

Final Dissertation

**USING DRAMA TO TEACH A FOREIGN
LANGUAGE IN PRIMARY**

Case studies in a Catalan and a Finnish Primary school

Ariadna SELABONA SISQUELLAS

Double Degree in Preschool and Primary Education Teaching (majoring in English)

Supervisor: Marta Esmarats Bigas

2018/2019

Universitat de Vic – Universitat Central de Catalunya

May 2019, Vic

Abstract

The need for continuous renovation in classrooms gives a step to new teaching methodologies and to the rethinking of the teaching-learning process of a foreign language. This study focuses on learning English as a foreign language at the stage of primary education and on drama as an innovative methodology in the English class. This research has been carried out through two case studies at a Catalan school and at a Finnish school that use drama in their classrooms. Thus, field work is done to design what kind of drama practices can be used by teachers as a model. The results of this study indicate that drama is a useful methodology for language learning and for the acquisition of oral skills and that it is interesting to use it in the learning of foreign languages with children.

Key words: foreign language learning, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), language teaching methodologies, drama, oral skills.

Resum

La necessitat de les aules de renovar-se contínuament dóna pas a noves metodologies d'ensenyament i al replantejament del procés d'ensenyament-aprenentatge d'una llengua estrangera. Aquest estudi es centra en l'aprenentatge de l'anglès com a llengua estrangera a l'etapa d'educació primària i en el joc dramàtic com a metodologia innovadora a la classe d'anglès. Aquesta investigació s'ha dut a terme mitjançant dos estudis de cas a una escola catalana i a una escola finesa que utilitzen el joc dramàtic a les seves aules. Així doncs, s'ha realitzat un treball de camp per dissenyar quin tipus de pràctiques de joc dramàtic poden utilitzar els i les mestres com a model. Els resultats del present estudi assenyalen que el joc dramàtic és una metodologia útil pel que fa a l'aprenentatge de llengües i a l'adquisició de les habilitats lingüístiques orals i que és interessant utilitzar-lo en l'aprenentatge de llengües estrangeres amb els infants.

Paraules clau: anglès com a llengua estrangera, aprenentatge de llengües estrangeres, metodologies d'ensenyament d'una llengua, joc dramàtic, habilitats lingüístiques orals.

Resumen

La necesidad de las aulas de renovarse continuamente da paso a nuevas metodologías de enseñanza y al replanteo del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera. Este estudio se centra en el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera en la etapa de educación primaria y en el juego dramático como metodología innovadora en la clase de inglés. Esta investigación se ha llevado a cabo mediante dos estudios de caso en una escuela catalana y en una escuela finlandesa que utilizan el juego dramático en sus aulas. Así pues, se ha hecho un trabajo de campo para diseñar qué tipo de prácticas de juego dramático pueden utilizar los maestros como modelo. Los resultados del presente estudio señalan que el juego dramático es una metodología útil en cuanto al aprendizaje de lenguas y la adquisición de habilidades lingüísticas orales y que es interesante utilizarlo en el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras con los niños.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras, metodologías de enseñanza de una lengua, juego dramático, habilidades lingüísticas orales.

1. Introduction

There is a wide range of methodologies to teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The present study is the Final Dissertation for the Double Degree on Preschool and Primary Education Teaching (majoring in English) from the University of Vic. This study focuses on drama as one of the methodologies to teach English in Primary education and analyses how it effects to learners' oral linguistic skills. That is the reason why research in two different schools has been carried out in two very different contexts, in a Finnish school, and in a Catalan school to compare how they approach it. Therefore, this study aims: 1) to analyse different drama activities, 2) to compare drama in EFL in two different contexts and 3) to determine the effects of drama in oral skills.

The main reason that pushed me to dedicate my Final Dissertation to study this topic is my interest on finding and justifying creative methodologies that escape from the traditional teaching and that I can use in my soon future practice as a teacher. I strongly believe in learning through play as well as on the idea that the process learning has to be moved by intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. For that to occur, the process of learning-teaching has to be significant for children. This study wants to show that drama is a methodology that can be used in EFL classrooms and can be very effective in terms of motivation and significant learning. The last aspect that has been motivating me to develop the present study is to move on with the Final Dissertation that I did last year. The last course's project name was: *Role-play as a teaching methodology for young foreign language learners*. With that project, I focused on one specific drama approach (role-play) in the Preschool stage (0-6 years old). Thus, the current work is strictly related to the first one and aims to give continuity to it, discovering how drama can be approached in the following educative stages.

