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**MULTICULTURALISM AND MULTILINGUALISM IN A DRAMA CLASSROOM: AN
ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY OF LIMPOPO TEACHERS STUDYING DRAMA AT
WITS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

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**A research report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Arts
in Dramatic Art Course, University of the Witwatersrand**

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH PROJECT

1.1 Aims of the study

The study aims to:

- Investigate the role of language and culture in a drama classroom;
- Explore ways in which multilingualism and multiculturalism in the learning environment are negotiated and harmonised when working creatively;
- Define my own '*positionalities*' as researcher-practitioner and draw parallels with my own experiences as a second language English speaker learning drama at the University of Cape Town's Drama Department, and now as a Drama facilitator teaching drama in English at Wits University;
- Discover ways through which I, as a drama facilitator in institutions like Wits University, can begin to transform the setting in a way that embraces and celebrates diversity.

1.2 Rationale

Wits University has always been a multiracial institution. It was one of the few institutions that stood as a beacon of hope against segregated education during the darkest days of apartheid in South Africa. The institution is committed to transformation and has set targets to ensure that it fulfils its constitutional equity imperative (See Wits University Language Policy document)¹. Transformation is a complex exercise that needs to be undertaken with caution and consideration. It should not be perceived as simply a head count game. If it is perceived as the number of 'black'² staff members and students present in an institution only, it would be a myopic understanding of this mandatory exercise. A non-simplistic view would be to interrogate transformation and all the challenges it presents which include; race, language and socio-economic background.

¹ The Wits University Language Policy document was adopted on the 14th March 2003 as a constitutional imperative to guide the institution on plans to guide addressing multilingualism which exists in the university. It is relevant to this report and is therefore referenced extensively (see p.41). The document used is not numbered and therefore for purposes of referencing in this report I numbered it myself.

² The classification terminology is in flux. In this context Black includes Black Africans, Coloureds, Indians and all other races that are recognised as black by the South African constitution.

As institutions strive to meet the national equity targets for subsidy purposes, challenges emerge. As more and more previously disadvantaged people enter the gates of privileged and prestigious institutions, they bring with them different languages, cultures, identities and lived experiences and the important question to ask is whether there is recognition of their lived experiences and what they are bringing to the university.

At Wits University English is the language of learning and teaching (LOLT). The student body and staff complement is multilingual and multinational with English as the unifying language. There is a large presence of students (and staff) whose home languages are not English. It is this group of people who inspired this research. Hilary Janks³ (2003) believes that English is a dominant world language that carries with it issues of language, power and identity. She asserts that access to English provides students with linguistic capital.

If you provide more people with access to the dominant language, you contribute to perpetuating and increasing dominance. If on the other hand, you deny students access, you perpetuate their marginalisation in a society that continues to recognise English as a mark of distinction. You also deny them the resources available in that language, resources which have developed as a consequence of the language's dominance. (Janks, 2003:1)

Lodge (1997) as cited in Janks (2003) calls this contradiction the 'access paradox' (*ibid*:1). The access paradox is inextricably bound up with questions of history, power, identity and domination. It is this labyrinth of issues that attracted my attention. The more I interacted with my students the more questions I asked myself about the plight of those students whose languages and culture are not the dominant ones in the institution.

I reflected on my own experiences as a student in the Drama Department at UCT and wondered whether my heightened awareness grows out of the complexities presented by belonging to a linguistic and cultural group that is in the margins. I was a second language English speaker

³ Hilary Janks is Professor of Applied English Language Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand School of Education. She has published prolifically on multilingualism in South African classrooms, English and its related issues of power, domination, access and Critical Language Awareness. She is one of the authors of the Wits Language Policy. Her published and non-published work is used in this report. She was also interviewed during the writing of this research report.

studying in an environment where the language of learning and teaching was English. The institutional culture was dominated by values embodied in the dominant language which consequently alienated me and many in my position.

The teaching and learning environment at Wits University is similar to that at UCT as described by Yvonne Banning.⁴ In her study she investigated the experiences of IsiXhosa speaking students studying drama at UCT and discovered that within the drama department (which can be inferred as similar to the university in general):

the structures, teaching approaches, the content of the curriculum and assessment methods, appear to be strongly embedded in a culturally determined set of values which are associated almost exclusively with English culture and language. There are strong indications of an acute and often disempowering dislocation between cultural knowledges, languages and experiences that students bring with them to the university (Banning, 2003a:3).

The drama department did not offer any bilingual courses in either English/Xhosa or Xhosa/Afrikaans (Banning, 2003b: 184) which were the languages spoken by many students in the university and generally in the province. The acquisition of knowledge and skills at institutions similar to Wits and UCT appears to be at the expense of other socially acquired knowledges, particularly where these derive from different cultural traditions and languages.

Banning concludes that collectively elements named above appear to create a learning environment separated by tough almost impermeable boundaries, from the social and cultural experiences that are shared by second language English speakers. She confirms this by quoting Canagarajah (1999:147) who says that:

⁴ Yvonne Banning was a Lecturer at the UCT Drama Department. I had the privilege of being taught Theatre in Education, Drama in Education and Community Theatre by her. She had a passion for students and working with communities. She founded Phakama, a Youth Theatre Project and Mother Tongue-a theatre organisation that focuses on issues affecting women. When Phakama was launched in Botswana our paths crossed again. I became one of the Phakama facilitators and worked closely with her. She passed away in 2009. Through her dedication to work using theatre and drama in marginalised communities, her legacy lives on. Two of her articles, both written in 2003, one unpublished and another published are used in this research report. The unpublished article titled *Small Things remind us who we are: an ethnographic account of the experiences of a Xhosa-speaking teacher and three students in the drama department at UCT* is referenced as (Banning, 2003a) while the published one *Learning to act in L2 English: An Ethnographic Comparison of the Experiences of Two Students In the Drama Department in a South African University* is referenced as Banning (2003b).

the conflict facing students from non-European backgrounds...is that they often face the pressure and/or temptation to give up their community-based indigenous discourses and adopt the academic discourses which enjoy power and prestige. (*ibid*)

I began asking myself multiple questions; what would happen if I allowed speakers of the languages I understand, other than English, to communicate with me using that language in class? In what language should I respond? Would that be fair to those who do not understand? No, it will privilege only those who understand. Is that what I want? No. Should I allow students to do creative work in a language of their choice all the time (which I'm sure my research participants would prefer)? What about the rest of the students who might not understand what they are saying? Would I be violating University regulations? (This information represents my thoughts and speaks to the complexity and myriad of issues presented by the particular group of students I was teaching, who became the participants of my research).

It is in the light of the complexities of my personal experiences, encounters and interactions with my students, my respect for their languages and cultural values and my uncertainty of what constitutes violation of my employer's regulations that I set out to conduct this research. The investigation is focussed on what actually happens during a drama class and on how I as the facilitator can mediate and enhance the learning experience for all students in a multilingual context. The research is of value because it provides an opportunity for my students and myself to interrogate our experiences in the university and in the multicultural and multilingual creative space that we share every week, and allows me to explore ways in which I might use the processes of drama to help overcome some of the difficulties we both experience.

1.3 Introduction

This report reflects my thinking and it tells my story as well as that of my students. It is a 'confessional tale' (Van Maanen, 1988 as cited in Saldana, 1998:181) of personal experiences which ponders reflexively on habits, personal practices and experiences. Its format comprises of auto-ethnographic and ethnographic accounts of the researcher-practitioner and those of the research participants. My authority derives from personal experiences of the matters under

investigation. I have taken consideration of the ethical issues that have arisen in the course of the research and followed all the necessary ethical procedures outlined by the Wits University research policy on ethics in research. The necessary ethics clearances were obtained (see appendices 5 and 6).

Lippi-Greene (1997) believes that within action research and auto-ethnographic study, the researcher's position and location in relation to the participants should be chosen carefully as it has fundamental effects on the outcomes of the research.

The activities of the researcher, the techniques chosen and the relationship between these techniques, should be based on an assumption that the personal relationship between the researcher and the [participants] are the primary medium for obtaining information. (Amid, 2000:2 as quoted in Ackroyd, 2006: 139)

Neelands as quoted in Ackroyd asks "How can drama be used as a critical tool in institutions that normalize the inequalities of power and inequalities of social justice...?" (2006:27). The study sets out to investigate how drama can be called upon to mediate against language and cultural domination.

My approach to this study was influenced by many authors and practitioners; Paulo Freire (1970; 1979; 2005), Augusto Boal (1985; 2000; 2008), drama educators and practitioners Heathcote (1970; 1993; 1995), Way (1967), Bolton (1993), O'Neill (1995), Wagner (1979) and Malan (1973). I also refer to the contributions of more contemporary drama educators and researchers (O'Toole (1992; 2002; 2006), Cahill (2006), Banning (2003a, 2003b), Donelan (2002a; 2002b; 2005), Conrad (2004), Saldana (1998), Neelands (2002; 2006) who offer perspectives in research in drama education, interculturalism and ethnography.

I introduced Yvonne Banning and her work above (p.3 see footnote 4). I reference her numerous times throughout this report. Her research is relevant to my research mainly because it is in the context of a South African institution similar to my own research context. It also provides a lens through which I can access the very context where my personal experiences are rooted - UCT Drama Department.

The position she chose to assume for her research inspired the choice I made for my research. Though she was a first language English speaker, she took genuine interest in the plight of students whose first language was not English and documented their struggles. The participatory, experiential and engaged research stance (Conquergood, 2002 as used in Donelan, 2005) allowed me to locate my experiences as a second language English speaker on the same plane as those of my research participants, a position encouraged by Freire, as cited in Flanagan (2006). The research stance allowed me to examine my own experiences as a drama student at UCT and to make a comparison with those of my students and comment on what I found.

Donelan's research provided a realistic model of the limitless possibilities drama avails for use in a multicultural environment. Her unpublished doctoral thesis examines the relationship between drama and intercultural education and provides practical means through which genuine interculturalism and interest in cultures and languages other than one's own could be harnessed, through the use of drama to create a community that prides itself on tolerance and respect.

The praxis of Augusto Boal, influenced by Freire, has had considerable impact on applied drama and theatre worldwide. Both Boal and Freire worked in South America in areas populated by illiterate and socio-economically underprivileged people for similar purposes: to empower them to become aware of entrenched socio-political oppression and to seek their own solutions to problems encountered. Therefore their writings and practices are consulted and used extensively in this research. I discuss their writings and works in detail in the literature review section.

Hilary Janks (2000; 2003) has conducted extensive research and published prolifically on multilingualism in South African classrooms. Her papers and books offer insights into the potential danger of the privileged position of English as a language of learning and teaching in a multilingual and multicultural environment. She examines the language in education policy in South Africa as well as classroom materials and practices and demonstrates the importance of counterbalancing access with an understanding of "linguistic hegemony, diversity as a productive resource, and the way in which curriculum design can be enriched by linguistic and cultural hybridity" (Janks, 2003:1).

Ngugi wa Thiongo's (1986; 1993) work on post-colonial discourses informs this study as it frames Janks' work. Kaschula and Anthonissen (1995) explore communication across cultures in South Africa and provide a deeper understanding of issues of language as a cultural agency deeply embedded in cultural practices. They succinctly articulate the practice of code-switching, a concept I find interesting and wish to explore further to see whether it could benefit my teaching.

The report also draws its intellectual strength mainly from performance ethnography and performance theory. It explores the potential of Popular Theatre as a pedagogical and research methodology. Norman K. Denzin (1993, 2007) pioneered the understanding of performance text, a genre within ethnography. The genealogy of performance texts lies in sociology and anthropology, locating it within the field of performance studies (Stern & Henderson, 1993, Strine, Long & Hopkins, 1990 as cited in Denzin, 1997). The study also benefits from post colonial and socio-linguistic theories.

1.4 Background of study

This study is an ethnographic enquiry into the lived experiences of the Limpopo teachers and myself as we negotiated multilingualism and multiculturalism within the drama classroom. It relies heavily on narrative exposition to fully understand those experiences and so I begin my writing with a story, the story of the research itself.

The Limpopo Province is notorious for disappointing matric results. In 2008, 84 614 learners wrote matric in Limpopo. 45 958 passed giving a percentage of 54, 3%⁵. The provincial government was not pleased with the results. They wanted to perform better or at par with Gauteng and the Western Cape⁶ provinces which are generally top achieving provinces in matric results in South Africa. They identified the problem as being deeply rooted in bad teaching at

⁵ The statistics were obtained from the speech presented in 2008 by the then Limpopo MEC for Education Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi announcing matric results obtained from www.edu.limpopo.gov.za, the official website for the Limpopo Provincial Department of Education. The initiative to withdraw teachers from schools to resend them for training was the brain child of Dr. Motsoaledi (currently National Minister of Health in the South African Government)

⁶ Gauteng and the Western Cape Provinces produce better results annually in comparison to other provinces in South Africa (Information obtained from the National Department of Education website www.doe.gov.org)

early childhood development and foundation phases. “Prioritizing early childhood development is one of the critical outcomes. Educators skilled enough to teach learners during early years are important” said Dr. Motsoaledi, then MEC for Education in the Limpopo Provincial Government in his speech presenting the matric results in 2008.

In 2009 the Limpopo Education Department took an ambitious and courageous step to withdraw qualified foundation-phase teachers from the education system, and sent them to university for re-training. The Wits School of Education received 215 of the teachers. About sixty eight of them took Drama and Movement in education for the first time in their academic pursuits.

