

DRAMA EDUCATION IN ENGLISH  
TEACHING

A study of drama activities in English language schoolbooks

Candidate's thesis

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Englannin opetuksessa ja muissakin aineissa draaman kautta opettaminen sisältää monia hyödyllisiä tapoja sekä oppilaille että opettajille. Nykytilanne on kuitenkin se, että draamakasvatus ja opettaminen draaman avulla ovat suhteellisen tuntemattomia opettajille, jotka eivät ole draamaa opiskelleet. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoitus oli siksi tuoda esiin draamakasvatuksen hyötyjä englannin opetuksessa opettajille, mutta enimmäkseen tutkia mitä nykyiset draamalliset tehtävät englannin oppikirjoissa pitävät sisällään. Draamaa ja draamakasvatusta on tutkittu laajalti, mutta itse draamatehtäviä ei ole suurennuslasin alle laitettu.

Englannin kieli on hyvin laaja alue tutkittavaksi. Tästä syystä tämä tutkimus pyrki kattamaan kaiken, mitä draamatehtävät voivat englannin kielen opettamiseen ja oppimiseen tuoda. Tutkimus koostui deskriptiivisestä analyysistä, jolla tutkittiin englannin kielen lukion oppikirjojen yhdestä sarjasta kolmea kurssikirjaa. Tutkimuksessa otettiin selvää mitä kirjojen sisältämät draamalliset tehtävät opettivat kielen alueella, mitä muita asioita ne opettivat, millä tavoilla ne edistivät opetusta ja oliko niissä jotain parannettavaa.

Tulokset osoittivat, että tehtävät opettivat enimmäkseen yleisesti kommunikaatiota, mutta paikoin myös tarkemmin jotain kommunikaation osaa. Vähemmän niissä opetettiin sosiaalisia taitoja ja kulttuurintuntemusta eikä kielioppia opetettu draaman avulla lainkaan. Oppimisen apuna hyödynnettiin oppilaiden mielikuvitusta, improvisaatiotaitoja, lauseiden toistamista, oikean elämän tilanteita ja roolissa olemista. Tutkimus osoitti kuitenkin, että roolissa työskentelyä oli suhteellisen vähän ja minkäänlaiseen keskusteluun tehtävästä opitusta ei kehoitettu työskentelyn jälkeen. Lisätutkimusta kaivataan saadakseen parempi kuva kaikista draamatehtävistä englannin kielen oppikirjoissa sekä itse draamatehtävien saralla opetuskokeiluna parannettuina tehtävinä. Myös englannin oppikirjojen tekijöinä tulisi olla enemmän draamakasvatuksen opettajia.

Tutkimustuloksia voidaan hyödyntää englannin ja muiden kielten opetuksessa. Draamatehtävät tuovat uuden metodin ja kiinnostavaa vaihtelua opettajille sekä oppilaille, vaikka draamaa ei itse ole opiskellut.

Asiasanat: drama, drama in education, drama activities, English teaching

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

English teachers are well aware of the fact that a teaching method which would work for all students does not exist. For this reason, teachers are on a constant quest for variation to their repertoire in order to maintain students' interest in the classroom. Drama activities have values that most teachers might not even be aware of. For instance, they can increase students' self-esteem, language skills and their abilities to express themselves by using their own creativity. In addition, they can develop social skills and make the students attain more cultural knowledge in an interesting way through a dramatic context. Moreover, drama activities can bestow equally children and adults benefits that are required in real life.

An abundance of theoretical material on drama and drama in the English classroom exists. However, even though the area of drama has been studied extensively prior to this study, I chose to concentrate on the actual activities since little material of them can be found. The theoretical framework of this study is based on studies and literature of foreign and domestic drama and English pedagogues. The data of this study were gathered by a descriptive analysis of three coursebooks of an English language schoolbook series. The objective of this study is to seek answers to the following questions: What do drama activities teach, how do they assist students' learning and if the activities require improvement.

In addition to the aforementioned, I wish to raise awareness on the benefits of using drama in English teaching. Nowadays, in Finland the use of drama in language classrooms is increasing. However, there remain teachers who are averse to use drama. They are customarily those who are not familiar with or have false beliefs towards drama. Thus, by virtue of this study, I wish to adduce knowledge of drama to support its benefits in teaching English.

First, in Chapter 2 I will describe what drama is in general, what advantages and facts are embodied in drama education and drama in English teaching and what have the previous studies done. Second, in Chapter 3 I will explain my study questions and describe the data and methods of this study. Third, in Chapter 4 I will discern the results of the study. Finally, in Chapter 5 I will discuss what the study has revealed.

## **2 DRAMA EDUCATION**

The theoretical background of this study is based on research and studies done in the field of drama and drama in English teaching in recent years. In this Chapter I will first define what drama and drama in education are. Drama education is a wide term that connotes drama and drama in education as certain kind of subordinates. Thus, in order to remain clear, I will discuss their content more thoroughly in the forthcoming Chapters. Second, I will explicate learning in drama. Third, I will discuss drama in English teaching. Finally, I will disclose the previous studies done in this field.

### **2.1 DEFINING DRAMA**

In this Chapter I will clarify certain erroneous impressions people may have of drama and briefly discuss the far-reaching nature of drama.

A preponderance of people think of theatre and plays when they hear the word drama. Indeed, as Heikkinen (2004: 19) states, plays are a part of drama. Drama as an art form coincides with what drama in theatre customarily is. In a theatre, actors play roles and their performance is viewed by spectators. However, drama does not remain between the four walls of a theatre.

The variance of descriptions unveils that drama is more than merely theatre. It can be specified, for instance, as a form of playing games and activities, seeing or making a play, Forum theatre, Theatre in Education (TiE), process drama, improvisation, studying drama or theatre history, and drama in education. The latter is the foundation of this current study and will be explained in more detail presently. However, owing to their irrelevance for this study, the other definitions will not be scrutinised. For more detailed information, see for example Heikkinen (2004: 31-39).