Therefore, to carry out this study, a first theoretical research regarding the topic of drama and drama in EFL teaching has been done in order to establish the theoretical basis to the study and to sustain all the following ideas that emerge from the research. All this information has been collected in the theoretical framework section of this paper. Later, data for the research has been collected through different instruments in different sessions in two different schools, one Catalan and one Finnish school. From all this information, some analysis and discussion have been established and some conclusions have been outlined.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Drama in the Communicative Approach context

Teachers are constantly looking for ways to improve classes and to motivate their students. Classes are welcoming lots of students with very different language levels and traditional teaching does not work anymore (Miccoli, 2003). Gray (2002) explains that there is a trend in foreign language teaching which leans toward communicative and authentic language use.

H. G. Widdowson in *Teaching Language as Communication* (1978) defines an approach to learn languages which is mainly focused on learning through speaking and interpreting the language. This author explains that a language is learnt with its use, through communication. It is basically needed to be able to construct grammatically correct sentences and adequate for its context. What this approach pretends is that the learner becomes able to use the language in a context and to do it with a communicative aim. For that, teaching should recreate as real as possible situations where the learner has to use the language with a communicative purpose.

It could be added to this approach what Canale (1983) established. This author outlined four knowledge types that take part in the acquisition of communicative competence. They are grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discursive competence, and strategic competence. The first one is the domain that the learner has of linguistic rules and codes. The second one stands for the sociocultural aspects of language use which includes the rules and convictions of the interaction and the aim of the communication situation. The third one refers to the coherence of the form of the text and the cohesion of the meaning. Finally, the strategic competence is mainly the use of verbal and non-verbal resources which make the communication effective. All these four competencies appear in all communications and that is the reason why they need to be taught.

All in all, as Dodson (2000) states, “in the communicative approach to language teaching, students use language for a purpose – to convey real meaning and to solve real problems. Drama is a communicative language-learning technique because is learner-centred and meaning-based. With theatre activities, students use language in a genuine way in a context that engages them.” (p.3).

2.2. General overview of drama. What do we understand as drama?

Drama has been many times described by many authors as an interesting methodology to use in English as Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. But, what is drama? Drama is not a new concept, it has existed since human civilization and that is the reason why every author gives a slightly different definition to it.

Holden (1982) understands that drama includes any kind of activity where people have to represent themselves or someone else in an imaginary situation; “In other words, drama is concerned with the word of “let’s pretend”; it asks the learner to project himself imaginatively into another situation, outside the classroom, or into the skin and persona of another person.” (Holden, p.1). Wessels (1987, p.7) believes that “drama is doing”, being and a normal thing in our daily life when facing different situations. Recent authors state that the concept of drama includes many other activities, such as acting, improvisation, dramatic play, pretend play and socio-drama. Davies (1990) also states that drama includes mime, role-playing, improvisation, interaction activities such as various forms of dialogues, and dramatized story-telling. Therefore, it can be stated that the word *drama* refers to a wide concept and it is seen from different points of view.

Some authors have considered necessary to make a distinction between *drama* and *theatre* for a better understanding of what drama is. Way (1967) and Zafeiriadou (2009) coincide on the idea that theatre is about establishing a communication between the actors and the audience while drama is more about an experience between participants and do not worry so with communicating with an audience. In the same line, Slade (1955) differentiates theatre and drama saying that theatre is about performing on stage and drama is as a spontaneous and improvised work.

Phillips (2000), states that in drama, learners have to get involved in the text and she thinks that it makes the language more meaningful and memorable than drilling or mechanical repetition fostered in theatre. That is why she makes this distinction between the two words, because the distinction allows not to focus only on the final product or representation but to focus more on its process of learning. So as Zalta (2006) also points out, drama should be related to both the product and the process of

learning. Maley and Duff (2001) also agree that the most relevant difference between drama and theatre is that in drama the process is more important than the product.

All in all, drama can take several forms. Drama is going to be considered in its wider concept. We should forget about the idea that drama is theatre and we will forget about the idea that drama is memorizing like parrots and repeating it to an audience. Moreover, in schools, it is necessary to focus on drama teaching rather than theatre to help students create more meaningful learning.

2.3. Drama in the EFL class.

Language learning is considered a cognitive, psychodynamic and social process, which has to be carried out through interaction and active engagement (Cameron, 2002). To make that happen, proper teaching methodologies and techniques need to be employed. Moreover, children do not have the need to communicate in a foreign language as adults do, so teachers have to create this need through games and activities. And according to Griva and Semoglou (2012), they should be activities that imply movement because when young learners are in a low-anxiety framework and they are enjoying, they learn languages better, quicker and with less effort.

Thus, if the teacher wants children to learn effectively, he or she has to create a meaningful and playful learning context where interactions and communication are enhanced. The activities should foster a natural language use environment and avoid feelings of stress. And that is when drama takes his role, as it accomplishes all the conditions mentioned before. Drama is a teaching technique where children interact to provide useful language. Case and Wilson (2003) add that drama in teaching English context “(...) makes students aware that English is not just words, structures and idioms, but it is a lively, dramatic and versatile means of communication.” (p.4). These authors also emphasise that learning a foreign language should be a pleasurable process.