Dr. Motsoaledi’s initiative continued to receive support from the Education Department and his successors made updates and pronouncements to demonstrate the provincial government’s commitment to improve education:

315 Educators are studying full-time for a Bachelor of Education degree with specialisation in Foundation Phase. Of the 315, 100 are enrolled with the University of KwaZulu-Natal and 215 are enrolled with the University of Witwatersrand. These Educators will undertake the study for four consecutive years including 2009 which implies that the department will be servicing and maintaining their sponsorship up to 2012. An additional intake of 320 has been planned for January 2010.⁷

The information given above is important because it provides some background to the context of this research report. It captures the excitement at the Limpopo Education Department and illuminates on how the research participants ended up at Wits. Details of the teachers’ background are discussed in much more detail in Chapter 3.

I now share my first encounters with the Limpopo teachers and chronicle the events that led to the birth of the research topic. In the first drama session, we gathered in the auditorium to welcome the students and to hand out course outlines. Students were informed of the course’s physical demands, interactive nature and reliance on group work which necessitates for them to dress comfortably to allow for freedom of movement. They were all dressed up in formal clothes and high heels as if they were going to work. As we continued to go through the course outline,

⁷Quoted from the 2010 budget speech presented by Mr. Dickson Masemola then Limpopo MEC for Education. Pronouncements on the initiative to withdraw teachers and send them for retraining continued to be made reinforcing the province’s commitment to improve education. Obtained from www.edu.limpopo.gov.za.

there was an eerie silence in the auditorium, particularly from the Limpopo teachers. I assumed that they were listening attentively.

As students stood up to leave the auditorium one of the Limpopo teachers approached me. It was clear that she was ‘representing’ a number of her peers because they stood at a distance and looked on. She needed to get something off her chest. She explained to us that she, and a sizeable number of her fellow students, are married women and devoted members of the Zion Christian Church (ZCC).⁸ She expressed her discomfort at the content of the brief particularly with reference to expectations of dressing comfortably - which to her meant wearing trousers of some sort. She decried that she does not own a pair of trousers and that she has never worn them before. She explained that in her culture and religion, married women just do not wear trousers. Her religious beliefs stipulate that females have to cover their heads at all times and that physical contact with males, except their husbands should be limited to a hand shake. Finally, she lamented that when teaching, we must look out for them because their English is not good, citing the facts that they have been out of school for a long time and that teaching in their province happened in their mother tongue. She finished by requesting that if they seem to be struggling we must not leave them behind. I stood there perplexed and lost for words. This interaction presented a light bulb moment for me.

I had known from the moment I took up employment at Wits University that I would have to further my studies. During my meeting with the then Head of School, I was made aware that I would have to settle first and then enrol to upgrade my qualifications. I was nervous about how I was going to cope with a full teaching load which included preparation, administration, teaching, supervision and research. With encouragement and support from colleagues and friends my anxiety settled and in July 2008 I registered for a degree of Master of Arts in Dramatic Art (MADA) at the Wits School of Arts (WSOA).

⁸ ZCC (Zion Christian Church) was founded and has its headquarters in Morija outside Polokwane, Limpopo. It is not surprising that there are many Limpopo teachers who are members of the church. The church has strict rules about deportment especially for female members. This presents an interesting dynamic for this research. It offers an opportunity to explore culture and religion in African societies.

In March 2009 we began a module called Practice as Research (PaR). The PaR project is delivered as a contained project to initiate post graduate students into research. I decided that for my PaR project I wanted to investigate the challenges faced by the Limpopo in-service foundation phase teachers who had arrived in Johannesburg to start studying at Wits University. I claimed that they were experiencing academic and social challenges given the rigorous academic demands placed upon them by Wits University, and their relocation from Limpopo to Johannesburg. That is how the title of this report was conceived though it evolved significantly over a number of months to become what it is now. My interest in this particular group stems from selective homogeneous factors; they represent a broad sample across age, educational qualifications, language, religion, cultural background and teaching experience. In the research report they are referred to either as participants or teachers. Below I present in detail the PaR project and its findings which form the backbone of this research report.

1.4.1 Practice as Research Project – A Forum Theatre Presentation

I worked with my Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) students as co-researchers. The PGCE class consisted of five students and myself. Each of us was allocated a task to undertake and a specific group to interview in order to generate data. The tasks involved interviewing students on academic matters and social concerns, speaking to the official of the Limpopo Department of Education and interviewing the lecturers who selected the teachers and those who were responsible for their welfare on campus. We set out to investigate the challenges faced by the Limpopo teachers as they transition from teaching foundation phase learners in Limpopo classrooms to becoming students in big lecture theatres at Wits University, Johannesburg. We found the challenges to fall within the following broader categories; academic, linguistic, socio-cultural and ideological. We noted these challenges and experiences and made them the subject of a Forum Theatre presentation.

Listening was emphasised as an important part of the data gathering process. The collected data was presented. Careful selection of content was done to avoid clichés and misrepresentation. The material was workshopped using play building and characterisation techniques, mainly Stanislavski's: hot seating, magic IF and memory. Students were put on a hot seat and asked

questions about their characters. Artistic license was also enlisted. One of the students is a talented performing musician and poet. He composed a poem (titled *The Limpopo to Jozi Blues*) and created the performance poetry repertoire with his peers. Forum theatre, a technique used by Augusto Boal, was a preferred choice of theatre technique to perform the workshopped presentation. Forum Theatre was chosen because it is the technique that creates a platform for discussion.

The arrival of the teachers changed the first year student body of the School of Education significantly. The average age increased and professionally dressed mature students became evident on campus.

1.4.2 The Performance

The performance consisted of five episodes skilfully put together by the PGCE students. For purposes of this paper I present only two episodes to describe in detail. Others I present in Chapter 3 under 'The Wits Experience'. Several techniques and genres were integrated in the performance; Image theatre, performance poetry, music and multimedia. Poetry was accompanied by appropriate music using a guitar. Multimedia was also used to complement the performance.

The time was exactly 12:30pm. There were only four people in the audience. I was concerned. This presentation depended entirely on audience participation. As the play was about to begin, about fifteen people walked in. This was a sizeable audience. Many Limpopo teachers arrived late and so did some of my colleagues. As the performance progressed, there was silence in the auditorium. Perhaps the issues raised by the drama were too familiar or the content somehow unsettling. Below I present the two chosen episodes.

Episode 1

The Limpopo To Jozi teacher Blues

*I was lying on the banks of the Limpopo
Teaching maths to a crocodile and a hippo
When along came a guy in a suit and a tie*

*He said let's have a little chat you and I
You see we have some problems in Limpopo
The water level is high but the pass rate is low
They sent me all the way here just to reach ya
We're sending you back to school to be a better teacher
So pack your bags and say goodbye
To your spouse and your children, try not to cry
We're sending you to the biggest city around
It's in Gauteng they call it Jozi town
You'll be staying in a place that they called Berea
That's nice, I hope it's peaceful there*

*That was quite a long time ago
I like it here but there are problems, though
First of all, there's that place Berea
It's name seems to fill people's hearts with fear
It's not the safest area around is it?
Even Jozi locals don't want to visit
This place is dangerous especially to a stranger
And back home the hippos were our only danger*

*Life is hard, but we're getting by
Things aren't easy and I tell you why
We've been living in Stay City all along
It's ok, depending which side you're on
I live on the fancy side, called Sandton 'cos it's pretty
I live on the other, we call it Alex 'cos it's shitty
Why don't we swop, it's only fair
No thanks, I think we'll just stay here*

*Meanwhile on campus things are tough
We're working hard but it's never enough
And the young kids are way too rude and bold
They call us Magreaser and say we're old
I think we deserve much more respect
And Wits still hasn't deposited our cheque
They owe us money and it's starting to annoy
What we gonna do? Let's Toyi-Toyi
Back home we Toyi-Toyi all the time
To protest against anything from poverty to crime
But when we do it here they get really cross
All we really want is to talk to the boss*

*We don't want charity we don't want pity
We're just doing our best to survive the big city
Sometimes we may get a little bit stressed*

*But we're doing ok and we're trying our best
So next time you see us, please be kind
And treat us respectfully if you don't mind
Next time you see us remember this poem
And remember that we're a long way from home*

(Composed by 'Alfred', PGCE Student)

This poem was composed after Alfred and I conducted several interviews with the teachers. It highlights concerns commonly raised by the many teachers we interviewed. It was accompanied by captivating guitar tunes as performers paced their recital to the rhythm and beat of the guitar. The audience members were called upon to snap fingers as the enactment unfolded. It ended with the five performers standing side by side lifting a flinching fist up in the air (a symbol synonymous with expression of power to the oppressed people (Amandla) as used in South Africa during the struggle for liberation).

Episode 2

This episode was designed to demonstrate the importance of communication. Communication among or between people is a two way channel. The speaker and the respondent have to be able to understand each other. If one party is not following, there is bound to be communication breakdown. In this episode the characters were three lecturers in management positions who had been invited to address the students' concerns. Before the episode began a questionnaire was distributed to the audience. They were informed that they had to complete it using information from the episode. The questionnaire had to do with the concerns raised by the interviewed students.

The cast played a video clip containing the interview of fellow PGCE students. The interviewed students raised genuine concerns about their well-being in the university. For anonymity purposes, the PGCE students are given pseudonyms and the interviewed students are identified as A, B and C. Their race, sex and nature of complaints have not been changed.

- A. A young white male student majoring in Geography methodology (he was training to become a geography teacher). His concern regarded lesson plans. He complained that

they were overwhelmed with information which was irrelevant to him as a geography teacher trainee. Response came from Isaac.

Isaac – a male PGCE student who responded in IsiZulu

Ukunganeliseki kwenu kuyezwakala, kanti futhi kunesisindo. Kepha, siyiqembu sizozama ukunikeza isikhathi esanele sokuthi nenze ama (lesson plan). Kubalulekile ukuthi amalungiselelo enu ahambelane nendlela eningakwazi ukufunda ngayo, indlela ephephile ngaphambi kokuba nihambe niyofundisa ezikoleni. Siniphile futhi amathuba amathathu wokuthi niyozibonakalisa ukuthi ngabe ninalo ikhono lokufundisa nokuthi nikwazi futhi nokukhombisa ukuzethemba kulokhu enikwenzayo. Khumbulani ukuthi sisebenzela phezu kwe (content) futhi sinethemba lokuthi isikole sifuna ukwandisa noma ukwengeza kunokuthi sinciphisele ulwazi lwalokho okumele nikufundise.⁹

Your concerns are valid and we as a team will try to give you more chances to create lesson plans but the only way you are going to learn and feel secure is if you get out and teach. We have offered you three teaching experiences and feel confident that this is enough for a course like this. With regard to the content, I feel that the university wants to extend you instead of only limiting you to the subject you are going to teach.

B. A mature black female student whose concern related to the length of time it was taking for her bursary money to be made available to her and how that has led to her financial struggle. She mentioned that her work was suffering because she could not print or photocopy assignments and reading materials.

Alfred responded in Hebrew;

Anachnu mevinim et hdeaga shelachem, umebiem charada. Ani rotze lechzek et yadecha velomar lecha shemisrad hamilgot tamid doeeg shechelko batahalich ykuyam bimhera. Aval, lamrot zoht, hamigbala shelachem hi shemeharega shehtfasim ozvim et hamisrad becape town, ydadm kvula ci haarevim lamilga achraim latahalichim ulezman habitzu shel shichrur hakranot.¹⁰

We hear your concerns and are sympathetic. I would like to assure you that the bursaries office always ensures that their part of the process is expedited speedily. However, their

⁹ IsiZulu translation refined by Bheki Zungu, a colleague who is a 1st language IsiZulu speaker.

¹⁰ The Hebrew translation was refined by Prof Yael Shalem, a colleague and lecturer whose 1st language is Hebrew

limitation is that once the forms have left their office for Cape Town, their hands are tied as the sponsors have their procedures and time lines for the disbursement of funds.

- C. A young black male student whose concern related to the language of instruction. His concern was that content is predominantly in English and that as a second language English speaker he does not understand most of the time.

Busisiwe responds in SeSotho;

*Ke le lebohela ho buwa ka matshwenyeho a lona. Wits ke Unibesithi e e rutang ka sekgoao. Mme fela re lemoha hore ho na le matshwenyeho, fela re dira ho hohle ho re ka ho khonang ho lokisa mathata a lona jaaka re buoa jena. Ke kopa hore le hololesehe ho nromlla email fa le na le mathata mme ke tla a lokisa le barutisi ba ba maleba.*¹¹

*Thank you for raising your concerns. Wits is an international university with English as the medium of instruction. However, we are aware of your language concerns and are addressing them as we speak. Please feel free to email me with specific matters and I will address them directly with the lecturers concerned.*¹²

All the concerns were raised in English, but management responded in different languages; IsiZulu, Hebrew and SeSotho. At the end of the episode, the facilitator/joker (a role I describe later) asked the audience to hand back the completed questionnaire. The majority, if not all of them had not completed it lamenting a lack of understanding of management's responses because of the languages they used. I believe that had the experts responded in English, everyone would have been able to complete the worksheet. This was a conscious decision by the performers to attempt to highlight the plight of English second-language speakers in an institution like Wits.