It should also be noted as Clipson-Boyles (1998: 3) points out that drama is multicultural. Indeed, this is one of the most compelling aspects for the use of drama. Consequently, drama can be used by anyone, notwithstanding age, race and ethnicity. In addition, Heikkinen (2004:

15) draws attention to the concept of drama in education being a part of a culture that belongs to everyone. Thus, as Heikkinen continues that in contrast of merely being a part of an institution, drama is a part of everyone's world. For this reason, drama could be cherished by all and can therefore be used in teaching any kind of students.

## **2.2 DRAMA IN EDUCATION**

In this Chapter I will explain what drama in education encompasses and what is its situation in the contemporary school world. The term drama in education refers to what can be taught through drama in drama and certain other subjects as well, for example languages and history.

In fact, drama is constantly around us. It is not located merely within the four walls of a theatre or amidst people in abundance. Indeed, as life itself, drama as well is comprised of small fragments. Thus, teachers have probably used drama in education without being aware of it. Drama in education is one teaching method amongst others and therefore not surpassing other methods. Moreover, it should not be feared.

Clipson-Boyles (1998: 11) points out that most teachers are averse to use drama in education due to their perception that it requires a copious amount of people wreaking havoc in a large space. However, this is far from the truth. Drama does not necessitate large emotions or venues to be drama. For this reason, even the smallest act and the slightest emotional response is drama. Thus, it can be used in a short time slot which enables variance within a lesson.

In Great Britain and certain other countries, teachers are well aware of drama in education. Howell and Heap (2006: 11) argue that Britain and other countries lack unclarity for the reason why to teach drama. It is stated in the national curriculum and is therefore obligatory. However, this does not mean that the reason is merely compulsion. Drama in education has benefits that other means cannot bring to the world of education. Owing to this, drama is used in teaching other subjects as well.

On the other hand, the situation in Finland is to a certain extent the opposite. Most teachers here are unfamiliar with drama in education. We have neither the national curriculum advising

to teach drama nor much interest towards it from elsewhere. In addition, the possibility to study drama in education or other form of drama is exiguous. Thus, teachers might be reluctant to teach with drama due to their unfamiliarity towards the benefits or for certain other false beliefs.

### **2.3 SERIOUS PLAYFULNESS**

In this Chapter I will discuss the meaning of the term serious playfulness and its significance in drama in education.

Owing to erroneous impressions, scarcely any consider drama as a critical teaching method. According to Heikkinen (2004: 59), an abundance of people have the presupposition that drama necessitates humour. For this reason, Heikkinen continues, drama is not taken seriously and is therefore not seen as a suitable learning medium. Thus, when people merely perceive drama as a bundle of multifarious fun and games, they miss the seriousness embedded in it.

Thus, in order to fundamentally fathom how play can be serious enough to gain learning benefits, one has to understand the term serious playfulness<sup>1</sup> (*vakava leikillisyy*s). Heikkinen (2005: 34) argues that there is seriousness involved inside the act of playing. Indeed, taking play seriously makes it play. Whenever we witness a dramatic moment, whether in a theatre or in a venue of lesser setting, we acknowledge the fact that the players take their actions seriously. Furthermore, the situation is similar to that of a playing child. Indeed, we know they are seriously involved with what they are playing. For this reason, an act of drama is not merely play. It is play taken with a grave disposition towards its seriousness. Heikkinen (2004: 81) elucidates this with that even though the form of drama in education is playful, the meaning is genuine. As a result, the appropriateness for teaching through drama cannot be comprehended if the seriousness is not acknowledged.

In addition, Heikkinen (2005: 34) points out that playfulness incorporates social reality and has neither obligations nor necessities tied into it. Consequently, by using their social reality, students are able to tie interesting meanings into a task from their own lives. This is achievable owing to the fact that drama is not an obligatory task students have to carry out.

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<sup>1</sup> For further information, see Heikkinen (2004: 76-83) and Heikkinen (2005: 33-37).

Alternatively, drama can be used as a catalyst for inspecting the world with and through it. As Heikkinen (2004: 77) explains, learning in drama occurs because people create spaces of possibility which have room for constructing new meanings. For this reason, drama has values in itself and they serve as learning benefits.

In this Chapter I briefly discussed the meaning of serious playfulness in order to clarify drama as a solemn teaching method. In the next Chapter I will discuss what drama has to offer in the field of learning.

## **2.4 LEARNING IN DRAMA**

I have divided learning in drama into two sections. In Chapter 2.4.1 I will explain how the actual learning in drama occurs. In Chapter 2.4.2 I will list certain benefits of that learning.

### **2.4.1 HOW LEARNING OCCURS**

Learning in drama might not always occur through those customary means provided by other teaching methods, for example making a test or listening to a lecture. As Heikkinen (2004: 165-166) reminds, the teacher has to create a safe and confiding atmosphere and tackle any pitfalls. Consequently, the teacher needs to allure the students into asking questions. For this reason, any line of questioning, for instance *what happened* or *what did you feel* might open up the problematic points. In addition, Heikkinen reminds that the teacher should be able to create those pitfalls as well in order to create a quizzical atmosphere.

Keeping students motivated through the whole lesson is an intractable problem. Heikkinen (2004: 164-165) points out that the most important task for a teacher is to activate the students. He continues that according to constructivism, learning is a result of a personal construction process and the teacher's task is to create the framework and hence further students' personal learning processes. Drama provides solutions for the situation accordingly, for instance, when the students work in a real life situation and gain experiences. As Heikkinen (2004: 139) reminds, learning in drama is comprehensive and occurs through experiences. Moreover, Howell and Heap (2006: 11) state that using drama in education can offer students the possibility to partake in challenging, exciting and inspiring experiences.