Drama activities make this process more pleasurable for children as they give them a real reason to use the target language. Children are engaged in the functional use of the language for meaningful communicative purposes, and they do it in a relaxed, contextualised and creative context. Besides, drama is an attractive activity for children as it is meaningful for them because it promotes the connection between what learners already know and the new input so it offers comprehensible language experience. For

all that, Zalta (2006) affirms that drama offers a very good opportunity for students to develop fluency in English.

All in all, as Davies (1990) explains:

“Drama in the English language classroom is ultimately indispensable because it gives learners the chance to use their own personalities. It draws upon students’ natural abilities to imitate and express themselves, and if well-handled should arouse interest and imagination. Drama encourages adaptability, fluency, and communicative competence. It puts the language into context, and by giving learners experience of success in real-life situations it should arm them with confidence for tackling the world outside the classroom.” (p. 97).

2.4. Advantages of using drama in EFL classes

Many authors outline several reasons why drama is considered an efficient methodology to teach English as a foreign language. Maley and Duff (2005, p.2) set out a list of advantages of drama in order to support its use in the school context. Other authors complement their ideas.

1. Drama integrates the four language skills in a natural way. According to Dodson (2000), the different language skills should not be taught separately as they are all used at the same time. For that reason, drama is an ideal methodology to teach language skills altogether as it creates a context for both receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing). Ruiz de Velasco and Abad (2011) also argue that drama is efficient for the improvement of linguistic competencies. For his part, Demircioğlu (2010) states that language abilities are fostered as acting allows an essential listening and speaking because learners are forced to use their language abilities in the dramatised context. He adds that drama provides situations for reading and writing as well as for example when students are asked to read the text and represent it or to write a dialogue in pairs to act it out later. Phillips (2000) adds that drama is not only useful to work a language, so drama’s aims might not only be linguistic but other subjects and cross-curricular content might be included.
2. Drama integrates verbal and nonverbal aspects of communication. So it implies both body and mind in the learning process.

3. Drama also integrates the affective domains of the child. Ruiz de Velasco and Abad (2011) consider that drama has an important effect on children's affective development, as children can express their emotions and feelings while doing the activities or they can even solve their own fears or conflicts.
4. Drama enhances language learning in a contextualized environment and so, the focus of the language is on its meaning. Phillips (2000) also explains that drama fosters what she names as "language personalisation" because children put emotion and personality to the language and when they interpret the text, they make it their own so language becomes memorable to them. Thus, drama creates experiential language learning, which is how languages are mostly learnt (Dundar, 2013). Phillips (2000) explains as well that the fact that language is used in a context makes drama an effective methodology to teach the language in its real use, meaning that the language is not taught word by word, but in sentences or chunks and with a real purpose. Moreover, the author adds that children have the chance to guess the meaning of those unknown words because they are used in a context. All in all, Dundar (2013) explains that drama creates a communicative context that facilitates language learning. Thus, drama fosters the conception of language as a network of relations and it gives opportunities to use it in real situations that would not come up naturally in a classroom setting.
5. Drama offers whole-person learning because children receive multi-sensory inputs. Ruiz de Velasco and Abad (2011) also affirm that drama contributes to the child's whole development. Phillips (2000) agrees too on that idea and states that drama gives children a chance to communicate from different communicative tools. She explains that drama involves children through their bodies, minds, emotions, language, and social interaction. And she argues that that is the reason why drama enables different learning styles. As she explains, each person is more commonly receiving and processing information easier in a different way (for instance: sight, hearing or body). Everybody tends to dominate one of these channels. Drama enables learning from very different channels and each child can learn from his or her easiest way.
6. Drama fosters self-awareness, awareness of others, self-esteem and confidence. Phillips (2000) gives a reason for that. She justifies that when playing a role, the person can escape from its own identity and this makes them lose their feelings of

inhibition, shyness or embarrassment. This author also purposes to the teacher to strategically attribute the different roles in the play to encourage children who are shy and to potentiate children who have the talent to act out in front of others. What is more, drama increases students' confidence to use the foreign language because learners can participate in the activity at different levels and this enables everybody's success.

