agree/ Agree/ Completely agree):

- Because of my disposition to curiosity and creativity;

- Because of the need to create a relational bond with my students;

- Because of the need to establish a professional competence.

26) Has there been any other reasons that prompted you to attend a training course on process drama for language teaching? If so, which one?

27) Who would you advise to take a training course on process drama?

28) What relational characteristics should a teacher possess in order to approach process drama?

29) Are there any professional characteristics (e.g. particular disciplinary knowledge or teaching skills) that a teacher should have in order to approach process drama? If so, which ones?

-During the training on process drama (The following questions are intended to explore your impressions and any challenges encountered during your training on process drama, from a personal, relational and professional perspective)

30) What impressed you most about the training on process drama?

31) How was your involvement with the other participants during the training activities on process drama?

32) While attending the training on process drama, you had the feeling that it was providing you with useful skills for your profession (Completely disagree/Disagree; Slightly disagree/Slightly agree/Agree/ Completely agree)

33) Could you please specify what skills you were able to acquire during your training?

34) During the process drama training, you faced some difficulties due to your overall drama-based knowledge (Completely disagree/Disagree; Slightly disagree/Slightly agree/Agree/ Completely agree)

35) If relevant, would you like to share an example?

36) During the training on process drama, you had some difficulties interacting with the other participants while carrying out the activities (Completely disagree/Disagree; Slightly disagree/Slightly agree/Agree/ Completely agree)

37) Is there anything you'd like to add about your participation with the other students?

38) During the training on process drama, you experienced some hindrances with your teaching method (Completely disagree/Disagree; Slightly disagree/Slightly agree/Agree/ Completely agree)

39) Would you like to share some thoughts on this last point?

-Advice for colleagues attending a process drama training *(Please complete the following sentences with your first thoughts)*

40) To counsel a colleague who is attending a training course on process drama, I would advise him/her to...

41) With regard to his/her involvement with the other participants, I would advise him/her to...

42) During the training, I would advise him/her to remain focused on the following didactic and subject-related skills…

-During in-class process drama implementation *(The following items are aimed at exploring your reflections during the implementation of process drama in class: the possible challenges you may have encountered and the reasons for using it in class)*

43) What were the main challenges that you had to face while using process drama for language teaching in class?

44) Can you please provide an example of how you handled them?

45) You experienced some difficulties in managing the class (Completely disagree/Disagree; Slightly disagree/Slightly agree/Agree/ Completely agree)

46) If relevant, can you briefly explain how you dealt with them?

47) Adapting process drama to the subject content was demanding (Completely disagree/Disagree; Slightly disagree/Slightly agree/Agree/ Completely agree)

48) Can you please justify your answer?

49) I've implemented process drama for language teaching in class (Completely disagree/Disagree; Slightly disagree/Slightly agree/Agree/ Completely agree):

-To bring novelty to my teaching routine;

-To expand my teaching expertise;

-To improve the student language oral skills;

-To encourage the development of student intercultural competence;

-To lower the student affective filter in the oral production and interaction;

-To empathize more with students;

-For school incentives;

-To enhance student engagement;

-To challenge myself;

-To combine my passion for the dramatic arts with my passion for teaching;

-To comply with the school principal's request;

-To test what I've learned during the training.

50) Other reasons?

51) How was student engagement during process drama activities for language learning?

52) Have you noticed any changes in your relationship with the students? Please explain your answer.

53) Was it in general effective as a teaching method for your class? Please explain your answer.

-Advice for colleagues who are interested in applying process drama in class (*The interview ends with this last section dedicated to tips for colleagues who experience process drama for language teaching in class.*

54) What advice would you give a colleague who is going to use process drama for language teaching in class?

55) What would you advise him/her on the student-teacher relationship, while he/she applies process drama in class?

56) What would you suggest him/her about the planning and management of the teaching activity?