Consequently, when the experience motivates the students, they could be more receptive to learn through these experiences. Indeed, as Owens and Barber (1998: 10) found out, drama can work as a motivating factor for learning.

Working in role is one way to increase students' motivation. Heikkinen (2004: 139) says that working with drama is demanding for teachers due to its requirements of constant activeness and presence. However, Heikkinen (2004: 135) claims that teachers are paid to guide and tune up teaching. For this reason, teacher-in-role might motivate the students to pay more attention since it shows that the teacher is genuinely interested in the subject as well. Furthermore, Clipson-Boyles (1998: 20) points out that children mostly enjoy when a teacher is in role. Owens and Barber (1998: 36) share a similar view and state that when the students are in role, it enables them to find out the possibilities of play involved in drama. Thus, when the teacher leads the way of being in role, students might be more willing to do it themselves, which is a tremendous motivator for a student when it works properly. Consequently, instead of merely presenting the instructions, teachers should occasionally put themselves at stake in order to show interest in the tasks the students are carrying out. As mentioned above, the experiences are the key and the teacher should encourage students to create roles and through them, experiences.

These meaningful experiences rarely befall by other teaching methods. In these experiences students learn by doing. As Heikkinen (2004: 130) points out, information sticks in students' minds a great deal better when they learn by doing. Referring to personal experience, I concur with Heikkinen. Thus, form of information notwithstanding, learning by doing is one of the greatest advantages drama has to offer.

In addition, Heikkinen (2005: 39) argues that new experiences enable students to form new solution patterns. Whether the solutions work or not, Heikkinen says they nevertheless raise new questions and thoughts. Indeed, when people dissect their own thoughts, learning can be a concomitant. Moreover, Heikkinen (2005: 38) draws attention to the fact that drama experiences aspire to create learning possibilities. This is particularly possible when people discuss together what has been done after an activity.

For this reason, Heikkinen (2005: 38) argues for the insufficiency of the mere experience. Indeed, learning in such experiences depends upon the analysis. Heikkinen (2004: 128) points

out that drama education creates meaningful learning experiences, which are those dramatic moments that lead students into discussions. As Heikkinen (2004: 23) indicates, when the experiences are discussed and explored, students gain knowledge of themselves as well as of culture and society. In addition, Howell and Heap (2006: 13) share this view by stating that drama provides the opportunity for studying and reflection. Furthermore, when learning is considered, I have found reflecting after an assignment to be mostly rewarding.

## **2.4.2 WHAT IS LEARNED**

When people engage themselves in real life activities with drama, learning ensues. As Heikkinen (2005: 39) points out, it occurs through means of trying, exploring and wondering. He continues that students learn new aspects of themselves while taking risks, working out new ideas and trying out different ways of conducting matters. Consequently, as Heikkinen (*ibid*) points out, people learn self-knowledge in drama. This can occur while experimenting with real life activities.

Furthermore, students learn cultural knowledge through drama. Howell and Heap (2006: 13) argue that drama is tied to culture and it offers children resources for understanding themselves and getting in touch with other people. Heikkinen (2004: 14) states that drama in education transfers cultural heritage from one generation to the next. In my opinion, drama is probably the finest way to transfer cultural knowledge when all the knowledge is learned by doing.

Drama in education facilitates the use of group work. Howell and Heap (2006: 13) state that drama is a social and reciprocal art form, a powerful means for cooperation and communication. They continue that it can change the way people feel, think and behave. Heikkinen (2004: 126) shares a similar view by stating that drama education is mostly cooperative learning. In addition, Heikkinen (2005: 33) claims that learning is the examination of meanings and creating together. Thus, studying these meanings together creates a social reality advantageous for all. When students work with each other in social situations, they probably obtain social skills with which they can cope in real life.

Bowell and Heap (2006: 12) state that apart from exploring themselves, children can also practise life with their own drama games. Engaging in drama activities therefore intensifies this further. Teachers as educators have the task of teaching children life as well and not merely compulsory school subjects. In addition, Owens and Barber (1998: 10) claim that owing to the impossible task of getting children to stop playing, they should therefore be offered the chance of learning from those playful situations.

However, drama in education is not designed solely for children. Heikkinen (2004: 24) points out a similar view as Bowell and Heap above: With and through drama people can explore and rehearse real life. Indeed, this notion refers to everyone. As I mentioned in the previous section with drama, drama in education too overlooks age, race and ethnicity.

Heikkinen (2004: 58) points out that what one does in drama does not occur in real life. As Heikkinen (2004: 136) describes, drama makes learning comprehensive by offering learning situations that imitate real life. Occasionally students are unwilling to exert themselves in a real life situation. Drama enables the opportunity in a fictional and safe environment. According to Heikkinen (2004: 23-24), drama experiences enable students to express feelings, thoughts and expressions in a restricted context that cannot be conveyed in real life. Owing to the fact that the act remains in drama makes it more secure to do. Even though real life is excluded, it is by definition reality. For this reason, the experience is there without any detriment.

However, I have to elicit the cautiousness embedded upon the preceding notion. Although I agree with the aforementioned, the situation is not that straightforward. Even though an act in a drama game is not reality, it may be taken as reality by a student. As a result, students may partake so well in the activity that little do they know of the consequences. Thus, in order to prevent intractable situations, each drama activity requires attention. In effect, teachers have to proceed with circumspection.

## **2.5 DRAMA AND ENGLISH TEACHING**

In this section I will clarify what drama can offer for teaching English. Students' learning in English teaching through drama is predominantly composed of what was discussed in the

previous Chapter. Nevertheless, I find it important to examine certain points of drama in English teaching that other subjects lack in. However, one needs to bear in mind that the following can be used in all language teaching and not merely with English even though in this study I refer to English.