7. Drama provides motivation. Phillips (2000) outlines three different reasons why drama has a positive effect on children's motivation. Firstly, she states that drama itself is fun and motivating. Secondly, the already mentioned fact that everybody's success is enhanced is motivating for them. Thirdly and finally, the author states that representing something knowing that there is a public is significant, challenging and motivating for children. Demircioğlu (2010) explains that drama students can look for new possibilities within themselves while dramatising and this is enthusiastic and creates a positive attitude towards foreign language learning.
8. Drama promotes responsibility for learning. In drama exercises children are involved actively and so, it promotes active learning. Phillips (2000) presents drama as useful to change the pace of the lessons. She states that drama is student-centred so it is a good idea to use it to complement the activities that are more teacher-centred, and that requires quiet and individual work.
9. Drama encourages an open, exploratory style of learning, where creativity and imagination have its place to develop. Risk-taking is an essential element in effective language learning. Budden (2004) explains that in drama activities language opportunities are multiplied because communicative situations outside the school context can be included. Besides, drama students are rehearsing possible real-life situations so their speaking a foreign language comfort might have grown when having to travel abroad and speak it in real situations.
10. Drama fosters the idea of learning together as it has a positive effect on classroom dynamics and atmosphere. Phillips (2000) gives a reason for that. The author argues that when pursuing a common goal (which may be to do a successful play), learners need to cooperate and take decisions in a group and this makes them work on their social capacities such as listening to each other's opinions or valuing others' suggestions. Moreover, they need to learn how to potentiate each member's strengths and hide everybody's weaknesses. Demircioğlu (2010) explains that drama's class

climate permit learning in a calmer atmosphere that does not have negative peer pressure and where children can empathise and establish better relationships.

11. Drama is fun, it is an enjoyable experience. Phillips (2000) states that dramatising is a common thing for children as they do it since they are very young when they play being adults, going to the supermarket or to the doctor. Teachers have to use this natural predisposition to act out, to dramatise situations in their classes.
12. Drama does not need a lot of resources, only characters.

All in all, it can be stated that drama has a clear positive influence on language learning and especially on children's oral skills (listening and speaking). The reasons for that are for instance that the language is taught in a communicative context and so, children learn to understand (listening) and express themselves (speaking). What is more, from those communicative situations, they acquire and practice new vocabulary and grammatical structures. Moreover, they explore different registers and styles and they develop conversational skills such as turn taking, topic changing or leave-taking. Apart from that, they gain confidence in the language and acquire more fluency and spontaneity. Goodwin (2001) also affirms that drama is an effective tool for pronunciation learning because various components of communicative competence (discourse, intonation, pragmatic awareness, non-verbal communication) can be practiced in an integral way and as they internalize the language, they improve their intonation and pronunciation. Dodson (2000) also affirms that drama activities can also lead to production skills.

3. Methodology

3.1. The study

The research question was: How does drama effect to the learners' oral skills in a foreign language learning context?

The main objectives of the research were:

1. To describe and analyse different drama activities.
2. To compare drama in EFL in two different contexts.
3. To determine the effects of drama in oral skills.

This study was based on an interpretative paradigm. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that the interpretative paradigm understands reality as something complex and it aims to comprehend the facts of one concrete reality. Therefore, this research follows this paradigm as it does not aim to implement anything new but it wishes to understand the actual reality of the schools regarding EFL teaching through drama through observation of the classes and the teachers' performances and analysis of it.

Moreover, it is a qualitative case study research because it examines two different cases. Tellis (1997) affirmed that this kind of research is commonly used in sociological studies and especially in education fields. Yin (2009) defines case study methodology as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p.18). Therefore, case studies are researches based on concrete experiences and they imply data collection and analysis.

3.2. Instruments

Some instruments were used with the main purpose of answering the research question and to accomplish the objectives of the research established at the beginning of the research process.

Observation has become an indispensable source of information. For that, a work camp diary has been used to collect the data from the school visits. The work camp diary is an essential tool to understand and analyse the drama practices because it allows noting the different events happening at the same time in the classroom as well as children behaviours in their natural setting. Concretely, a total amount of 20 class sessions have been observed. The information taken from the work camp diary is referenced like this:

Work Camp Diary notes

Two interviews have been the other main source of information. Interviews helped me to ask qualitative questions to the key participants, in this case to the English teacher of each school. Interviewing the teachers has helped me to acquire more subjective information and to achieve it, I have previously done a template with a structured but flexible interview.

On the one hand, one interview with the English teacher in a Catalan school was created. You can find information that comes from this interview in the analysis and discussion cited as *Teacher 1*. Here you can see the questions of this interview:

1. Last year I was able to observe how to approach teaching-learning in the foreign language (through symbolic play) to children. Do you continue using this methodology in primary school? How do you move it to senior ages?
2. I have observed that you frequently use dramatic resources in the classroom. Could you explain some of the activities that include this type of methodology? Do you combine this methodology with other types of teaching resources in a foreign language?
3. Why did you decide to focus on English as a foreign language in this way and not from another?
4. How do you think that this type of teaching methodologies influence the acquisition of oral skills (speaking and listening)?
5. Do you think that this methodology has strong points and weak points? Which?
6. What do you think is the greatest difficulty using this methodology in primary school?