1.4.3 Discussion

¹¹ I refined the SeSotho response because I understand the language. It has similarities with my 1st language SeTswana.

¹² In this report management's responses have been presented in English for the sake of the reader. During the presentation they were deliberately presented only in the languages mentioned above, to the frustration of the audience who relied on hearing and understanding so they could complete the questionnaires.

In this section I present the discussion that transpired after the presentation which foregrounds the participants' experiences at Wits. Certain issues that came up during the discussion were not necessarily related to the Forum Theatre presentation. They made apparent the underlying tensions that existed between the teachers, the young students and some lecturers (to some extent).

The audience's contributions during the discussion were guided by their experiences of interacting with the Limpopo teachers. The facilitator (named the joker in Boal's Forum Theatre) had to draw their attention to the episodes presented time and again as they tended to digress and instead discuss their personal experiences interacting with the Limpopo teachers. The role of the joker is to facilitate the discussion by posing probing questions. The role requires facilitation skills because the right questions have to be asked, otherwise no discussion will take place. Open ended and follow-up questions get the audience discussing and explaining. Unskilled facilitators ask close ended (yes or no answer) questions which can lead to blocking discussion of pertinent issues.

While I understand that there were issues that the presentation wanted to draw the audience's attention to, the digressions mentioned above were interesting as they provided useful insight into the tensions that existed within the School's community. One lecturer who was present contributed that the Limpopo teachers seemed to have a culture of *entitlement*; (*we deserve preferential treatment because our government is paying a lot of money. Also note that we come from disadvantaged backgrounds, we have been out of school for a long time so you must not expect a lot from us*). She accused them of expecting preferential treatment from the university and assured them that they will not get any because all students pay fees.

This did not go down well with one teacher who responded by lambasting the University for misleading them into believing that their syllabus was going to focus on issues relevant to foundation phase teaching. They accused the University for being out to extort fees from their provincial government while not giving them their money's worth.

The other issue was about *exclusivity (we belong by ourselves because our needs, as professionals with families and homes seem to be misunderstood)*. The teachers were perceived to have unreasonable expectations of the university.

There was a feeling of *victimization and ageism (we are being targeted by young students because we are old)*. The teachers said that they were called ‘dinosaurs’, ‘magreazers’ and ‘fossils’- reference to their advanced age. Initially, they said the rude comments and name calling directed at them by the young students bothered them. However, at the time of the interview (several months after their arrival), they had developed a different attitude. Many said they viewed the young students as their own children and had learned to tolerate their behaviour.

As the discussion progressed, there was evidence of increasing tensions and flaring tempers. The joker steered the discussion clear of confrontation and insisted that the next person should comment specifically on the performance and not personal experiences outside of what was presented. One young student accused the teachers of snooping and poking their noses into other people’s business. When probed further, the young girl told the joker that one teacher asked her why she was smoking. She demonstrated how she responded to the teacher by stretching her arm (as if giving a high five) and looking away and saying “I told her back off, I did not bring my mother to school, who are you to tell me what I can and cannot do” said the young girl, clearly irritated.

The cast was not spared by the teachers. They accused them of presenting an inaccurate picture of their situation. They alleged that the performers portrayed them as rural beings who were still stuck in the Stone Age. “We don’t all come from rural areas you know, some of us live in Polokwane” commented one unimpressed teacher. Some teachers later informed me of how they were offended by the performance but could not say anything as they were not confident enough to articulate their unhappiness in the presence of many people in English. In their defence, the cast informed the audience that all the presented scenarios were created from discussions with numerous teachers and the lecturer responsible for them.

Sitting in the audience, watching and listening as discussion unfolded, I felt that the joker should have allowed the discussion to grow organically without channelling it in a particular direction. When I asked her why afterwards, she cited fear of inciting confrontation which could have resulted in further polarisation between the young students and the teachers. I agreed with her. She also expressed that she was under enormous time pressure to steer the discussion in matters she thought were important. One must remember that this performance happened over lunch time and students had to go to lectures afterward. Under circumstances where time pressure is not a factor, discussions following Forum Theatre should be allowed to continue until such a time when there is consciousness awakening on the audience's side to spur them into action to change their circumstances.

It became increasingly evident that complex and multi-faceted issues emerged even from so modest a project, which gave impetus to the conceptualization of this project in its current form. The substance of the detailed research report was developed through further interactions over a period of fifteen months with the participants themselves.

1.5 Chapter Outline

This research report is divided into seven chapters. I begin by giving some background to the conceptualization of the research topic by chronicling the events that sparked my interest in this particular topic with this particular group of participants.

In Chapter 1, I contextualize the study by giving background information. The background information contextualises my sustained interest in the subject matters under investigation: multilingualism, multiculturalism, drama pedagogy and ethnography to my life and the lives of the research participants.

Chapter 2 presents the literature reviewed in the research writing process. It details practitioners, educators and authors whose theories and practices theoretical underpinning to this project. It also details the research design and methodology

Chapter 3 focuses on the ethnography of the research participants. The writing of their ethnography illuminates their shared experiences despite the different environmental contexts of their former academic pursuits. It then interrogates the researcher-practitioner's 'positionalities' and experiences. In the chapter, I share my own experiences as a second language English speaker learning drama in English at the University of Cape Town (UCT) and draw parallels with the experiences of my students studying drama in English at Wits University.

I illuminate my current position as a drama facilitator at Wits University, now teaching second language English speakers in English. I discuss how the 'positionalities' I occupy present dilemmas in my teaching. Having experienced first-hand what it is like to learn in an environment that is removed from my lived experiences I investigate what it is I can do to disrupt the cycle of inconsideration by institutions of students' backgrounds and lived experiences.

Chapter 4 discusses the importance of drama in the classroom and presents views by drama in education pioneers like Dorothy Heathcote, Brian Way and Cecily O'Neill. I demonstrate the ways in which drama in education can be used as a tool for transformation in multilingual education by discussing the practitioners' methodologies.

Chapter 5 focuses on the practical aspects of the research. It details part of the methodology used in the data generating process and presents the current teaching practices; how teaching is conducted in Drama in Education at Wits and how these practices could be changed for the better.

Chapter 6 examines the responses of the research participants to the questionnaires, interviews and informal discussions. The final chapter reflects on the overriding objective of the study. It highlights the most significant findings of the data to answer the overarching question of this research report: *How can multilingualism and multiculturalism be embraced in the drama classroom?* A conclusion is drawn from a variety of research tools; sustained observation, formal and informal interactions, formal and informal interviews, questionnaires and a workshop. Recommendations are made at the end to inform future planning and teaching.

1.6 Conclusion

In Chapter 1, I gave background information about the conceptualization of the study. I started by introducing the participants of this research and their purpose at Wits University. Through my interaction with them, I started to wonder about my own teaching practices as a drama facilitator and began to have more questions than answers. I discovered that I share a lot in common with them. We are both second (some third) language English speakers and are both studying in an environment where teaching and learning happen predominantly in English. I remembered my academic struggles as a student and claimed that they are experiencing similar challenges. I described the incident that inspired the title of my PaR project and proceeded to give an account of the Forum Theatre presentation that I embarked on with my PGCE students.

By close reference to Banning's studies of (2003a:2003b) I argue that my contexts of study and that of my students compel students from non-English speaking backgrounds to give up their community-based indigenous discourses to adopt the academic discourses which enjoy power and prestige. I presented evidence which according to Banning (2003a) has strong indications of an acute and often disempowering dislocation between cultural knowledges, experiences and relationships students bring to the university and their experiences on campus. I proposed that drama can be called upon to engage non-verbal communication that will not privilege one section within multilingual contexts.

This study is informed by the practices embedded in action research and reflective practice. To conduct action research successfully I chose my position consciously to allow myself space to participate, observe and research all at the same time. In looking at myself, my work and the research journey I was about to embark on, I reviewed the contributions of Donald Schon (1993) in several of his writings on the reflective practitioner and Reed, Davis and Nyabanyaba (2002) on reflective practice and related their ideas to those of Neelands (2006) in Ackroyd (2006) who asserts that "the reflective practitioner's position (my stance in this research) describes a particular self-orientation towards the understanding of improving one's practice..." (p.16)

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

In this section, I review ideas and contributions of authors and practitioners whose works and practices speak to this research. Firstly I review published literature on Theatre of the Oppressed and Popular Theatre. Secondly, I consider drama in education as a research methodology for change which draws influences from reflective practice and review the works of drama in education practitioners; Heathcote (1970; 1975; 1995), Way (1967), (1979) and O'Neill (1995) and O'Toole (1992;2002). Thirdly, I discuss multilingualism and highlight its manifestation in South African schools and how code switching is used as a strategy to mediate for learners (and teachers) whose first language is not the language of learning and teaching (LOLT), the dominant language in the learning environment. I make reference to language-related rights as enshrined in the South African constitution to promulgate the protection of the multiplicity of languages that exist in the country. Fourthly I discuss the two primary theoretical frameworks that underpin this study: critical theory, performance ethnography. I acknowledge as secondary theoretical frameworks the contribution of post-colonial theory to the intellectual strength of this project by reviewing prominent voices that contributed to post-colonial discourse. I end the chapter by detailing the research design and methodology and the data collecting process.

2.2 Literature Review

The works of Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal (as mentioned in Chapter 1) are fundamental to this research. Freire has published extensively on Education and Politics and their interdependence (1970; 1973; 1998; 2005). Augusto Boal's work was influenced by Freire. They worked with uneducated people in impoverished areas in several countries in South America. They referred to the communities they worked with as the 'oppressed', reference to their challenging socio-economic circumstances and the lack of access to education, employment and resources. Boal modelled his approach to liberate the oppressed around Freire's work and developed theatre

techniques called Theatre of the Oppressed. His techniques are used extensively in class and in the data generating workshop in Chapter 5 of this report.

According to Flanagan (2006), Freire believes that education is never neutral. “Every educational system has the effect of transforming people who pass through it in certain ways” (p.185). This assertion is confirmed by Foucault (1984) as cited in Lippe-Green (1997) that it is a fallacy to assume of education as an evenly distributed and power-neutral cultural resource. Apparently, Freire firmly believed that educational transformation is deliberately contrived by dominant groups that use education to encourage others to be passive and accept oppression (Flanagan, 2006).

Freire (1979) and Foucault (1984) concur on the non-existence of democracy in any educational setting. This research was prompted by the compelling evidence of the domination of English and its inherent cultural values in an institution that has always claimed to be an epitome of democracy. My insidious position as the agent of that domination, despite supposedly embodying transformation given my background, also motivated this research. “If educators are to help the oppressed to achieve their humanity they must do so with them” (Flanagan, 2006:186). I have therefore located myself in the midst of the participants in order to reflect on my practice. I take advice from Freire (1979) that if one wants to achieve anything authentic on behalf of the oppressed, one must work with them. Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed is defined by Flanagan (2006) as a process of enabling the oppressed to see the alternatives to their oppression so that they can begin to transform their own world of experience. I argue that this transformation must begin with me leading the way.

This study explored the potential of Popular Theatre as a pedagogical and research methodology. According to Conrad (2004), the term popular theatre was used by Ross Kidd (1992) [among others] in the 1970s to talk about the form of development work he was doing in Botswana and Zimbabwe at the time. It is defined as

a process of theatre which deeply involves specific communities in identifying issues of concern, analyzing current conditions and causes of a situation, identifying points of change, and analyzing

how change could happen and/or contribute to the actions implied. (Prentki & Selman, 2000:8 as quoted in Conrad 2004:2)

Conrad illustrates that Popular Theatre draws on traditions of participatory (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991; Kidd & Byram, 1978; McTaggart, 1997; Bydon-Miller, Hall & Jackson, 1993) and arts-based/performed ethnographic approaches (Conquergood, 1998; Fabian, 1990; Turner, 1986 as cited in Conrad 2004) as an effective means of collectively drawing and examining participants' experiences toward producing new understandings.

Denzin (1997) affirms that Popular Theatre and ethnographic practices draw from participants' experiences to collectively create theatre and engage in discussions of issues through theatrical means that "interrogate the meanings of their lived experiences" (p.94-95). Donelan (2002a)¹³ further supports Conrad and Denzin and cites Peacock's definition of the purpose of ethnography. She says it can be applied to the work of drama educators wishing to address an intercultural educational agenda.

The work of Brecht in 1930s Germany, as analysed by Conrad (2004) was a theatrical form that influenced the development of western popular theatre in the way it reclaimed theatre for political community purposes. Brecht "felt that realism in the theatre is an upper and middle class value and that it encouraged passivity among the bourgeois audiences, suppressing the inclination to be active participants in the theatre, as in life" (*ibid*:3). His strategies and approaches were aimed at subverting that notion. He explored ways to break the 'fourth wall'. His Epic Theatre technique of *Verfremdungseffekt* loosely translated as "to watch from a distance, without involving oneself, as one who observes, thinks and draws on his or her own conclusions" (Boal, 2008, p.xix) - included episodic scenes interrupted by narration, songs and parables aimed to make the audiences active interpreters of the multilayered text rather than only playing on their emotions. For Brecht (1964:23), Epic Theatre "appeals less to the feelings

¹³ Two of Donelan's articles both published in 2002 are used in this report. To distinguish between them, *Embodied Practices: Ethnography and Intercultural Drama in the classroom* is referenced as Donelan (2002a) while *Engaging with the Other: Drama and Intercultural Education* is referenced as Donelan (2002b). It is apparent that these articles later became an integral part of Donelan's unpublished doctoral thesis titled *The Gods Project: Drama as intercultural Education* (2005) which is also referred to extensively in this report.

than to the spectator's reason. Instead of sharing the experience the spectator must come to grips with things" (Conrad, 2004:2).