Play is an essential part of drama and language is certainly related to play. As Heikkinen (2004: 66) argues, play is founded on language, which is the first and most important device humans create in order to express their thoughts. I turn to serious playfulness to expound on the situation. Heikkinen (2005: 35) points out that serious playfulness always has a stake, either being symbolic, material or ideal. Thus, the stake can be a matter that should be learned during the drama exercise. Clipson-Boyles (1998: 11-12) shares a similar view by stating that drama activities necessitate careful planning for a certain purpose. Thus, the purpose or the stake in language teaching could be used for communication, group activities, memory assistance, practising particular forms of speech or for practising reading with expression. The use of playfulness, which is related to language and has learning benefits, could therefore be a fundamental asset in teaching English.

Students learn to use regular speech through drama. Almond (2005: 11) draws attention to the fact that through drama the division between the organized language inside a classroom and the spontaneous language in the real world will narrow. This is achieved, as he continues, due to drama engaging students in authentic real life situations. Furthermore, Heikkinen (2004: 136) continues that drama develops students' non-verbal and verbal communication skills. Moreover, Clipson-Boyles (1998: 3) shares a similar view by stating that drama puts language into context. Thus, when students are obliged to participate in meaningful activities and use English, they strive to use normal everyday speech. As a result, students speak in English in order to fulfill the assignments and inadvertently practise their language skills.

The real life activities may be beneficial for learning as well as motivation. The spontaneous speech required by the activities necessitates students to use their imagination. In contrast to producing verbatim sentences, the activities call for students to state and articulate their own ideas. Thus, when students can use their imagination, their spontaneity to react in English could increase. Consequently, when the speech is spontaneous and therefore improvised, the learners' speech may become more fluent and confident. As a result, students' confidence could strengthen when they are more willing to use their language skills. Furthermore, when

the situations are practised in a safe environment inside a classroom, students are probably more willing to use their language. When students use their language skills and see that they can manage, their self-esteem may rise as well. In addition, through these real life activities, students learn of life.

While the purpose of these real life situations is commonly fluent communication, other tasks provide practise for other skills. For instance, Clipson-Boyles (1998: 12-13) points out pair activities where students can drill forms of speech in particular. For example, how to make a telephone inquiry or how to order food in a restaurant can be these tasks. The aforementioned are required in language teaching, since the students need to manage in all fields of language use. Thus, merely teaching communication is insufficient if the students are unable to speak due to a lack of vocabulary. Consequently, drama can assist in language learning's various fields when teachers use their imagination to create such activities.

As Clipson-Boyles (1998: 8-9) points out, drama activities produce processes that are related to listening, speaking, writing and reading. Although teaching English with drama mostly assists listening and speaking, drama activities can amend the situation of reading and writing as well. For instance, if an activity requires students to speak of their feelings, it can be followed by a writing assignment in which those feelings can be weighed up in more detail. Consequently, the more students write and speak, the more they can learn to find meanings in a written text. Thus, drama has the possibility to enhance students' reading skills as well.

Although Owens and Barber (1998: 11) point out that drama is not the one and only proper way to learn, it is nevertheless one of those methods that keep the lessons interesting. They draw attention to the fact that most teaching requires students to remain quietly seated. They continue that drama stories can utilize different learning styles, functions and forms of group work. Thus, using drama in English teaching entails all the variation required in a language classroom, from which students and teachers alike benefit.

## **2.6 PREVIOUS STUDIES**

In this section I will explain the previous studies conducted in this field, which are three MA theses and one Licentiate thesis. In addition, I will explain their significance for the current

study.

In her MA thesis, Huohvanainen (2001) explored the use of process drama<sup>2</sup> in an English language classroom. She constructed an optional course which used process drama in teaching oral skills. Her material package is well founded on a theoretical basis and she finds the benefits of process drama in language teaching. However, the interface between Huohvanainen's thesis and this current study remains vague.

I do agree with the capability of process drama in examining a theme or a topic. Nevertheless, the time it requires does not concur with the means a regular lesson has to offer. For this reason, Huohvanainen conducted her study in an optional course, whereas I am pursuing with activities for all courses and classes. In conclusion, as Huohvanainen (2001: 75) states, students' language skills may lack in sufficiency for the communication a process drama requires. Smaller activities, which I favour, do not require communication skills polished to perfection, which children and teenaged students rarely possess. Consequently, there is justification for the current study.

In her MA thesis, Pyörälä (2000) constructed an optional English course in which she studied various drama activities that could improve students' communication skills. Pyörälä mainly discussed how the students perceived the tasks and what they may have done to their skills in their own perspective. Although meaningful for the current study in teaching students communication, it lacks in studying the activities themselves. However, certain issues have relevance for the current study.

Pyörälä (2000: 101) found out that students felt learning English through drama to be enjoyable and beneficial. On the other hand, as Pyörälä states, the enthusiasm may have been merely due to students' own interest to attend an optional course. Were this to be done with students who did not attend the course by their own free will, the results might have been different. Nonetheless, it is proof that drama activities work in practise.

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2 Process drama always has a theme or a topic that is scrutinised. It involves the whole group together creating a process based on a drama story that the teacher introduces. The work is mostly made through improvisation and performed for the other group members and not an audience. People work in and out of role and react to situations and topics from various perspectives. For more information, see *Bowell and Heap (2006)* and *Heikkinen (2004)*.

The course seemed to bring out certain benefits which I have been arguing for in the background study. Pyörälä (2000: 101) states that quiet and shy students were able to express themselves and the more assured students gave room for students without much assurance. Thus, social skills were learned as well in the course (see Chapter 2.4.2). According to Pyörälä (2000: 103), it was the improvisational nature of the activities and acting in role which brought the students the ability to use spontaneous speech. This coincides with my own research of the benefits of drama in English teaching (see Chapter 2.5). In addition, Pyörälä (2000: 104) noted that the students were able to use their language skills within a context and produce more sufficient speech than they would have initially thought. As I mentioned before, when a meaningful context is provided, the language barrier grows smaller (see Chapter 2.5).