Figure 1: Catalan teacher interview guideline

On the other hand, another interview has been carried out with an English teacher in Finland. You can also find information extracted from this interview in the analysis and discussion. You will find the information from this interview cited as *Teacher 2*. Here are the questions of this interview:

1. I have observed that you frequently use dramatic resources in the classroom. Could you explain some of the activities that include this type of methodology? Do you combine this methodology with other types of teaching resources in a foreign language?
2. Why did you decide to approach English as a foreign language in this way and not in another?
3. How do you think that this type of teaching methodologies influence the acquisition of oral skills (speaking and listening)?
4. Do you think this methodology has strong points and weak points? Which ones?
5. What do you think is the greatest difficulty using this methodology in primary school?

Figure 2: Finnish teacher interview guideline

Finally, a third instrument has been used to carry out the study: the document review. This tool has consisted of reviewing the existing documents of the school in order to plan the questions for the interviews and to develop the observation guide. In addition, document review has been very useful to gather the background information of the centres and to have a previous idea of their teaching philosophy and their history as a school.

The documents used for the document review were:

SCHOOL 1	SCHOOL 2
Document 1: Catalan National Core Curriculum (2016)	Document 5: Finnish National Core Curriculum (2014)
Document 2: Projecte Educatiu de Centre (PEC)	
Document 3: Project Lingüístic de Centre (PLC)	
Document 4: website of the school	Document 6: website of the school

Figure 3: Documents analysed

These documents are cited as *Document 1, 2, 3, 4, 5* or *6* respectively.

3.3. School contexts and participants

This research has been carried out with a total amount of 90 children from two different primary schools. *School 1* is a Catalan school and *School 2* is a Finnish school. Some parameters were taken into account when choosing these schools: 1) the school had to teach English as a foreign language, 2) the students had to be in the same grade or almost in the same grade, 3) the school had to be near to me because I needed to go there as many times as possible to observe the maximum sessions possible. A brief summary of these parameters can be found in the table below (Figure 4).

There is a reason why a Finnish school was finally chosen, which is that I have done the teacher training placement in Finland for ten weeks this academic course. In this Finnish school, they were doing many drama activities in the English and CLIL classes from a long time ago, so I wanted to take advantage of their experience and I thought that it was a good chance to enrich my study by complementing it with abroad experiences and to learn from a different education system that also works with drama.

After looking for some schools in my area that could accomplish these parameters, one Catalan public school and one Finnish school were chosen. The observations were carried out from December to March.

School	School 1	School 1	School 2
Location	Catalonia	Catalonia	Finland
Academic year	2 nd grade	4 th grade	4 th grade
Teacher	English teacher specialist	English teacher specialist	English teacher specialist and CLIL teacher

Number of children	40 pupils: 20+20 (2 nd A + 2 nd B)	24 pupils (4 th B)	26 pupils (4 th B)
Number of observations	8 sessions of 45 minutes (4 with 2 nd A, 4 with 2 nd B)	4 sessions of 90 minutes	8 sessions of 45 minutes
Subject	English	English	Social studies, maths and science (in CLIL) and English

Figure 4: parameters for the school choice

School 1

The first participant school is a public school of for about 400 students and 40 teachers situated in a village in the Central area of Catalonia. This school offers education from 3 to 12 years old students. *Document 3* explains that most of the families in the school are Catalan but there are also families from different origins. Thus, children have different mother tongue languages. In 2014 data, approximately 5% of the children are not Catalan but 20% do not have Catalan as the first language. In this school, Catalan is the vehicular language and so it is used as the language to communicate between all the members implied in their educative community and the one used in written communications of the school.

Some important aspects to highlight about their foreign language learning approach described in *Document 2* are: 1) they impart the subject entirely in English; 2) they approach it from a communicative point of view and not on its formal study; 3) they demand a good level of English to their foreign language teachers as well as necessary strategies to create experiential classes and 4) the introduction of English in this school is done when children are 5 years old. Regarding methodologies used for teaching the foreign language, resources such as routines, songs and nursery rhymes, small theatre representations or audiovisual media are frequent. They also more spontaneously make theatre plays, watch films and create books and magazines, and once every course they have an English Day.

To introduce the foreign language, children start having one session per week (26-27 hours per year), and they do it in role-play corners where English is used as the language to communicate. In the first stage of Primary, more importance is given to oral comprehension in order to respect children's Silent Period but oral expression is also

slowly introduced with very guided activities. In the second stage of Primary, a lot of importance is still given to the oral part of the language and children's output is every time more pushed. Moreover, they introduce the written comprehension. In the final stage of Primary, foreign language learning is mainly focused on written language and they also introduce CLIL in subjects such as Science.

School 2

The second school participating on this study is a Finnish preschool (6-year-olds) and primary school (7 to 13-year-olds) located in a city of for about 300.000 inhabitants in the south-west of Finland. This is a school of for about 450 pupils. It is a comprehensive school. Comprehensive schools are schools that do not only offer basic education but also English-enriched teaching. For that reason, one class of each course is an English CLIL class, so the pupils in those classes study some of the subjects in English.