Boal contributed techniques which were to change the course of community mobilization. His approach subverted theatrical conventions. He developed techniques he called Theatre of the Oppressed and documented them thoroughly in his book also titled *Theatre of the Oppressed*¹⁴ during a time when his native country of Brazil was under a 'cruel and murderous civic and military dictatorship' (Boal, 2008:ix). In it, he encourages readers to "...study the past in the present, so as to invent the future" (*ibid*) and presents techniques which bring about the consciousness to be proactive about their own situation in order to change their destiny.

In *Theatre of the Oppressed* Boal describes an experiment he carried out in Peru whose objective was to teach illiterate people how to read and write. He said that the problem of teaching literacy in Peru was "magnified because of the vast number of languages and dialects spoken by its people" (Boal, 2000:96). He realised that the illiterate are not people who cannot express themselves: they are people who are unable to express themselves in a particular language, which in that case was Spanish (Boal, 2000). "A man who has a language, consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language" (Fanon, 1967:17-18). Illiterate people certainly have a language which is always not the dominant or recognised language. In their possession is the world expressed in their language which the status quo does not recognise. The richness of culture and identity possessed and expressed in that language is not realised as it is marginalised. Boal argues that by learning a new language, a person acquires a new way of knowing reality and of passing that knowledge on to others (Boal, 2000). He further says that each language is irreplaceable. "All languages complement each other in achieving the widest, most complete knowledge of what is real" (Boal, 2000:96).

Central to Boal's ideas is knowledge of one's body. He believes that to control the means of theatrical production man must control his own body so that he can "free himself from his condition of spectator...in which he ceases to be an object and becomes a subject, [changing]

¹⁴ Three versions of Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1985; 2000; 2008) books were consulted. Revised versions offered ideas that were not in earlier versions. They have all been referenced separately in the reference section at the end of the report.

from witness to protagonist” (*ibid*). This is an important understanding in terms of the embodied techniques which were used in this research and explained in more detail on pages 86-88. The spectators’ proactive involvement in finding solutions to their plight awakens their consciousness to the fact that they are the only agent of their own destiny.

Tourelle and McNamara (1998) believe that Boal’s techniques are integral to his overall concept of the *Theatre of the Oppressed*. They include; Image Theatre, Invisible Theatre and Forum Theatre which are used to give participants a voice to discover plans for change. Through drama, participants are allowed to explore and try out different solutions. For Boal, Theatre of the Oppressed techniques were a weapon for oppressed people to use toward changing their social reality - what Conrad (2004) refers to as “theatre for the people, by the people” (p.3). The symbol of oppression is believed to represent the unchangeable system that can only be improved through growth in consciousness. “You cannot change the world itself, but you can modify the way you relate and respond to it” (UNESCO, 2006:6 as quoted in the compiled reader on *Basic Forum Theatre Structure*, Chinyowa, 2008).

Forum Theatre aims to initiate serious and fruitful discussions through the use of the joker and techniques such as Simultaneous Dramaturgy. In Forum Theatre a show is performed in which a certain image of oppression is presented and spectators, now turned spect-actors, may enter the action and try to move it towards a different, more satisfying ending (Tourelle & McNamara, 1998). The simultaneous engagement of the audience and performers as the performance progresses to change and modify the end results is what Boal (1985) refers to as Simultaneous Dramaturgy. These concepts and their relevance to this study are explored in more detail in Chapter 5.

Neelands (1996) as cited in Ackroyd (2006) believes that reflective practice is a way of working that is not bound by external factors like traditional research methodologies. Taylor (2000) as quoted by Neelands (1996) in Ackroyd (2006) defines it as the nurturing and development of life-long dispositions and the on-going continuous self-inquiry into one’s own professional practice. These ideas have strongly influenced my own approach to this research and have validated the focus on my own teaching and practice as a worthwhile source of data.

Drama in education or process drama is important for this research. It is considered an inclusive pedagogical praxis or productive pedagogy (O'Toole, 2002). Chapter 4 is dedicated to drama in education and its power to effect change. Therefore, I do not wish to go into much detail here about drama as an inclusive pedagogical praxis. According to O'Toole (2002) drama in the classroom creates space for “cultural diversity, critical thinking, creativity, deep knowledge and transformational understanding” (p.40).

Heathcote and Herbert (1995) speak of the mantle of the expert - a system of teaching which involves role reversal of the conventional teacher-learner relationship in which learners draw from their own experiences to enrich the learning environment. Consideration of learners' lived experiences is important because it acknowledges what they bring to the classroom. Acknowledging one's presence and where they come from creates a sense of belonging and elicits interest in the learning process. When the mantle of the expert is used in the classroom, the teacher relinquishes the responsibility of being the one who knows and hands it over to the learner. This role reversal allows for learning to take place simultaneously at conceptual, personal and social levels (Heathcote & Herbert, 1995).

Way (1967) believes that drama is mainly concerned with experiences of the participants - “the individuality of individuals...If each person is helped to enjoy and to know what it feels like to use the creative part of themselves...their intuition will be developed” (p.3-4).

It is in light of the above assertions that the recommendations (principles and strategies) in Chapter 7 are heavily skewed towards a shift in pedagogical approach to embrace a curriculum that will “work in the service of envisioning and enacting a just education” (Medina & Campano, 2006:341).

Multilingualism refers to the presence of many languages used by the inhabitants of a society. The languages do not always meet on terms of equality and independence. The South Africa Constitution recognizes the importance of creating a society which is tolerant of multilingualism and made it a constitutional imperative to recognise the many languages that exist in the country.

Kaschula and Anthonissen (1995) write that the interim constitution promulgated in 1993 makes the provision for all eleven official languages. This is specifically decided in order to acknowledge the linguistic variety in South African society and to affirm and enhance the equal status of each language. In their admission of the complexity of multilingualism and multiculturalism, they acknowledge that people may never be competent in all the designated languages but there needs to be an awareness, understanding and sensitivity to issues related to multilingualism and multiculturalism. Since the collapse of apartheid and the opening of educational institutions to all races, classrooms reflect the country's character. They contain students from different linguistic, cultural and socio-economic background, all under one roof. Therefore, teaching and learning must reflect this diversity.

However, that is not always the case. English as a language of instruction is the only language used in my drama class. Verbal and non-verbal improvisation activities are planned expecting spontaneity and quick thinking. Barba (1982) as cited in Pavis and Kruger (1988) questions this privileging of English and the prevalent use of spontaneity by asserting that it is difficult to describe the way in which each student organizes their improvisation based on the very general instructions given by the facilitator in English. Seeing that the culture of deep thought as opposed to spontaneity is imbedded within the participants' thinking patterns, processes of information often function effectively from mother tongue.

Skutnabb-Kangas as cited in Phillipson, Kellerman, Selinker, Smith and Swain (1991), posit that multilingualism allows for thinking in two different ways. For second language English speakers, information is first processed in mother tongue and then translated to English. This takes time and in instances where quick responses are expected during improvisation, students struggle with spontaneity because they are still processing information and deciphering from mother tongue to English. Interruption of mother tongue happens when the student's thinking process is incomplete and they are expected to give an answer at a stage where information processing is not yet complete.

Kaschula and Anthonissen (1995) advocate for the use of code switching or code mixing. They quote Heller (1988:4) who defines code switching as "the use of more than one language in the

course of a single communicative episode” (p.73) while Myers-Scotton (1993:47) refers to such switching as involving “the use of two or more languages in the same conversational turn, or even within the same sentence in turn” (*ibid*). Adler (2001) defines code mixing as the insertion of words or phrases into a sentence in another language, and Grosjean (1982) defines the former as taking a word from the other language and integrating it phonologically and morphologically into the base language for example the English word ‘*profit*’ is usually integrated into Setswana and pronounced ‘*porofite*’. In this chapter, I use the term code switching to cover both code mixing and code borrowing.

Moschkovich (2002) describes code switching as classroom conversations that include the use of the learners’ main language as a legitimate resource that can be used to facilitate learners’ communication in mathematics. Setati (1998) defines code switching as a switching done either by the teacher or learners between the LOLT and the learners’ main language. She further describes code switching as a practice that helps learners to use their main language as a learning resource. Setati (1998) says that when an individual uses two or more languages in the same conversation to stress the point which he or she wants the listeners to understand clearly, that is regarded as code switching. Baker (1993) contributes that code switching is when a person (more or less deliberately) alternates between two or more languages.

Ahmad (2009) points out that teachers have been using code switching to enhance students’ communication and conceptual understanding in the teaching and learning of mathematics. According to Ahmad, code switching is used when all the simplest means to make learners understand have been exhausted, more especially when the level of the language used is above the learners’ capacity. In general it is believed that code switching is an efficient teaching strategy when teachers teach learners with a low English proficiency, and the use of code switching enables learners to access mathematics knowledge more effectively and more efficiently. Grosjean (1982) contends that teachers code switch when they cannot find an appropriate word or expression or when the language being used does not have the necessary vocabulary item or appropriate translation. Baker (1993) argues that in every subject teachers have valid reasons for code switching. She states the reasons for code switching as follows “1) to emphasize a point, 2) when a word is not yet known in both languages and 3) for ease and

efficiency of expression” (p.77). Code switching could be done in a bi/multi-lingual, not in monolingual classrooms. The latter do not need to switch between codes because the LOLT is also their main language.

In code switching and code mixing, the linguistic richness and diversity in the classroom is not only acknowledged but fully taken advantage of because sometimes a particular concept is not lexicalized in one of the languages, or the equivalent word in the other language does not carry the same connotations. Therefore, the linguistic ‘complementarity’ enriches the understanding of learners and the meaning-making process.

The South African constitution pronounces on the equal status of the eleven official languages in South Africa. The Language in Education Policy¹⁵ outlines the task of the Department of Education (DoE) as, to recognise cultural diversity as a valuable national asset and to promote multilingualism by developing the eleven languages referred to in the constitution. The Wits Language Policy commits to the development of Sesotho and to continue to further language transformation in South Africa. “English will remain the only medium of instruction at the University, until such a time as it can be used together with Sesotho” (Wits Language Policy, 2003:1). If deliberate measures are not taken to mediate against the power and domination of English at institutions of higher learning, the realisation of the ideals articulated in the above mentioned documents will be fallacious.

Ideally, at an institution of Wits University’s reputation and in my drama class, adoption of the code switching and code mixing should be considered. If members of a community are proficient in more than one language, as is the case with the participants of my research, they should not have to be required to select a particular one. There should be acknowledgement that people think, act and experience what they do because the language they use allows them certain choices (Kaschula & Anthonissen, 1995).

¹⁵ The Language in Education Policy is a Department of Education (DoE) document adopted in 1997. It was developed to clarify language development and its implementation in South African schools in accordance with the recognition of all official languages and to further transformation.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

In this section I present and discuss the two primary theoretical frameworks that underpin this study. They are; critical theory, performance ethnography and to a large extent post-colonial theory. In addition to the above mentioned frameworks, a hybrid of others; critical social theory and social identity theory contribute to the intellectual strength of this report. Their importance and contribution to this research are acknowledged.

Gibson (1986) defines critical theory as a framework that “can help teachers establish rational justification for their practice and also improve their practice...it enables teachers to place their own practice and experience at the centre of their studies” (p.vii). This definition affirms the role(s) of reflective practitioner/observer participant that I assumed in the process of undertaking this research. Critical theory frames my reflective practice that I embarked on in this research and informs my interaction with my students as mentioned earlier and will continue to do so throughout this report. Paulo Freire (2005) further validates critical theory and my role in this research by asserting that “one really works on behalf of the popular classes if one works with them, discussing their dreams, desires, frustrations, fears and joys” (p.77).

Critical theory allows access to culture and reflective practice while post-colonial theory is concerned with the hegemony and dominance of English whose influence continues to spread globally at the expense of other languages. Critical theory acknowledges the sense of frustration and powerlessness that many feel as they see their personal destinies out of their own control and in the hands of others. “Privileged groups always have an interest in maintaining the status quo to protect their advantage” (Gibson, 1986:5).

Another component of critical theory is social theory which is a broader category of theoretical production including subsets like sociological theory, race and ethnicity and cultural theory (Lemert, 1993 as cited in Leonardo, 2004). Although studies in critical theory have examined all the above mentioned schools of thought, apparently many scholars have synthesized critical theory and social theory into an overarching framework to arrive at critical social theory (Calhoun, 1995 as cited in *ibid*). As a critical form of classroom discourse (Leonardo, 2004),

critical social theory is said to cultivate students' ability to critique institutional as well as conceptual dilemmas, particularly those that lead to domination or oppression.

Habermas (1979) as quoted by Neelands in Ackroyd (2006) proposes that the purpose of critical reflective practice is to "...expose the operations of power, bring about social justice as domination and repression act to prevent the full realizations of individual and social freedoms" (p. 23). Habermas expands by saying that for critical theorists, reflective practice is an emancipatory project that seeks to empower teachers as agents of social change. In the process, the teachers problematise the curriculum in terms of what and whose knowledge is valued and in terms of how inclusive and equitable the curriculum is for students who do not belong to the culture of power.