Salopelto (2008) studied intercultural communicative competence through drama in her MA thesis. She organized a teaching experiment with a material package. Her conclusions were that the students were able to learn of drama and culture. Thus, this study proves that drama can teach culture (see Chapter 2.4.2). However, equivalent to the other studies, Salopelto lacks to put drama activities through the looking glass. For this reason, it is not much use for the current study.

Putus (2008) draws attention in her Licentiate's thesis towards drama creating opportunities for interaction in an English classroom. The study was carried out by studying two different drama activities in different classrooms. Her findings pointed out that both, classroom discourse as well as regular speech, occurred in the courses. Even though the means in Putus' study were not vast, the results proved that students can have a discussional environment with the teacher, which benefits learning. However, owing to the fact that the study pursued to find interactional benefits and although achieving in it, it neglected any other possible findings that might have been of an interest for the current study.

In this Chapter I disclosed the findings of the previous studies and their relevance for the current study. As it was discovered, the previous studies have not researched drama activities. For this reason, I have to conclude that there is pertinence in this study in the field of drama and English teaching.

### **3 DATA AND METHODS OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

In this Chapter, I will disclose the data and methods of this study. In addition, I will explain the research questions and the reasons that embarked me on the current study.

In fact, there were four points that drew me towards this study. First, there has not been much study of drama in English teaching in Finland. Second, drama activities in contemporary English schoolbooks have not been extensively studied previously. Third, short drama activities fit the class' timetable more sufficiently than, for example, longer process drama that consumes the whole class or more. Fourth, shorter activities occasionally already exist in schoolbooks and are therefore undemanding to find when one wishes to conduct a study. Finally, I will continue on this topic for my MA thesis and this study will serve as practise for a larger study. Consequently, I find it crucial to conduct such a study in order to assist my future career as an English teacher using drama in education, which is a personal interest of mine.

Even though the previous studies converse the benefits of drama for students, they lack in explaining how drama activities are actually constructed. Thus, in this study I will examine their benefits as well as inspect the activities from their vantage point. In other words, I will explicate the construction of the activities and what they aspire to fulfill. I wanted to construct a study that scrutinizes the use of drama activities in English language schoolbooks. Moreover, I wish to find out if the activities have the required means of a drama activity, that is to say, are they linked to the theory I have introduced in the previous Chapters or if they demand amendment.

In the present study, I will seek answers to the following questions:

1. What linguistic area does the activity teach, for example, communication, grammar or expressions.
2. What additional education does the activity teach, for example, group work, gaining cultural knowledge, learning social or communication skills.
3. What means does the activity use in order to assist students' learning, for example, improvisation, imagination, practising real life or acting in role.
4. Does the activity require amelioration for worthier results?



### 3.1 THE DATA

Finland lacks in schoolbooks that have implemented drama with English teaching to a large extent. However, each schoolbook has different activities and among them customarily are tasks that use drama in a certain form. For this reason, I merely went through contemporary schoolbooks and sought the activities that used drama. Most of them had a very small amount of them. Thus, I chose books that had a fairly large and varied mix of activities using drama. Exercising my own judgement, I gathered an assortment from those activities. In addition, the selection is small due to the length of this study that did not allow a larger amount.

The data for the present study were gathered from *English United* schoolbook courses 1-3, which are for students in upper secondary school (lukio), aged 16-17. The data consisted of a total of 11 activities, four from course 1, four from course 2 and three from course 3. *English United* Course 1 is referred to as EUC1 and Course 2 and 3 as EUC2 and EUC3, respectively. I will use abbreviations with the activities as well and they shall be in the manner of EUC1, page 55, activity 10 as EUC1 P55 A10, for example. In addition, even though the books have been published in 2004 and 2005, they have received later prints and are in contemporary use.

### 3.2 THE METHODS

The method of the current study was a descriptive analysis that was conceived from the research questions. For this reason, the results were achieved juxtaposing personal contemplation with existing theoretical knowledge. In order to gain a wider picture of various drama activities in contemporary schoolbooks, different schoolbooks should be compared. However, owing to the present study's short medium, I did not carry out the comparison.

Furthermore, I did not construct a questionnaire for the students for two reasons. First, this study was too condensed for carrying out the tasks personally and observing how they work. From my vantage point, observation would be required if one were planning a questionnaire of activities. Consequently, the results could be more clear when the activities have been seen in practise. Second, I would have probably found students who use the books and had done the tasks in question. However, I could have not been certain of how much they remember of the tasks, if they had even done them. As a result, I decided to analyse merely the activities.

Less time consuming activities have certain benefits. They can keep students' interest level high. Younger students in particular might lose their interest fairly quickly. Thus, since the activities bring variation to a lesson, students might not be immediately enervated. Indeed, all teachers strive for varying learning mediums and teaching methods for their students. Short drama activities are not difficult to carry out and they leave time for different topics in the lesson. For this reason, I prefer shorter activities instead of, for example, process drama, which consumes one lesson or more. Thus, I find it important to study those activities.

In advance of the results, I will clarify the final research question. If a drama activity does not produce enough of a wanted result, it can be modified. For instance, an activity that displays what to say, can be modified to what could be said. It is possible to know the mere idea of what needs to be discussed and have the students produce the actual speech themselves. This may generate a more beneficial result for students' communication skills. However, if the goal is to teach certain forms or idioms, it could work through simply reading the text and perhaps with certain emotions. Thus, it remains as a drama activity, even though the students do not produce the words from their own imagination.