In *Document 6* they explain that the aim of this teaching is to inspire the pupil to use the foreign language in a natural way and to support the learner's versatile language learning. The use of English in CLIL classes starts in year 1 and gradually increases from very basic use to the sixth grade where English is already widely used as part of teaching. In addition to language learning, *Document 5* specifies that in this language classes there has to be familiarization with English-speaking cultures.

An important aspect to highlight regarding the language topic is that CLIL students are admitted to these classes on the basis of a separate suitability test when enrolling in a school. The conditions to enroll the child in a CLIL class are the following: all children enrolling in CLIL and immersion classes are required to have feasible skills in Finnish relevant to the level for their age. Pupils enrolling in these classes in the first grade are not required to know the particular foreign language while pupils enrolling in a different course class should have sufficient knowledge of the particular foreign language for that grade level. Thus, the participants of this school are linguistically talented. Moreover, other facts such as exigency asked to the students or students' responsibility and autonomy to learn, influence on the student profile selected as it is different from the other school context. Finally, it is influential that English is part of children's daily life. They have got it on their TV's and all around and so, they have got an intrinsic motivation to learn it.

Regarding methodologies used to teach EFL in this school, it is remarkable that a book is a base for teaching in CLIL classes and English classes. Moreover, technologies are very much used in this school and they are part of children's learning devices. There are lots of game-based activities that also include dramatic exercises or small representations. Also, oral skills are very much the main focus of the lessons and for that, dialogues and discussions between teachers and students are frequent.

4. Results and discussion

In this part of the paper, results will be discussed and interpreted in relation to the existing theoretical framework. Thus, the obtained data is establishing a discussion with the theorists and it is analysed and contrasted in order to show coherences between what teachers said in the interviews, what their documents say, and what they do in their classes. The results of the current study have been divided into two main sections.

4.1. Drama in the two chosen schools

There are many different ways to approach EFL teaching in Primary. However, as *Teacher 1* affirmed, moving to upper grades does not mean that language does not have to be significant and contextualised anymore to be learnt. Thus, in Primary, as in all levels of education, it is important to create situations where students can learn the language in real communicative contexts where they have to use authentic language (Gray, 2002). Both schools introduce drama in their EFL classes because of that reason.

The current study found that when using drama to teach a language, it is very important to coordinate and properly sequence the subject during all children's studies in order to ensure a logical evolution of the complexity of the language level required. As seen during data collection of last course's research, *School 1* is starting to introduce EFL in role-play corners. In the first courses of primary, they still do lots of games, representations and language routines while in upper courses, although they follow in the same line, they simulate real communicative situations and they introduce written language when dramatizing (*Work Camp Diary notes*). *Teacher 1* affirmed that planning and determining how to teach is important to ensure all competencies are worked out.

In *School 1*, drama, as well as other methodologies such as TPR, songs, storytelling, and games are the basis of EFL classes (*Work Camp Diary notes*). *Teacher 1* justifies the use of these methodologies because they all imply an active role of the student and are significant activities to them. And why are they significant to them? Because as Widdowson (1978) explained when defining the Communicative Approach of language learning, the language is learnt with its use, when interpreting and producing the language. Thus, children learn foreign language because they have got to use it for some reason, to overcome a situation.

The Finnish National Core Curriculum (2014), *Document 5*, gives total freedom to the teachers to approach their teaching. It is open to all innovative approaches and methods that imply the active participation of the students. That is the reason why *Teacher 2* is always looking for new effective ways of approaching foreign language teaching. In *School 2*, drama does not only appear in EFL classes but is also frequently used in other CLIL subjects such as science, history or social studies. *Teacher 2* affirms that drama is very useful in all her classes because language becomes much more memorable to the children when they have learnt it in a context. She says that it is because “they have been implied mentally and physically”. Thus, this teacher agrees to what Phillips (2000) explains about “language personalization” as when children need to act out the language, they internalize it. This can also be illustrated with an example extracted from the *Work Camp Diary notes*. In one occasion, a child did not remember a word, but he explained to the rest of the group the context in which they learnt that word and then, they all remembered the word.

When developing this study, it has been noticed that when doing drama activities in both schools, children are more motivated, they have fun and they are involved in the class, as they actively participate and they are more concentrated and focused on learning (*Work Camp Diary notes*). Teachers in both schools (*Teacher 1* and *Teacher 2*) confirm that their motivation towards language learning increases when doing drama because they need to use the language in a purposeful situation. Thus, they have got an intrinsic motivation to use the foreign language. Case and Wilson (2003) explain the important role that pleasure and motivation play when learning a language. It is also found that drama activities are part of children’s interests and what is more, they are useful to cover all language levels and different intelligences in the classroom, so this makes language get to all children.