I argued earlier that upon arrival at university, students who do not belong to the dominant languages and cultures are compelled to abandon their cultural knowledges and lived experiences or cope with marginalisation as a consequence. Critical theory as a reflective practice wishes to identify a praxis which will provide all students with equal access to privileged cultural knowledge and capital whilst also ensuring that the boundaries of what is taught and how it is taught extend to include knowledge and experiences which are inclusive and representative of students' lived experiences (Neelands in Ackroyd, 2006:25). "The purpose will be to equip students both with knowledge needed to be powerful and a critical consciousness of how power operates in the curriculum selection and beyond" (*ibid*).

Conrad (2004) believes that performance ethnography, has its roots in the fields of anthropology (Fabian, 1990; Turner, 1986) and communication/performance studies (Conquergood, 1998) where performance is regarded as both legitimate and an ethical way of presenting ethnographic understanding. Performance theory has recently received recognition as a legitimate research theoretical framework in undertaking arts-based inquiry (Finley, 2003 as cited in Conrad, 2004). Schechner (1988) believes that performance is a paradigm of liminality. It creates an opportunity for involvement in a process that is 'symbolic and reflexive' (p.52). Norman Denzin's (2003) sustained contribution has been significant to the research and understanding of performance ethnography.

According to Conrad (2004), performance ethnographers find or create opportunities to observe, participate and/or represent findings to others through performance. Performance provides cultural understandings and performance ethnographers inquire into rituals, games, storytelling, theatre and dance and dramatic events such as moments of conflict, the performance of social roles, gender, race, status, age and so on (Austin, 1975; Butler, 1997 as cited in Conrad, 2004). In performance ethnography, performance spills from the stage into ‘real’ life. I immersed myself in the experiences of the participants (*and my own*), not to be invasive but in order to understand their history which I believe has significantly shaped their identity and their interaction within the current context.

For Denzin, performance ethnography as a praxis is “a way of acting on the told in order to change it” (p.228). Finley (2003:287) as quoted by Conrad (2004) asserts that performance creates an open, dialogic space for inquiry and expression through “an imaginative interpretation of events and the contexts of their occurrences” (p.5). She further examines Garoian (1999) who believes that performance opens a liminal pedagogical space that allows for a reflexive learning process that recognizes the cultural experiences, memories, and perspectives which encourage participant discussions of complex and interesting issues (Conrad, 2004). This theoretical paradigm provided further insight for me as the researcher-practitioner and further defined my role in the research process. Elements of auto-ethnography and reflective-practitioner methodologies surface strongly in this research.

This research is about multilingualism in the classroom. Multilingualism recognises the existence of many languages in one context. In reality, the languages do not enjoy the same status, some enjoying privilege over others. Of particular interest to this study is the status of English in an educational institution. Language is an integral part of cultural expression whose dual function in society has been succinctly articulated by Leech (1974). He believes that language is an agent to expound knowledge and pass on information, so as to facilitate co-operation between members of society. Furthermore, he sees language playing a pivotal role in the way these complex human interactions take place. This research report draws influences from the writings of post-colonial theorists Frantz Fanon (*Black Skin, White Masks*; 1967) and Edward Said (*Orientalism*; 1978)

whose sustained contributions to post-colonial discourse set the cat among the pigeons and caused a cacophony of debates. Their contributions are mainly on the status of English in relation to other languages. English enjoys a privileged position globally. With privilege comes power and domination. Below I discuss the global position of English in the context of post-colonial discourse and the complexity of matters that have arisen as a result of its global status.

Benjamin Graves' essay titled *Where and What is Post-colonial Theory* (year of publication not stated in the essay) states that in order to fully comprehend post-colonial theory it should be placed into some historical context. The phenomenal spread of English is closely linked to the historical trajectory of the British Empire which has been contextualized in the contemporary post-colonial and neo-colonial discourses (Prah, 2009)¹⁶. One central feature of post-colonial theory is an examination of the impact of the continuing legacy of the European conquest, colonialism and domination of the non-European lands, people and cultures. Central to this critical examination is an analysis of the inherent ideas of European superiority over non-European peoples and cultures that such imperial colonization implies (accessed from <http://www.photoin-sight.org.ul/theory.pdf>).

Fanon and Said's sentiments are still echoed by contemporary scholars like Ngugi (1986;1993), Ashcroft (2002), Phillipson, (1992) and many others who have written extensively on the global position of English, its privileged use and hegemony in educational settings at the expense of vernacular languages. African languages and English do not enjoy the same status. Conscious of the fact that so much has been written about language, this study interrogates the post-colonial debates on English as the language of imperialism, power and oppression, whose global position has made it inescapable in its reach and overwhelming in its influence.

In Prah's (2009) keynote address at a conference on *Mapping Africa in the English Speaking World*, he refers to Robert Phillipson's ground breaking 1992 book, *Linguistic Imperialism* which provides interesting views for this research. Phillipson identified English linguistic

¹⁶ Prof Kwesi Kwaa Prah is the Head of The Centre for Advanced Studies in African Society (CASAS) in Cape Town, South Africa. He has published extensively on post colonial discourse especially around issues of languages. At the time of the writing of this report, his keynote address at the University of Botswana's *Mapping Africa in the English Speaking World* Conference had not been published but was considered for publication as part of the conference proceedings.

imperialism as language asserted and consolidated through the establishment and persistent reproduction of structural and cultural disparities between English and other sociologically co-existent languages. Burchfield (1985) as cited in Phillipson (1992) says that;

English has become a lingua franca to the point that any literate educated person is in a real sense deprived if he (or she) does not know English...Linguistic deprivation is a less easily noticed condition, but one nevertheless of great significance.

(Phillipson, 1992:160)

Another interested voice that Prah refers to is that of Karen Stanley whose main interest is in the teaching of English as a second language. Phillipson and Stanley's assertions are a reality in the multicultural and multilingual institution that Wits is, validated by my encounters with my drama students as outlined above.

Stanley (2002) extends Burchfield's assertion quoted from Phillipson above by adding that the English Language carries with it imperialistic influences. This, she continues, has been in relation to the imposition of an outside language on native languages, resulting in their allocation to a secondary status along with the cultures they represent. At other times, English is seen as a tool to propagate the economic, cultural or religious values of dominant world powers. She concludes that English in the classroom serves as the ideal arena in which such possibilities can be examined by students and teachers alike (*ibid*).

Fanon (1967) situates language at the centre of the black predicament of marginalization. He says "a man who has a language, consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language" (17-18). If it is considered important for people to be aware of their past in order to be able to shape their future, then their language is important. Mastery of language affords remarkable power:

To speak means to be in a position to use certain syntax to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture to support the weight of civilization. (*ibid*:17-18.)

Fanon (1967) further argues that the history, culture, language, customs and beliefs of the colonizers are to be considered as universal, normative and superior to the local indigenous

cultures of the colonized. This creates a strong sense of inferiority in the mind of the recipient and leads to the adoption of the colonizers' language, culture and customs as a way of compensating for those feelings of inferiority in their self-identity. Fanon finally validates my research by suggesting that within the education system where the body of literature has been produced in colonial languages, the receivers of this education need to be aware that their education is based on foreign ideologies and that as indigenous people, they must take care not to uncritically reproduce the concepts and beliefs of the colonisers.

Ngugi's sustained contribution to the post-colonial debate brings an interesting dimension to the use of English in educational drama. His main concern was related to his use of English as a literary medium of expression. "The use of English as my literary medium of expression, particularly in theatre ...had always disturbed me... the possibility of using an African language stayed only in the realm of possibility " (Ngugi,1986:43-44). This self-reflective moment allowed Ngugi to take an 'epistemological break' (*ibid*) from his past and to focus on addressing the issue of language in theatre. Thereafter, he started writing in his mother tongue Gikuyu. Through this strongly worded opposition, Ngugi contends that the language of drama and theatre does not necessarily have to be English and that it can be any other language. In fact he ends a chapter titled *Imperialism: English, a Language for the World?* on a radical note by proposing "Kiswahili as the language for the world" (1993: 40)

Speaking of English in post-colonial discourse or in education is synonymous with power and domination. Janks (2000) takes us back to the apartheid time in South Africa, the time when rhetoric was radical and defiant. She quotes Thompson who reminds us that

In the days of apartheid it was easy to understand power as a negative force which constructed and maintained relations of domination by protecting the interests of the small white minority... To the extent that...language was used to sustain relations of domination (1984:35:175)

The language of domination that she is referring to above was Afrikaans. It was the enforced medium of instruction which led to the Soweto students uprising on the 16th June 1976. The day is commemorated annually on the same date and is now named Youth Day.

In the context of this study, there is no doubt that research participants are receiving education. The education system is presumed democratic in that it allows everyone to participate. But within the context of this supposed democratic setting they are disempowered because of language. Foucault (1984) as cited in Lippe-Green (1987) points to the fallacy of the assumption of education as an evenly distributed and power-neutral cultural resource. “Any system of education is a political way of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourses, along with the knowledges of powers which they carry” (1984:123 in 1987: 65). The lived experiences of students form an integral part of who they are. If these lived experiences are marginalized there is a risk of losing the richness which diversity has the potential to bring.

2.4 Research Design and Methodology

The research methodology mainly draws from the practice as research project carried out in March 2009. It became increasingly evident that complex and multi-faceted issues emerged from this modest project, hence its expansion into a fully fledged research report. Because teaching and learning approaches in educational drama are strongly participatory and experiential, I consciously opt for the participant/observer role for myself as researcher. I, as I did with the practice as research project, adopted an open-ended approach – “looking for what I could find, rather than finding what I set out to look for” (Banning, 2003b: p.187). This research stance is introduced earlier in Chapter 1 p.7.

In gathering the data for the practice as research project, qualitative and ethnographic methods were used and continued to be used in this report. According to Jessor, Colby and Shweder (1996), ethnography and qualitative methods are self contained research procedures that allow for participant observation, unstructured interview, informal survey and case studies. I held formal and informal individual interviews in order to gather the most accurate and honest opinions possible.

This study also relied on the use of popular theatre as a performative and participatory research method (Conrad, 2004). My data was generated from class activities that predominantly involved group work. As I worked with the students in sizeable groups, Boal’s techniques of Image

Theatre and Forum Theatre were used (described fully in Chapter 5 page) during which students interpreted presentations and frozen images (tableaux) in terms of their inherent meanings. Issues surrounding language and power were explored using status and improvisation games. Sometimes students were compelled to present in non-verbal communication, sometimes in gibberish, other times in a language that they are less confident in. Other times students used their first languages in presentation while at other times I allowed for code-switching between languages of their choice and English. For instance I would give a percentage composition of each language in the scenario. Those not in the scene interpreted what they were seeing. Interpretation was based purely on gestures and emotions and not language. By framing issues of concern through play, genuine responses were evoked. In many of the activities I chose to do through these strategies, I re-positioned languages and switched the linguistic currency within the creative space by giving power to the previously disadvantaged languages. More data was generated by a workshop presented at the WALE Festival discussed in Chapter 5.

In addressing potential students/teacher power relations, violation of privacy and other ethical considerations, participants had to sign consent forms. They were made aware that they were under no obligation to participate, and that refusal or withdrawal from this research process at any stage would not result in any penalty or victimization in their current or future intentions to study Drama in Education. Furthermore, I used pseudonyms to protect the identity of all research participants. The actual names of institutions and the province from which the participants come have been used. This, in my view does not violate any research ethics as information about these are in the public domain. My proposal has been cleared by the Wits University Ethics Committee (see appendices 5 and 6; Ethics Clearance and permission from the Wits School of Education to conduct this research respectively).

The research process is inevitably self-reflective as any other performance practice. Conclusions drawn from this research are based on sustained reflection and self-reflection and the continuous engagement with the participants over a period of the past fifteen months. Such conclusions are drawn from the analysis and interpretation of questionnaires, interviews and recordings. The stringent self-reflection, including suggestions from participants, should open up the possibility for the discovery of pedagogical approaches aimed at encouraging the acknowledgement and

inclusion of the multiplicity of languages and cultures in the classroom and perhaps an opportunity to give those languages equal partnership status with English or at least a more elevated status. The research has also informed me, as a drama facilitator in this particular setting, of the place of drama methodologies in transforming the classroom in a way that celebrates this diversity.

2.5 Conclusion

The reviewed literature focused on issues of language, culture, power, education and theatre and drama within education. The study draws intellectual strength from a number of theoretical frameworks; post colonial theory, critical theory in reflective discourse, socio-linguistic theory, Critical Language Awareness, performance studies and performance ethnography.

From the original PaR project described in Chapter 1 emanated complex issues that needed further exploration which gave birth to this research report. I have described the methodology used in the data generating process with students. I later used a drama workshop as a site for conducting participatory action research along with questionnaires and structured and unstructured interviews. Interviews and questionnaires are social sciences oriented research instruments and by using a drama workshop alongside them I wanted to highlight and acknowledge the emergence of popular theatre as a participatory performative research and performance ethnography as legitimate research methodologies in drama education. In the workshop I employed Boal's techniques of image theatre and forum theatre to investigate issues of language, power and performance. The workshop is described in detail in chapter 4.