## **4 RESULTS**

In this Chapter I will reveal the results of this study. I have divided the Chapter into three categories. They are designed from the research questions and disclose the data that were discovered within the parameters of each Chapter. First, in Chapter 4.1 I will disclose what linguistic area the activities were teaching. Second, in Chapter 4.2 I will discuss additional education the activities are striving for. Third, in Chapter 4.3 I will impart the assistance for learning that the tasks use.

### **4.1 LINGUISTIC AREA**

The activities had one common teaching element. Communication was taught in 11/11 of the activities. Thus, they were all designed to train students' speaking skills. However, when it came to other points, the activities varied a great deal.

Certain activities (7/11) concentrated on a certain area in communication teaching. First, fluent speech was taught in 5/11 activities. Second, 1/11 activities taught negotiation by having students practise agreement and disagreement as well as convincing and raising objections. Third, the importance of paying attention was taught in 1/11 activities. Last, 1/11 activities focused on pronunciation and, in addition with 2/11 activities, made students practise translation.

## **4.2 ADDITIONAL EDUCATION**

Certain additional teaching points were found. The students' own culture, in this case Finnish culture, was taught in 7/11 activities. However, only 1/11 activities taught another culture, which was British. Furthermore, certain social skills were taught in 7/11 activities. In addition, how to work with a partner was taught in 3/11 activities. Although in other activities students practised in pairs, these activities required the students to actually make the task with a partner. On the other hand, group work was taught in merely 1/11 activities.

## **4.3 LEARNING ASSISTANCE**

The activities used a varied mix of learning assisting elements. First, real life was practised in 9/11 activities. Second, students were required to work in role in 9/11 activities. Third, phrase drilling was carried out in 4/11 activities. Fourth, imagination was required in 6/11 activities. Fifth, improvisation was called for in 9/11 activities. Last, discussion after the task was used in 1/11 activities.

## **5 DISCUSSION**

In this Chapter I will analyse the results and connect them to the background study discussed in Chapter 2. Furthermore, I will discuss if the activities require improvement. This Chapter has been divided to sections correspondingly to the prior one. However, Chapter 5.4 is an addition which refers to the parts of the activities that could be amended.

## 5.1 LINGUISTIC AREA

Although 11/11 activities taught communication, 7/11 concentrated on a particular area. As a result, the book series was well founded on language teaching since it strived to cover various aspects of it. EUC1 P81 A10 was an excellent example of using drama when teaching a particular communication skill since mere communication is insufficient (see Chapter 2.5). It required the students to use the negotiation skills they had learned prior to the task in a real life situation. As a result, students' negotiation skills might improve when they learn it through drama.

In addition, first, 5/11 activities (EUC1 P81 A12, EUC1 P90 A11, EUC2 P38 A6, EUC3 P72 *Now try this in pairs* and EUC3 P101 A10a\b) required the students to use fluent speech and therefore taught real communication (see Chapter 2.5). Second, EUC3 P72 *Now try this in pairs* taught the importance of paying attention. This was a decent way of acting out a situation and after this task, the fact of paying attention might be remembered by the students when they have all tried out how it feels. In effect, they might learn by doing (see Chapter 2.4.1).

Last, EUC2 P14 A3 taught pronunciation and translation. However, it was at the teacher's discretion to choose which is taught by making the students use either the translated or the English version of the text. Nevertheless, both skills are important in English language teaching and this activity provided the possibility to practise both. On the other hand, EUC2 P38 A6 taught merely translation. However, it did not require the students to translate all that they speak. They had to construct their speech from a few words given as assistance. Nevertheless, it had translation embedded into it. In addition, EUC3 P101 A10a\b had a small amount of translation teaching as well.

## 5.2 ADDITIONAL EDUCATION

A large amount of the activities taught culture. The students' own culture was taught in 7/11 activities (EUC1 P55 A10, EUC1 P81 A12, EUC1 P90 A11, EUC2 P14 A3, EUC2 P80 A8a\b\c, EUC3 P36 A7 and EUC3 P101 A10a\b). The situation in the tasks converse of how their contemporary culture works. For this reason, students can learn of their culture and of

themselves as well as others through these activities (see Chapter 2.4.2). EUC3 P36 A7 was particularly interesting since it required the students to teach their culture to a foreigner. Thus, they can dissect their own culture in the process. On the other hand, EUC 2 P29 A8a\b\ taught British culture. However, it may have required too much from the students even with proper knowledge of Britain's monarchy. To this I will return later in the section of imagination.

Students gain social skills as well when they work with each other (see Chapter 2.4.2). First, in 3/11 activities (EUC1 P55 A10, EUC1 P81 A12 and EUC1 P90 A11) the students practised social intercommunication and may have learned of life in the process. Second, in EUC2 P14 A3 the students were able to assist each other in translation or pronunciation and as a result, had the possibility to learn to be more cooperative. Third, EUC2 P80 A8a\b\ taught students how to act in a restaurant. Fourth, the skill practised in EUC3 P72 *Now try this in pairs* was the art of listening. Last, in EUC3 P101 A10a\b\ students learned how to work in a job interview. The aforementioned are all skills that real life calls for. For this reason, students need to practise them and these activities achieved that purpose.

More social skills were learned in activities that required pair and group work (see Chapter 2.4.2). In 3/11 activities (EUC1 P81 A10, EUC2 P29 A8a\b\ and EUC3 P101 A10a\b\ ) the students were required to organise a role play with a partner. As a result, they learned to work with each other and used group work skills, even though they worked in pairs. In EUC2 P80 A8a\b\c\ the students had to work in small groups in a social situation in a restaurant and look into the life of the waiter and the customers. Thus, these activities taught how to work with other people in different situations.