During the data collection period in the schools, it has been observed that the more children are used to do drama activities, the more effective they are. For instance, in *School 2*, children were very much used to establish dialogues in class and to collaborate in group works. Thus, when the teacher proposed to do an activity concerning drama, they were making groups very fast, listening to others and respecting their classmates' opinions very much, not judging themselves or others when interpreting. This made the activities much easier and fluent for sure. For that, it is important that when proposing to use this methodology in the EFL class, the teacher is conscious that it takes time for children to get used to it, to take it seriously and to take drama as another tool for learning.

What is more, *Teacher 1* affirmed that this kind of activities frequently imply more noise than a traditional class as students have to talk between them. These activities also take more time. *Teacher 1* ensures that "You cannot do drama quickly. The presentation of the activity, rehearsals and final product make it longer. But all that time is well invested when you see the results and the evolution of the knowledge and motivation of the children. There is a lot of implicit and explicit work behind drama."

4.2. Oral skills improvement through drama

From the data collected and according to what it has been stated in the theoretical framework, it is confirmed that drama activities in EFL class imply the four language skills (Dodson, 2000 and Maley and Duff, 2005) and have a positive impact on children's oral skills. The more children are used to drama practice, the better the language oral understanding and production are. In fact, during the short time of observation, a slight improvement has been noticed in both schools. However, interviewed teachers (*Teacher 1* and *Teacher 2*) affirmed that there is a noticeable improvement in children's knowledge of the language and their oral skills when practicing drama.

Teacher 1 affirms that drama offers the conditions for the two indispensable elements of language: input and output. Drama offers a lot of input in the foreign language and fosters and provokes output. As *Teacher 2* explains, the input is as important as output as children also need to listen to their mates' questions if they want to give a proper

answer. They cannot answer “Potato” when the question is “What is your favorite color?”.

In *School 1* and *2* the teachers use dramatic resources when teaching. For instance, they use lots of gestures and mimics when giving oral instructions (*Work Camp Diary notes*). *Teacher 1* explained that dramatizing her talk helps her students to understand the foreign language. As stated in the theoretical framework, children learn more vocabulary and grammatical structures when they are taught in a communicative context (Maley and Duff, 2005, Dundar, 2013 et al.). She affirms that dramatic resources such as corporal expression or non-linguistic strategies favour children’s oral comprehension.

For the same reason, *Teacher 1* asks her students to accompany their foreign language productions with non-verbal language when representing a piece of a story or simulating a real situation. Therefore, she wants to demonstrate to her students that the aim in language learning is to reach communication. Children need to see that the objective is to make oneself understood and that verbal communication is only one piece of the whole communication. Maley and Duff (2005) and Phillips (2000) agree that drama implies verbal and non-verbal communication and gives children the opportunity to communicate from different communicative tools. For instance, *Teacher 2* explains that when dramatizing, children use much more than their oral skills, they can use pointing for example. And what it is even more interesting in this kind of practice is that they collaborate with each other. For instance, a child can point to an ice cream and say “I want this” even if he wanted to say “I want a strawberry ice cream”, their friends can help and say “Do you mean strawberry ice cream?”.

In relation to this idea, this study also found that children get used to the use of the language when doing drama activities and so, they gain confidence in it. As stated in the theoretical framework, Phillips (2000) gives a reason to that. This author states that children can participate in drama activities at different levels and therefore, everybody can success according to his or her language level and this makes them more self-confident towards the foreign language. Moreover, children can learn from many channels. *Teacher 2* says that drama activities can allow the shier children to participate more, in a different way that is not speaking in front of all the class: “Drama makes shier children a bit braver”. She states that children who are shier or still not ready to produce language can still be very talented in audio. Thus, the Silent Period of each

child is respected because they can interfere in the activity without saying a word, but still participating in the communication.

Mostly in *School 2*, where other subjects apart from English have been observed, a very good level of conversational skills has been perceived during debates and discussions (*Work Camp Diary notes*). As stated in the theoretical framework, drama activities allow children to explore different registers and styles of communication and they develop lots of conversational skills such as turn taking. Apart from conversational skills, as children practice the language in communication, they acquire a good pronunciation and intonation and have more fluency. Moreover, they are more spontaneous, as they get the words from the context.

Therefore, the results of this study have reaffirmed the ideas that have been stated in the theoretical framework, which can be synthesised in two main issues. On the one hand, drama has been defined as an excellent method to approach EFL as it is very effective in terms of language learning. On the other hand, when analysing explicitly foreign language oral skills in this particular study, it has been found that drama clearly positively influences them. In sum, the results have demonstrated that it is possible to introduce dramatic resources in the class and benefit from their demonstrated advantages.