Saussuer (1972) as cited in Janks (2003) says that we can see what something is, by seeing what it is not. We can help students to understand what English is and what it is not by making use of the wealth of linguistic resources that our multilingual and multicultural students bring to classes. In that way we might be able to convince our students that English is not superior to other languages, while at the same time teaching them to value linguistic diversity and to respect people who have extensive multilingual repertoires.

CHAPTER 3 ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND POSITIONALITIES OF THE RESEARCHER-PRACTITIONER

3.1 Introduction

This research is about education and educators. Traditionally, teaching was perceived as an esteemed vocation. That view has shifted significantly as more and more financially rewarding professions emerged. The prestige with which teaching was revered has been taken over by professions like law, medicine, accountancy and engineering. Having been a teacher at all levels of education I know firsthand how society views teachers. The hard work and sacrifice they put into their work goes unnoticed. However, that perception is not totally unjustified because there are irresponsible teachers who bring the profession into disrepute; those who have affairs with learners, lazy ones who abscond and neglect their duties and responsibilities and those who go to work drunk. Perhaps it is understandable that society views the profession with disdain so much so that no parent encourages their child to become a teacher. Being involved in teacher education I have seen how those that end up in the profession get there because their matric results do not allow them entry into other courses. My situation was very different. I worked in well resourced private schools my entire teaching career. The schools I worked at looked after employees very well, therefore my experiences of the profession are different from teachers who work in public schools, some in under-resourced environments.

In Chapter 1, I provided brief background information about the arrangement between Wits University and the Limpopo Provincial Government. I located this relationship within the broader national educational framework with specific reference to the ongoing under-achievement of Limpopo provincial public schooling. I gave evidence of how the initiative of withdrawing foundation phase teachers from schools to send them to several institutions for retraining came about (See appendix 1). I also presented a description of the PaR project which inspired this research. The description is interspersed with narrative to evoke the qualities of the performance space and to paint a picture of the relationship between the performance and the audience members. I do not wish to repeat that in this chapter.

In Chapter 3 I focus on the contexts that gave birth to the experiences of the participants. I mentioned in Chapter 1 (p.4) the role that I chose for myself as researcher-practitioner. In this chapter I interrogate the multiple roles that I occupy, which I refer to as ‘positionalities’ (Warren & Davis, 2008). I name these multiple ‘positionalities’ (researcher-practitioner, facilitator-lecturer, Second Language English speaker) and unpack their meaning and implications to my interactions with my students. The meanings and implications of these multiple ‘positionalities’ are magnified by my own experiences as a student. I retrace my educational history from Botswana (my country of origin) to UCT and frame them in relation to my current position at Wits University. Of particular interest to this study are my experiences at UCT as a second language English speaker in an environment where the language of learning and teaching is English, which resonates with those of my students.

Finally, I present perspectives on multilingualism and multiculturalism in the classroom and discuss them in the context of this research. I conclude by summing up the significant points discussed in the chapter.

3.2 The research participants: Marriage of (In) convenience – Wits University and the Limpopo Provincial Government

The University of the Witwatersrand, referred to in short as Wits University is located in the heart of South Africa’s economic hub and metropolis – Johannesburg. It is one of the leading academic institutions on the African continent. It is synonymous with the production of successful alumni who become high profile achievers and influential in their fields all over the world. Some are powerful political figures, for instance, South African Former President Nelson Mandela; successful lawyers such as Advocate George Bizos; Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and literary writer Nadine Gordimer and many chief executive officers in the Johannesburg Securities Exchange (JSE), listed companies and the corporate sector; to name but a few. This achievement by Wits alumni is flaunted by the alma mater at every opportunity. One can only imagine the excitement that comes with admission to this prestigious institution. Jackson, Pancer, Hunsberger, Pratt & Alisat (2008) postulate that the majority of students, upon entering university approach this transition in their lives as a period filled with interesting activities, new people to meet and stimulating academic work. Although this conclusion was drawn from

adolescent participants in the United States, I believe the same is true for the participants of my research.

Wits University boasts of a student and staff body that is reflective of its global appeal and status. It attracts top achieving students and highly accomplished scholars. The language of instruction at Wits is English. In compliance with the new Language Policy for Higher Education which requires Universities and Technical colleges to develop multilingual language policies, Wits University adopted a new language policy¹⁷ on the 14th March 2003 in which it commits itself to:

- Promote multilingualism by supporting the use of all eleven official languages for interaction on the University campus and in ceremonial gatherings, by translating documents and providing interpreting services where necessary and by offering a major in at least one foreign language;
- Develop SeSotho by developing language teaching resources and courses in SeSotho for staff and students, and by assisting the government to develop such resources for primary and secondary education. It also proposes to contribute, alongside government, to the development of language itself, so that it can be used as a medium of instruction in Higher Education;
- Develop the linguistic abilities of staff and students in English, SeSotho and IsiZulu by providing courses in these languages and by requiring communicative competence in English and an African language. (Wits Language Policy: 2)

This policy, according to Janks (2003) sets the University on a path to introducing a bilingual Sesotho-English medium of instruction in the long term.¹⁸ It also recognises African students' desire for access to English while at the same time, it requires students and staff who cannot speak an African language to take courses in Sesotho or IsiZulu. According to Janks (2003), it is the combination of access to English¹⁹ and the requirement that everyone speak an African language that might realise the policy's claim that "learning the languages of South Africa is a

¹⁷ The Wits Language Policy (see p.1) was written by Dr. N. Thwala, Dr. D. Swemmer and Prof. H. Janks. Janks (see p.3), who I interviewed in 2009 stated that the idea to formulate the policy (is a constitutional mandate) was also based on language research conducted at the University (by van Zyl and Makoe, 2002) and on the advice given by the Senate Language Policy Committee

¹⁸ The University policy conceptualises a bilingual-medium of instruction which uses oral code-switching. This is common practice in South African schools (Janks, 2003)

¹⁹ Janks says that the research conducted at the University (van Zyl and Makoe, 2002) "indicated that there is overwhelming support for all students for improving their English language skills so that they can attain mastery of oral expression and written competence and for qualifications to include credit bearing courses in English for students who need them (Janks,2003)

means of enhancing understanding of one another and of overcoming our differences” (Wits Language Policy, 2003:1).

Johannesburg is the Cosmopolitan African City. The name is synonymous with dichotomous connotations; to some it is the place of gold and opportunities, yet to others it resonates with danger; hijackings, gangsterism, drugs and life in the fast lane. The Limpopo Province on the other hand contrasts significantly with Johannesburg. The province is constituted of mainly rural areas. The provincial capital Polokwane, boasts a serene and peaceful atmosphere which evokes a small town mentality. I am able to relate to my research participants and draw parallels with my own experiences of relocating from a small city in Botswana to Johannesburg. There is recognition of likeness between myself and the research participants on this level.

The arrival of the Limpopo in-service teachers at the Wits School of Education was waited with anxiety. Enrolment went from 350 in 2008 to 869 in 2009. Due to this unexpected number, there was unease regarding staffing and teaching venues. About sixty eight of these students were to take drama and movement in education for the first time in their academic pursuits. This pushed the number of a drama class of 2009 to 94. Considering the practical nature of drama and movement, we had to teach in a gymnasium and employ one more staff member. We then divided the group into two small groups and rotated them such that group one did movement in first half of the session while group two did drama. After that they swapped over. We had to offer the same content twice.

In the first drama session, we gathered in the auditorium to welcome the students and to hand out course outlines. Explanation of the practical nature of the course was reiterated. They were further informed of the course’s physical demands, interactive nature and reliance on group work which necessitates for them to dress comfortably to allow for freedom of movement. As it was, they were all dressed up in formal clothes and high heels as if they were going to work. As we were explaining this there was an eerie silence in the auditorium, particularly from the Limpopo teachers. I assumed that they were listening attentively.

3.3 The Wits Experience

This section can be viewed as an extension of the ‘Discussion’ section in Chapter 1.4.3. It foregrounds the research participants’ experiences and reflects them through the eyes of other students (and staff) they encounter as they try to get on with their academic work. The data collected during the interviews which was not selected for performance is presented here. According to Compas, Wagner, Slavin, & Vannatta, 1986 as cited in Pancer, Hunsberger, Pratt & Alisat (2000) the reality of students’ experiences at university is harsher and more stressful than many of them anticipate. They quote Rice (1992) who says that students who have moved away from home are cut off from family, friends and familiar environment. Academic demands put considerable pressure on students as work is often both more difficult and more voluminous than expected.

Culture shock was another theme that came up during the discussion. Teachers expressed shock at activities which young students engage in like smoking, drinking and public display of affection. In African culture, it is believed that a child belongs to the community. There are certain habits that are viewed as ‘unAfrican’. Smoking by a girl and public display of affection are viewed as foreign. Smoking is especially the reserve for older men and showing affection is a very private matter designed for a private space out of the glaring public view.

The teachers felt that they had the responsibility to ‘show the young students the way’ and the young students wanted to be left alone, the anecdote which is described on page 17. The tension between the teachers and the young students can be attributable to the fact that the teachers feel that they are the custodians of African culture. Tension is also heightened by the generation gap that deepened the wedge between the young students and the teachers, making socialisation and working together a distant possibility. For drama class this caused serious concern as most of the work relies on group work.

Participants attributed the insurmountable pressure to the discrepancy between their expectations and what was actually happening at Wits as far as their syllabus was concerned. Many participants assumed that since they are foundation phase teachers, they would study courses

relevant to their phase of teaching; Mathematical literacy and numeracy and Literacies in Languages and Communication only. At Wits the syllabus is much broader. It includes compulsory courses like Philosophy of Education, Educational Psychology, Studies in Education, Computer Literacy and a range of options to choose from, Arts in Education (Drama and Movement, Music and Visual Art), Sciences and Technika. They accused Wits of exploiting their provincial government.

A significant number of participants experienced health problems. Two of my students broke down in my office. They had been hospitalized - one with severe migraine and another with bouts of epileptic fits. Forcing back the tears that had welled up in their eyes, they sobbingly shared with me their difficulty to cope academically and expressed that their health conditions were triggered by stress compounded by the rigorous academic demands and anxiety of failing their government, their colleagues at work and their families back home. It became apparent that undertaking studies at a mature age is not just an individual matter. In African culture, the impending success is not only for the individual and their immediate family. The community has 'claim' in the success too, which compounds the already existing pressure (see p.94). At an advanced age it becomes much more meaningful to get another opportunity to a better life. I was later to learn that some teachers (though none from my drama class) dropped out of the university, packed their belongings and went back home.

Throughout the year, we struck up friendships based on mutual respect; I respected them as adults (not to say that I do not respect my young students), and they reciprocated two-fold. They addressed me as *Meneer* (an Afrikaans reference to the male boss), a clear demonstration of a deeply entrenched apartheid mentality. I spent the most incredible year with this group of determined and hardworking adults. We cried and laughed together, shared personal joys, achievements and academic struggles with both our eyes focused on one ball, so to speak, to ensure that they achieved to the best of their ability in drama, and they did. At the end of the first year all the Limpopo teachers in my drama class had passed the two drama courses offered in the first year.

3.4 Biography and Positionalities of the Researcher-Practitioner

I write this paper from a complex position of vulnerability. I do so with great caution lest I come across as a hypocrite. Here, I name the multiple ‘positionalities’ and the many hats that I wear as I undertake this research. I present as a researcher-practitioner, young black African male, foreign national working in South Africa, SeTswana first-language speaker, second-language English speaker teaching educational drama, in English at Wits University. Because teaching and learning approaches in the Drama department are strongly participatory and experiential, with a close working relationship between staff and students, I consciously opted for a participant-observer role for myself as researcher. Banning believes that in the multiple ‘positionalities’ that I occupy, researching a group that I also teach, I cannot deny my own central positioning within the manifestation of the discourse;

“Acknowledging one’s own positioning in the governing power structures would be the only course. And, indeed, such an approach enacts in its process some of the fundamental features of the relationships and practices... The research process would need to be as self-reflexive as any other aspect of discursive performance practices (Banning, 2003b, p.187).

I find my current multiple ‘positionalities’ particularly disconcerting given my purpose. I bring with me the baggage of my own personal and cultural values and those of Wits University as the leading English medium institution on the African continent. I teach only in English because of the incidental institutional culture. I am compelled to disregard the presence of the richness of linguistic and cultural diversity in my class. It concerns me that through my current multiple positionalities, consciously or sub-consciously, I perpetuate the vicious cycle of academic struggles for second-language English speakers doing educational drama. I feel I should know better how to interrupt this troubled transmission, but I also feel my hands tied behind my back by my professional responsibilities.

As teachers, says Warren and Davis (2008), “we live in the waves of identity and we struggle with how and in what ways we make these identities, these shifting tides of ourselves apparent.

We occupy overlapping spaces - our teacher/[researcher] selves are marked by age, gender, institutional rank and race to name but a few” (p.307).

I have had to re-imagine my current position in relation to the personal experiences of my own academic struggles as a student of drama. I am compelled to turn back the hands of time twelve years to reminisce about my own academic struggles as a first year second-language English speaker, learning drama, in English at the University of Cape Town. This nostalgic journey exposes my vulnerability which further compels me to be self-reflective. But first let me give the background to where it all started.