### **5.3 LEARNING ASSISTANCE**

In order to teach their goal, 9/11 activities (EUC1 P55 A10, EUC1 P81 A10/12, EUC1 P90 A11, EUC2 P29 A8a\b\, EUC2 P80 A8a\b\c\, EUC3 P36 A7, EUC3 P72 *Now try this in pairs* and EUC3 P101 A10a\b\ ) used real life (see Chapter 2.4.2) in a situation that may occur to the students. For this reason, the situation might have interested the students more and therefore benefited their learning. Although the activities taught communication, the reality of the situations may have encouraged students to learn of themselves in the process. For instance, EUC2 P80 A8a\b\c\ was particularly beneficial since it taught how to function in a

restaurant in English. On the other hand, EUC3 P101 A10a\b\ taught how to work in a job interview, which is equally beneficial for a student. In addition, even though EUC3 P72 *Now try this in pairs* did not use a real life situation, it was an example of what may take place in real life in any communication situation.

The students were required to work in role (see Chapter 2.4.1) in 9/11 activities. In 3/11 activities (EUC1 P55 A10, EUC1 P81 A12 and EUC3 P36 A7) the students acted as themselves as well as in role. In addition, they were excellent examples for the teacher to pay attention. Even though working as themselves may produce more self-knowledge, there is the risk of taking the activity too seriously (see Chapter 2.4.2). However, in 6/11 activities (EUC1 P81 A10, EUC1 P90 A11, EUC2 P29 A8a\b\, EUC2 P38 A6, EUC2 P80 A8a\b\c\ and EUC3 P101 A10a\b\)) the students worked in role and not as themselves. Thus, these activities could have raised the students' interest towards the activities. Furthermore, working in role as well as in real life situations bring forth the meaningful experiences that can assist learning (see Chapter 2.4.1).

Drilling phrases and learning them by heart is certainly one learning method. However, using the phrases in a real life situation and drilling them in an environment that gives the students experiences (see chapter 2.4.1), is much more beneficial. EUC1 P81 A10 required the students to drill phrases that they had acquired prior to the task. In order for the students to learn the phrases and evolve as communicators, they need to practise them in a real life situation and in this activity it was possible through drama. EUC1 P81 A12 introduced phrases that the students can practise in use and therefore learn them as they proceed with the task.

In addition, EUC2 P80 A8a\b\c\ introduced in a\ certain phrases that are used later in b\ and c\. This was a decent example of first drilling the phrases and then using them in a real life situation. In my opinion, even though the task is time consuming, it should be done as a whole. Otherwise it would not be as beneficial. Furthermore, EUC3 P101 A10a\b\ used a similar method that certain phrases were learned in a\ and then they were used in assistance when improvising the discussion in b\.

Imagination can be a wonderful asset for students. 6/11 activities required students to use their imagination in various ways. First, in 3/11 activities (EUC1 P81 A10, EUC2 P29 A8a\b\ and EUC3 P101 A10a\b\)) students used their imagination to construct a role play with a partner.

Thus, when they can do it themselves, they probably will be more interested and hence, their motivation for carrying out the task as well as their learning increases. Second, in EUC1 P81 A12 the students were required to use their imagination in producing speech. Third, in 2/11 activities (EUC1 P55 A10 and EUC1 P90 A11) students were required to come up with their own explanations. Last, in EUC 2 P29 A8a\b\ the students had to imagine the whole situation, which provided freedom to fulfill the task. However, the students may not be that aware of the British monarchy in the first place. For this reason, the activity may be too far-fetched and require more imagination from Finnish students than they actually have. Nevertheless, when students can use their imagination, it can increase their motivation and learning a great deal (see Chapter 2.5).

Students had to use improvisation (see Chapter 2.5) in 9/11 activities (EUC1 P55 A10, EUC1 P81 A12, EUC1 P90 A11, EUC2 P29 A8a)b), EUC2 P38 A6, EUC2 P80 A8a\b\c), EUC3 P36 A7, EUC3 P72 *Anow try this in pairs* and EUC3 P101 A10a\b\). The activities required the students to use fluent speech in which they had to improvise what to say. This assists in learning fluent communication when the students do not have set phrases to recite. In particular, EUC1 P90 A11 required the students to argue by themselves and therefore was an excellent communication activity. We all use improvisation when we speak since we do not generally practise what we discuss. Thus, improvisation is a skill that requires practise when learning English as well.

EUC3 P72 *Anow try this in pairs* required the students to discuss how they felt after the task. This is important to do after a task that has been acted out (see Chapter 2.4.1). In this activity it was particularly important since the students practised paying attention. When they discuss how they feel, they might actually learn to listen one another. However, this task was the sole one that had discussion. To this I will return in the next Chapter.

## **5.4 AMELIORATION**

In this Chapter I will disclose certain points from the activities that in my point of view could be amended. However, although they are merely my own opinions, I will explain my thoughts by linking them to the background material.

Indeed, there was little of encouragement for discussion after the task in these activities. As it had been previously mentioned (see Chapter 2.4.1), discussing the task afterwards is important in a drama activity. In this case, EUC3 P72 *Anow try this in pairs* was the only one that instructed discussion after the task. In my opinion, with drama activities, it is what the teacher should consider after every activity, time permitting.

1/11 activities required a follow-up for ameliorated results. EUC1 P81 A10 was a decent example of making the students learn negotiation prior to using that skill in an activity where spontaneous speech is required. However, this task could have been followed by an activity with less drilling of particular forms. In fact, now the students merely constructed their own conversation and did not practise real speech. Thus, the follow-up could have been, for example, a situation that required the negotiation forms to be constructed by free communication. As a result, the learned negotiation strategies would have been in more real use, that is to say, in a real conversation.

However, students may find the activities difficult to carry out when fluency is required. In fact, even though the students are of equal age, their language skills definitely are not similar. For this reason, students might not be able to carry out the task accordingly. These activities required a great deal of fluent speech from the students, which they indeed have to practise. Thus, it should be noted that there are risks when engaging into those activities. Moreover, although these facts are contradictory, they do not demote each other. The activities required constant activeness from the teacher to make sure that students profit from them. In other words, the activities should not be insurmountable for the students. However, even though drama activities are demanding (see Chapter 2.4.1), they can be worth the effort.