5. Conclusions

The schools in which these results were obtained are two examples of the use of drama in EFL teaching. That is not to say, in all schools in Catalonia or Finland drama is approached in the same way. However, the present study, exposing different groups of children in primary education to distinct drama activities, has made evident the fact that drama is a good methodology for EFL teaching. The results of the present study have shown that there is not one only model of implementation of drama that is useful for all contexts because every teacher has to adapt it to its school context and taking into account its students needs and previous experiences in it. What is more, it has been demonstrated that well-approached drama activities can bring a lot of advantages whereas doing drama in an inappropriate way might bring some disadvantages as

children could dislike it. The data obtained did not demonstrate any negative results of this methodology regarding oral skills development. Nevertheless, the observations done through a short period of time have shown improvement in participant's oral skills.

The chance to see the implementation of this methodology in another country has been a relevant fact for this study as it has been interesting to see how they are applied in two very different contexts. The aim of this study was not to define which one was better or worse but to compare them and keep with the most interesting things about each. It is always very enriching to analyse what is going on in the schools and inspire with other ideas or new methods from abroad.

Some elements can be mentioned regarding the limitations of this study. The time of observation of the drama activities and its outcomes (four months) has been shorter than it would have ideally been. A suggestion for further research would be to analyse the effect of drama in oral skills in longer-term exposure. Carrying out two case studies in two specific contexts is not enough to draw general conclusions or to extrapolate the results in other schools.

At any rate, this study's attempt is to engage the English teaching community to consider the need for rethinking the EFL teaching in primary education and the use of more communicative approaches. The study has demonstrated not only good results of drama methodology but also meaningful engagement of the pupils and advantageous effects in long-term exposure to this kind of activities.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to express my gratefulness to the schools where I did my fieldwork. Teachers and pupils participation has been a key element of my research.

Secondly, I would also like to give special thanks to my family and friends for their support while developing the project.

Finally, I want to express my gratefulness to my tutor, Marta Esmarats, for sharing with me all her knowledge and for passing me on her creativity and very interesting ideas. It has been a pleasure to work with her.

6. Bibliography

Budden, J. (2004). Role-play. Retrieved from <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/role-play>

Cameron, L. (2002). *Teaching languages to young learners*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Canale, M. (1983). From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy. In Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. W. (Eds.), *Language and communication*, p. 2-27. London: Longman.

Case, D., and K. Willson. (2003). *English sketches*. Oxford: Macmillian Heinemann.

Davies, P. (1990). The use of drama in English Language Teaching. *TESL Canada Journal*, 8 (1), p. 87-99.

Demircioğlu, Ş. (2010). Teaching English vocabulary to young learners via drama. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2 (2), p.439-443.

Dodson, S. (2000). FAQ's: Learning languages through drama. *Texas Papers in Foreign Language Education*, 5 (1), p. 129-141.

Dundar, S. (2013). Nine drama activities for foreign language classrooms: Benefits and Challenges. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 70, p.1424-1431.

Finnish National Board of Education. (2016). *National core curriculum for basic education 2014*. Helsinki, Finland.

Generalitat de Catalunya, Departament d'Ensenyament. (2016). *Currículum i orientacions educació infantil. Segon cicle*. Barcelona: Servei de Comunicació i Publicacions. Retrieved from: <http://ensenyament.gencat.cat/web/.content/home/departament/publicacions/colleccions/curriculum/curriculum-infantil-2n-cicle.pdf>

Goodwin, J. (2001). *Teaching Pronunciation in M. Celce-Murcia. Teaching English as a second or Foreign language*. Heinle & Heinle.

Gray, J. (2002). Overcoming the fear of using drama in English Language Teaching. *The internet TESL Journal*, 6 (8).

- Griva, E. and Semoglou, K. (2012). Estimating the effectiveness and feasibility of a game-based project for early foreign language learning. *English Language Teaching*, 5 (9).
- Holden, S. (1982). *Drama in Language Teaching*. London: Longman.
- Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. London: Sage Publications.
- Maley, A. and Duff, A. (2001). *Drama techniques in language learning: a resource book for communication activities for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Maley, A. and Duff, A. (2005). *Drama techniques: a resource book of communication activities for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Miccoli, L. (2003). English through drama for oral skills development. *ELT Journal*, 57 (2) p.122-129.
- Phillips, S. (2000). *Drama with children*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ruiz de Velasco, A. and Abad, J. (2011). *El Juego simbólico*. Barcelona: Graó.
- Slade, P. (1955). *Child drama*. Michigan: Philosophical Library.
- Tellis, W. M. (1997). Application of a case study methodology. *The Qualitative Report*, 3 (3), p. 1-19.
- Way, B. (1967). *Development through drama*. London: Longman.
- Wessels, C. (1987). *Drama*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1978). *Teaching language as communication*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Yin, R. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Zafeiriadou, N. (2009). Drama in language teaching: a challenge for creative development. *Issues*, 23, p. 4-9.
- Zalta, G. (2018). Using drama with children. Retrieved from: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1107900>