I relocated to South Africa from Botswana at the beginning of 2008 amid hopes that the grass would be greener on the other side of the border. South Africa is one of the economic giants on the African continent. Through her diverse economic portfolio, sound policies and the ever-growing economy, she has attracted skilled and unskilled migrants from the rest of the continent and far afield. In this paper I locate my experiences within the broader context of the educational climate in my adoptive country - South Africa and compare them with those of my research participants. According to Alsop (2002) practicing ethnography means shifting one’s notion of centre and periphery and coping with the complexity of multiple centres with multiple peripheries. By using these different voices I try to demonstrate that being at home and being away are two very human states of being that are intimately connected. As a foreign national living and working in South Africa, I understand the complexities of leaving home. Even though the participants of my study have not left their native country, their relocation is not only geographical but emotional as well. Their destination is foreign compared to home.

I was born and bred in Botswana. However, studying took me to a number of academic institutions. My academic skills were honed at the University of Cape Town because that is where I eventually attained my two degrees. Botswana, my homeland a land-locked country bordering South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia, is known as the largest diamond producer by value in the world. The country has often been referred to as a beacon of peace on the African continent, but the latest developments on the political landscape brings this tag under scrutiny.

The Botswana education system is wonderful in its support and development of human resources necessary for the country's economic needs. Education is free for the first twelve years of schooling. Those who attain good results at secondary school (reference to high schools as derived from the British system) are offered a full scholarship covering tuition, travel, accommodation and stipend. The scholarship can be tenable at any reputable institution in any part of the world. For courses not offered within institutions in Botswana, students are sent overseas at full government's expense. I must admit that the scholarship is one of the most generous I have ever come across. To complement government efforts to skill citizens, private companies also follow suit. However, their focus is particularly on the skills relevant to their core business. For instance a mining company will sponsor students to undertake mining related courses who eventually have to come back to work. This, in my opinion is a great gesture from a country that cares for its people.

While the scholarship programme offers a once in a lifetime opportunity for many, its downside is the inability of secondary schools to expose learners²⁰ to different career opportunities. Career guidance and counselling is the mandate of the individual schools. It is ineffective in its implementation (at least at the time when I completed school) as it did not expose learners to career paths at an early age, which should inform their subject choices. Learners are left to their own devices. I was a victim of this education system.

When I completed secondary school, my admission letter from the University of Botswana (UB) arrived. I was to pursue Pre-Entry Science Course (PESC), a six months bridging course designed to ease students into pursuing a health science or engineering related programme. I had not applied for PESC but was invited because of my excellent results. With hindsight, it makes sense to channel good learners towards careers that are of great necessity and importance to the optimum growth of the economy. Upon entering UB I continued to apply myself to all my studies and I performed fairly well. I then applied for a Debswana Scholarship to pursue primary education, and was duly offered one.

²⁰ For the purposes of this report, children of school going age are referred to as learners, a term used mainly in South African education and those of University going age are referred to as students.

Debswana is a partnership between the mining giant DeBeers and the Botswana Government. The company has been in existence since early 1980s when rich diamond deposits were discovered in Botswana. The discovery of this glittery mineral was to spin the fortunes of the poor African nation and catapult it from being one of the poorest nations in the world to the middle income economic status that it has now. The diamonds produced in Botswana are high in quality and value as compared to those from other countries. Diamonds are the main source of revenue and the largest contributor to the country's economy. This complete reliance on non-renewable resources proved disastrous in the wake of the recent recession and economic meltdown. Due to the shortage of skilled manpower in Botswana, Debswana has to recruit qualified personnel regionally and internationally to work in its two operations (Jwaneng Mine and Orapa & Letlhakane Mines). In order to attract highly skilled and qualified personnel, attractive packages have to be offered and one of the incentives was free quality education for their children. I was to train to eventually teach at one of the private schools owned by Debswana at one of its operations in Botswana.

After a successful completion of BSc second year at UB, I packed my bags and headed for the Mother City, the Southernmost tip of the African continent where the Indian and the Atlantic Ocean meet - Cape Town - to study for a Bachelor of Art (BA) Degree in Drama and English followed by a Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE). It was at the University of Cape Town that I realised my immense love for Drama and education. And, that is how I ended up in the Debswana owned private school as a primary school teacher. Later, I joined Maru-a-Pula School, a prestigious private school in Gaborone, Botswana. The school is well resourced and boasts of a 500 seater theatre named Maitisong—a SeTswana word meaning The place of entertainment. Maitisong is a beckon of hope for the arts in Botswana. It is a cultural resource centre which serves the school's needs and those of the arts community in the country. Every year there is a festival which attracts regional and international performance to delight arts lovers in Botswana. Of the four years that I worked at Maru-a-Pula, a year was spent as Director of Maitisong, organising the festival and producing the monthly newsletter. After that I resigned and headed south to take up employment as a Drama in education lecturer at one of Africa's finest academic institutions - Wits University.

3.5 The UCT Experience

Located at the foot of Table Mountain, the University of Cape Town's main Campus offers stunning views of the beautiful Cape Town. Casting your eyes eastwards one used to be greeted by the two ladies of Athlone, the two cooling towers for the power utility Eskom which formed a part of the city's skyline. They have since been brought down in an emotional countdown which changed the Cape Town's landscape forever. Next to the University stands the Rhodes Memorial named after Cecil John Rhodes. The view from the UCT campus offers a sense of the vastness and beauty of Cape Town and it was these mesmerizing views, serene atmosphere and the laxity of the people that made me fall in love with Cape Town. I knew that my stay at UCT would be a blissful one.

The Drama School is located in the Gardens near Cape Town City Centre. There was a bus service running between the main campus in Rondebosch and the satellite campus in town. In Chapter 1 I discussed the how the Drama department was run and referenced Yvonne Banning's research with second language students, therefore I do not wish to repeat it here. Instead I augment on what has already been discussed in the earlier chapters. Similar to Wits, the LOLT at UCT is English. At the time when I was a student, the staff complement was predominantly white, mainly English speaking (5 white females and with three while males). Guest lecturers were sometimes invited and it was on a few occasions that a black person would be invited to present a module or to direct a play. I do not want to speculate on the reasons for this trend. The learning environment was vibrant with students willing to put in extra hours to hone their skills. There were a number of options and routes which students could enrol for to attend Drama School; Performers Diploma in Theatre (PDT), BA Theatre and Performance (BA T & P) or BA (Drama). According to Banning, diploma students usually constituted a minority group among the general drama student body for whom English used in the department was likely to be unfamiliar because they were mostly from what is now called Further Education Training (FET) schools. They gained entry to the vocational courses by successfully auditioning, but without having met the entrance criteria set by the university. Their major focus was acting. The BA (T & P) students did a four year degree programme with strong focus on both academic and

performance work. The BA (Drama), the route I had chosen did not have the focus on performance. The orientation and exposure to elements of performance was rudimentary though thorough. We attended theory lessons with performance students but had our own practical sessions. We also collaborated in theatre in education (TIE) projects which we took to schools. I believe it was during TIE sessions that I realized how much I wanted to be a facilitator. There was something fascinating about the way the role of facilitator of learning functioned and I always looked forward to TIE sessions.

Every year there was a BA production, which presented an opportunity for students in my stream to perform. Interested students had to audition and I am proud to say that I made every BA production during the three years that I spent at the UCT Drama School. In the first year production we staged a devised play based on Helen Martins' *The Owl House* titled *Bethesda Moon*. The play marked the celebration of the centenary of Owl House artist. The director was a Lecoq trainee who facilitated the creation of a poignant and theatrically interesting piece that encompassed almost 60 years in the life of Bethesda and its residents. She intertwined poetry, shadow puppets to create a fast-paced soul-baring piece that exposed prejudices and desires. I was cast as *Koos*, a coloured man who worked as Miss Martins' labourer. The rehearsal process started with community building exercises. Out of a cast of 18 performers (16 were white mainly females and 2 were black males - I being one of them). The initial exercises that included name games, physical activities, trust exercises whereby one closed their eyes and allowed himself to fall freely trusting that the other will catch him created a sense of familiarity and indeed trust.

My character did not have a lot of lines. At the time I was happy with that because I felt intimidated as I listened to my co-performers reciting their lines. I struggled to learn my few lines because I was not used to rote memorisation, coming from a science background. Because I was embarrassed at holding the group back, I stayed up long hours at night, learning my lines and writing them down. Eventually I got them. As I reflect on the experience now, I notice how the director utilised some of Boal's games for actors and non-actors to create a united cast which worked together like an oiled machine. For subsequent productions (*Andorra* and *More Rooms* – Adaptation of Quinton Terrantino's *Four Rooms*) I was cast in lead roles and I marvelled in the

glory of being the star of the show. The first production provided a springboard and confidence that catapulted me into the future and for that I credit the director.

I now turn to the practical sessions. The improvisation sessions always presented challenges. The one session I remember vividly; the lecturer asked us to follow her instructions and to perform the actions. She gave a few adjectives which at that time I had never heard of. Coming from a science background my English vocabulary was very limited. We had to be on our feet, moving at a fast pace and exerting ourselves to the best of our ability as this also served as a warm-up. “Writhe, slither...” the lecturer called the adjectives one by one. I stood there perplexed. Everyone else was hard at work, students on the floor, some twirling in mid-air and others whirling around like a tornado or twister. Usually I waited for others to execute their movements and then followed. This time around I did not know who to follow because there were contorted and morphed bodies occupying different levels and planes in the room. I did not know what to do and I stood there watching. I was so embarrassed it was like everyone knew what was going on. The lecturer looked at me and quickly turned away. She did not say anything. I immediately went down on the floor to copy one of the students. I wondered whether my lecturer ever thought that there was someone like me who did not understand some of those words. What bothered me was that I never expressed how I felt to the lecturer. Later when we were comfortable with each other I shared with my Xhosa speaking friends, our experiences of the first few months at Drama school. We realized how much commonality we shared in our struggles to fit in. No one wanted to be seen not to understand and we all laughed about it.

In improvisation there are processes of offering, accepting, modifying and rejecting. Accepting an offer allows the improvisation to carry on and so does modifying. A typical improvisation session involved one student starting an action and then the next student accepting or modifying it and then passing it on. I used to wish that I would be the last person to receive the offer. At that time I used to think in my first language Setswana and then translate into English. So the thought process and translation took longer. There were also moments of interruption of mother tongue. This happened when my thought process was interrupted while cognition was still in the Setswana thinking mode and due to the pressure I would blurt out whatever I was thinking in Setswana. Laughter would sometimes erupt. But usually it would be puzzled looks of wonder

about what I had said and how they were supposed to respond. Very few students understood Setswana and those were usually from Gauteng. Sometimes one of them would explain the meaning of what I said while I still recovered from the embarrassment.

In Chapter 2, I wrote about the advantages of multilingualism under the literature review section. The research I presented read that bi/multilingual people see things from more than one perspective. I have reservations about this position because the scenarios described above did not allow for this multiple perspectives. Maybe it works under certain conditions but under my then circumstances bilingualism brought shame and feelings of inadequacy. From then onwards, I buried myself in books and read avidly to improve my English so that I could never be left behind. The action I took after the above described incidents is articulated by Rich as quoted by hooks in Prentki and Preston (2009) by saying "... this is the oppressor's language, yet I need it to talk to him [oppressor]" (p.80) I insisted on accessing this power so that I am able to separate useful knowledge that I get from the dominant group for assimilation and co-option. hooks is repulsed by this act and she shuns it by saying " It is not necessary to give yourself over to learn and that one should not lose that radical perspective shaped and formed by marginality" (ibid:80-83).

Flanagan (2006) speaks passionately about oppression in education which was abhorred by Freire. He says that the most effective and efficient means to control the oppressed is to control their consciousness. "The oppressed are convinced of their own lack of worth as individuals they doubt their own knowledge and experience...they look to the oppressor for validation...they aspire to the way of life of the oppressor...to become oppressors themselves" (p.185).

During discussions with my peers, it became apparent that we shared similar experiences with Banning's students who she interviewed three years after my departure. There was revelation that the learning environment, the structures and the teaching approaches appear to be strongly embedded in a culturally determined set of values which are associated exclusively with English. Canagaraj, 1999:147 says that: "The conflict facing students from non-European backgrounds...is that they often face the pressure and/or temptation to give up their community-based discourses and adopt the academic discourses which enjoy power and prestige (in

Banning, 2003:3). Education is never neutral. Freire believes that educational transformation is deliberately contrived by dominant groups that use education to encourage others to be passive and to accept oppression (*ibid*).

By presenting the selected anecdotes of my experience above, I am in no way castigating my education and experiences at UCT as all bad. I had many enjoyable moments and I learnt most of what I know now at that time. Through the ‘interesting’ experiences, I am able to critically reflect on them in relation to where I am now. Having described the multiple ‘positionalities’ (teacher, facilitator, researcher-practitioner) I occupy currently I use past experiences to inform how I work with my students now and in future.

3.6 Multilingualism in a Drama Classroom

According to Setati et al (2002) Afrikaans and English are the main or primary languages of only a minority of the country’s teachers and learners. They believe that the majority of South Africa’s teachers work in classrooms and schools where English is officially the language of learning, but is not the main language of either the teachers or the learners. This is true for higher institutions of learning. This practice has been alluded to above with reference to the medium of instruction being predominantly English at Wits University. The gravity and the extent to which unacknowledged multilingualism manifests itself in the classroom became apparent in group dynamics as they emerged in my class.