In addition, certain consideration was required from the teachers. Occasionally activities have instructions that should not have been present and these activities had one example. In EUC3 P36 A7, it was mentioned that the activity can be done in writing or it can be acted out. For this reason, the teacher had to choose between one or the other. In my opinion, writing assignments should be on their own. Here the students had the opportunity to work alone instead of with each other and they will probably use that chance. Thus, without discrediting writing assignments, they should exist on their own and not as a choice in a drama activity. In other words, the activity had the benefits of functioning as a proper drama activity and should be carried out accordingly.



One of the most interesting points was that each of the activities lacked the use of teacher-in-role (see Chapter 2.4.1). I have argued for the benefits of role play and explained why teacher-in-role could prove to be for the students' advantage. For this reason, I was disconcerted for the inability of these schoolbooks to produce even one example of having the teacher in role. Thus, I offer my ideas of remedy. First, EUC1 P55 A10 could have had the teacher as the grandparent. Indeed, it would have changed the way the task is done, namely that the students would speak to the teacher instead of to each other. Alternatively, the teacher could have merely been in role in the beginning of the activity and motivate the students prior to their own discussions. In addition, EUC1 P81 A12, EUC1 P29 A8a\b\ and EUC2 P80 A8a\b\c\ could have been done similarly with the teacher in role in the beginning. Second, EUC3 P36 A7 could have had the teacher in role through the whole task. Instead of making the students work with a partner, they could have had a whole class conversation with the teacher who is playing the host. However, talking in front of the whole class might be uncomfortable for certain students. Nevertheless, teacher-in-role could prove its worth in this fashion.

I was surprised to find out that there was a shortage of group activities. Most of the activities were done in pairs. Although beneficial as well, group work should, however, be encouraged since with drama students gain more benefits from group work (see Chapter 2.4.2). As mentioned above, when the teacher is in role, the students work as a whole class. As a result, they could practise their group work skills. For instance, in EUC3 P36 A7 the students could have worked as one large or a few smaller groups and come up with answers to the questions or make certain knowledge of Finland available before questioning. Thus, skills in a regular conversation would be practised in a group and in English. The activities that used group work merely had it in the beginning for task organising. For this reason, activities in which the students practise their language skills in a group situation could prove to be beneficial for the students. Although EUC2 P80 A8a\b\c\ came close, it limited the discussion into a closed restaurant situation and, therefore, did not allow group work skills to be practised extensively. For instance, an activity in which the students need to, in English, work their way out of a dilemma can be advantageous for group work skills.

Teaching cultures through drama remained vague. This coincides with Salopelto's (2008) point that cultural knowledge is required and she already proved that drama is a decent way of teaching it. Indeed, the activities using drama lacked in culture teaching. There were activities

that taught the students' own culture and an activity which taught British culture. However, EUC 2 P29 A8a\b\ merely taught the knowledge of Britain as a monarchy, knowledge which the students probably have established prior to the task. Thus, in order to be more profound in teaching other cultures, more variation is required. These examples merely scratched the surface in drama teaching culture. Cultural knowledge is required and is beneficial for the students (see Chapter 2.4.2).

Finally, the activities taught mostly communication skills. What I would have wanted to see were grammar activities using drama. The schoolbooks had grammar teaching merely as a separate section. However, none of the activities used drama in any manner. Although grammar activities mostly drill forms, they can be incorporated with drama. In fact, drilling grammar can happen in a situation, which makes the activity more interesting.

## 6 CONCLUSION

This study discussed the content of drama activities in contemporary English language schoolbooks. The focus was to find out what the drama activities taught and how they assisted learning. In addition, there was discussion for possible amendment of the activities. The theory was based on literature by pedagogues of drama and English since they provide the means for a teacher who uses drama in English teaching. The study was conducted by a descriptive analysis of drama activities from three courses of the *English United* schoolbook series.

The results of the study elicit the following information. Although the activities taught communication in general and certain other points of communication, they taught little else. There were activities from which students attained cultural knowledge and social skills. However, the activities that taught the aforementioned remained rather vague. Nevertheless, the activities had useful means of assisting learning. They required students to use imagination and improvisation, drill phrases, work in role and in real life situations. On the other hand, only one of the activities used discussion after the task in the instructions. The activities lacked the use of teacher-in-role and working in role, grammar teaching and group work. In addition, teacher consideration was required a great deal. Thus, amelioration was required frequently.

This study gives an insight of the situation of drama activities in Finnish schools' English language schoolbooks. When I began this study, I was aware that English language schoolbooks incorporate a certain amount of drama into the activities. However, I was as well aware that there were none that would have used drama more than other schoolbooks. In my opinion, after witnessing the situation of these activities, Finnish school system requires English language schoolbooks that have been done by drama educators.

The present study is a small scale study and therefore has deficiencies. First, I did not have a singular theory that I would have followed. Initially, I pondered of studying the activities through Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and find out how much they teach communication. However, in order to gain a wider benefit from a confined study, I decided to search all the points the activities had to offer. Second, the results should not be generalised. In order to provide a comprehensive report of the activities in contemporary English education in Finland, a comparison of different schoolbooks would be required. Third, the results are insufficient since they are merely my own opinions of the tasks even though they are based on previous research.

Thus, creating a teaching experiment with ameliorated tasks and conducting interviews where the students can reflect on their learning could elicit a worthier outcome. In fact, I am planning to construct a teaching experiment for my MA thesis. For this reason, in this study I wanted to discern drama activities in a smaller scale in order to be able to expand on certain ideas in the MA thesis. Moreover, when the tasks are processed while students carry them out, ampler results might arise.

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