Drama is a social activity which relies strongly on group work. The pattern that developed in this class puzzled me. Students tended to gravitate towards speakers of their first language so that they were able to communicate in their mother tongue. This, I think provided a comfort zone of familiarity. I believe that being at University should open one’s opportunities to new friendships and possibilities, so I set out to interrupt this troubling pattern that propagates segregation and the apartheid mentality of ‘we belong together’ (Jansen, 2008) and we will have nothing to do with you because you do not speak our language. I resorted to allocating groups using creative drama techniques to ensure that students were always mixed. It became apparent that the young students (pre-service students) straight out of school laughed at the older teachers because they

did not express themselves and their ideas concisely. This bothered the teachers, and concerned me gravely.

In groups, those in the linguistic minority would get upset that the majority spoke the language they did not understand. Tensions began to mount. Little progress was made with arguments being about which language to use. The groups became dysfunctional and facilitators were called in to mediate. I mediated in English. The teachers not being fluent in English could not express themselves satisfactorily. The interesting thing is that they knew that my home language, SeTswana, is similar to SePedi and that if they spoke to me in SePedi they would be able to express themselves freely and I would understand. I insisted on English being used so that everyone could follow the mediation process. There was finger pointing from the fluent English speakers accusing the Limpopo teachers of not contributing to the discussion. In their own defence, they said that they could not contribute because they did not want to be laughed at by students young enough to be their own children. For the sake of progress, they kept quiet and accepted everything they were told. English speakers dominated and controlled the creative process relegating others to the periphery.

Medina and Campano (2006) believe that “drama opens critical spaces within which students can access their linguistic resources to negotiate diverse perspectives and generate knowledge that may serve their own educational and social empowerment” (p.332). This ideal however had not been achieved at this stage.

3.7 Multiculturalism in the Drama Classroom

In Chapter 1 I mentioned the various cultural and ideological challenges presented by my students. Some mentioned that as married Christian women who belong to ZCC they are supposed to cover their heads at all times; never wear trousers or hold hands with males who are not their husbands. My drama class is a microcosmic system that consisted of people from all walks of life with different cultural values and varied belief systems which presented real challenges. The rigidity with which cultural values are held presented a challenging environment for me and the students to work effectively. How then do I operate within those constricting

cultural boundaries without violating anyone's beliefs? It was a question that I constantly asked myself.

Drama is being called upon to address multiculturalism in the classroom. Donelan (2002a) proposes that by integrating intercultural performances into the drama curriculum students can be encouraged to critically examine their own social and cultural attitudes and build dynamic understandings of each other's worlds. Brahmachari (1998) as cited by Donelan (2002b) posits that the drama classroom can be transformed into a safe space that allows for the creation, development, exploration and invention of new cultures and identities.

Donelan (2002b) believes that intercultural pedagogy engages students to put themselves in the place of others to explore, construct, interpret and represent cultural narratives using specific arts conventions and languages. "Ethnography allows us as drama teachers and participatory researchers to engage with our students as they explore, struggle with, create, resist and perform intercultural drama" (p.43) She concludes by saying that ethnographic practices provide the means for drama educators, researchers and students to experience what Pedelty (2001:247) calls "reflective and transformative explorations of self and Other" (*ibid*).

3.8 Conclusion

I began the chapter by introducing the study participants and the context within which they operate. I presented the dilemmas and challenges they face as they struggle to cope with school. I then brought my current positionalities under intense scrutiny given my context. I presented anecdotes that I think best relate the experiences that I wish not to reproduce for my students. This is in no way a complete picture of my time as a student at UCT. I had ugly and sad moments, but I chose these because of their relevance to this study. I wonder whether my expectations of a nineteen year old pre-service teacher should be the same as for those of a forty-five year old in-service teacher. My warm ups are physically demanding. Do I design my classes to accommodate the wide range of age and physical capabilities of my students? Will that not be compromising of the standards expected at Wits? I wonder. I hope that as a drama teacher in this particular institutional setting I can begin to transform the setting in a way that embraces

and celebrates the richness of diversity present in its physical space. I believe in education. I really do because if it was not for education I would not be where I am now. But I do have an understanding of Freire's argument about how dominance can upset the great intentions in education.

CHAPTER 4 AN INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGICAL PRAXIS: DRAMA IN THE CLASSROOM

4.1 Introduction

According to Medina and Campano (2006) drama presents an opportunity that opens up critical spaces within which students can access their linguistic resources to negotiate diverse perspectives and generate knowledge which will serve learners' educational and social empowerment. Donelan (2002a) quotes Jonothan Neelands' appeal to schools to adopt a "humanizing curriculum which will foster compassion, empathy, tolerance, highly developed interpersonal skills and respect for difference" (Neelands, 2002:8:36).

The above statements demonstrate insistence on Freire's concept of the pedagogy of the oppressed, hence the chapter dedicated especially to drama in education. Not only am I responsible for training teachers to use drama as a teaching methodology in the classroom, but I also perceive it to be an ideological and practical basis through which learners can be empowered. Through exposing the Limpopo teachers to this methodology I maintain that there is much which they can discover for their own empowerment on campus and for that of their learners in the future.

This chapter begins by discussing the importance of drama in the classroom. My engagement with drama in education readings in preparation for this chapter, led to the discovery that the terms drama in education, educational drama, drama in the classroom and process drama are used interchangeably. The literature did not draw a clear distinction between the four terms. Therefore, in this chapter, I use them interchangeably to maintain consistency with the sources I consulted. I also follow the conventional use common in drama writings in which a teacher is assumed to be female and a learner as male. The use of these pronouns should be regarded as gender inclusive.

The participants of my study, as stated several times in the previous chapters are foundation phase teachers. Their curriculum was designed taking into consideration the fact that at the end of their course, once their qualifications have been upgraded and skills honed, they will go back to Limpopo to (hopefully) effect the desired changes necessary to achieve better results at matric level. In that light, the arts disciplines (music, drama and movement and visual arts) were made compulsory for them. Drama and movement are combined and are offered as one course even though each one is taught by a specialist.

By the end of the four year programme, the teachers should have completed one of the three arts discipline courses mentioned above and should be able to competently integrate the art within their teaching. I am not sure of the reasons for this decision but in this chapter I affirm it by outlining the benefits of drama in the classroom. I address how drama can be beneficial to the teacher and the learner. I further offer a perspective on how the learners' drama experiences reflect their cognitive, physical, emotional and linguistic growth. These experiences provide the lens through which to appreciate the importance of drama in the classroom as a process that could significantly contribute to the development of the whole child. I proceed to discuss a system referred to as the 'Mantle of the Expert' by Heathcote and Herbert (1985:173). The mantle of the expert system involves the reversal of the conventional teacher-learner relationship where the teacher is the source of knowledge. "The teacher assumes a fictional role which places the student in the position of being the one who knows or the expert..." (*ibid*). I proceed to discuss the teacher in role strategy which allows the teacher to oscillate between the mantle of the expert system and the traditional teacher role as we know it.

According to Morgan and Saxton (1987), in the teacher in role strategy, "the teacher is taking part in the play and at the same time monitoring the experiences of her students." (p.38) It is important that while using the teacher in role strategy she keeps an eye on the proceedings to ensure that the session does not deteriorate into chaos which could derail the learning objectives. They identify nine roles that can be assumed by the teacher. I discuss these roles and state the advantages and disadvantages of each. Accompanying the teacher in role strategy are the three stances that guide the assumed roles. They are; manipulator, enabler and facilitator. Depending on the stance associated with the role, the teacher may or may not have the flexibility and

freedom to oscillate between her traditional authority figure and the assumed role while monitoring learning and ensuring discipline. Each assumed role is also accompanied by status which could be high, medium or low. I present these under the teacher-in-role section.

I am compelled to evaluate the current pedagogical practices in my department. I look at what I teach, how I teach and who I teach with. While my interest is specifically in my department, I cannot ignore the fact that my department is part of an institution and that my work is intrinsically linked to the institutional framework. I therefore look at my pedagogical practices as influenced by: the programme design, the university language policy, and the students I teach. All these factors present a myriad of challenges that determine and influence, positively or negatively my methodological approaches. The chapter concludes by presenting an ideal lecturer and espoused curriculum, mindful of the factors that come into play in the context within which I operate.

4.2 Drama in Education

According to Gavin Bolton as cited in Jackson (1993), drama in education is concerned with dramatic art and pedagogy. “Classroom drama lies in its potential to achieve change of understanding (a pedagogic objective)” (ibid:39). Malan (1973) defines drama in education as:

an experiencing activity...in which all participate; and all bring to the activity not acquired skills but what is basic and common to all human beings in order to investigate, with sincerity and absorption, some area of life themselves, so that it may...alter their being, may affect their awareness of themselves, of others and, of the environment and society in which they exist. (p.6)

O’Toole (1992) contributes that drama in education is a form of dramatic activity centred on fictional role-taking. O’Neill (1995) defines the term according to what it is not. She draws her definition from a comparison between drama in education and a theatre event and as such offers more characteristics which give each its own distinguishing features. One characteristic that stands out is that process drama gives access to an authentic experience for the participants. As a teacher trainer, I believe it is imperative that my students have an understanding of what it is that their learners could benefit from in learning drama or through drama. Having defined what

drama in education is, the question of its application and effectiveness in the classroom, towards child development becomes the core issue.

With growing emphasis on the child-centred approach in the Foundation Phase and particularly on learning through experience, it is apparent that drama in education offers those values. A remarkable example given by Way (1967) validates that children use play as a means of trying out life's experiences in the most experimental and imaginative ways both alone and with their friends. In Piaget's (1920) stages of development, children learn best from experience, of touching, of movement, of using concrete apparatus and most essentially through play. They learn best by doing. O'Neill (1995) affirms Piaget's theory by stating that children are aware of drama long before they even enter school. The whole area of make believe involves a certain amount of drama.

Often children's games are based in this world and they help children to make sense of the society within which they exist. Way (1967) adds that the basic involvement is brought to the activities in order to investigate areas that are common to human life while Bowell and Heap (2001) believe that drama creates opportunities which enable children to interact with the world and to understand it more fully so that they may function more successfully.

Malan (1973) cites one of the pioneers of educational drama Peter Slade who categorised child play into two types: personal play and projected play. In personal play, the child is himself completely engrossed in this make believe world, mentally, imaginatively and physically. S/he may take several roles, changing them constantly as they wish with no guidance or prompting from an adult. They can change their identity in a flash "with swiftness and conviction that we (adults) can only admire and very rarely come anywhere near achieving" (p.7). In projected play, the child creates an imagined world outside of himself. It is projected onto objects. By doing this the child is trying out life experiences which he is likely to have encountered. "And he is playing fears, repressed desires, anti-social behaviour, which the social conventions around him do not allow him to give expression to (Burton, 1955 as cited in Malan, 1973:8). Personal and projected play can be viewed as an escape from reality, and also as an exploration of reality. They engage imagination. Images are manipulated to conjure worlds which are beyond the

children's immediate experiences and by doing this all doors are opened for imaginative thought (Bowell and Heap, 2001).

Drama is used as an educational force or medium to build awareness of the environment and society in which one exists. This is important for children's development because within the roles they take they apply rational thinking in an effort to obtain answers to the things that puzzle them in this confusing world. O'Neill (1995) concludes that in play there is obvious learning potential in terms of skills and objectives.

The child is then stopped from playing as he is taken to school. This stops him from using his own creativity, imagination and exploration by the dogmatic coaching that takes place at school (Malan, 1973). It is arguable that at different stages in one's life when things change one must adapt, but if there is space to learn what is prescribed through an 'impulse' that lies within us from childhood, what can be the possible detriment in combining the two - questions Malan.

In drama in education, learners are dependent on the teacher who also may play different roles - to guide them on who to be and what to do but never how to do it (Way, 1967). How learners are encouraged to project themselves is the basis of what makes learners creative from the very start. Having guidance whilst actively participating is also what aids good classroom behaviour.

In describing Heathcote's teaching methods using drama, Wagner (1976) says she does not use drama to produce plays. Instead she uses it to expand the learners' awareness, to enable them to look at reality through fantasy and to see below the surface of action to its meaning. She further states that her views give children the opportunity to examine their own living problems from a new perspective, and to show that it is important to listen, to accept, support and then challenge decisions made in class. Learners' vocabulary also improves as they develop a finer control of rhetoric through interaction with others. The potential for drama to contribute to linguistic development has been referred to earlier in the introduction and will be revisited again later in the chapter.

Jackson (1993) contributes that the teacher and learners both discover the significance in the content of what they are creating. Learners engage in activities whose intentions are to involve

learners in direct experience and to show that they are agents and recipients of these experiences. Teachers are facilitators. “In creating a world within a drama and inviting children to invest directly and actively, the teacher creates the opportunity for understanding to be perceived which is directly transferable to the real world” (Bowell & Heap, 2001:2).

Educational drama is the only active teaching method which extends across the curriculum to facilitate and deepen the whole learning process. At its heart are the development of personal understanding, decision making, communication skills and social activity. It is an essential tool in the teaching of orality and stands with literacy and numeracy at the core of education. It is both an aesthetic activity and a tool of learning and one of the few genuinely democratic teaching methods: the emphasis is on active engagement rather than observation and its aim is empowerment through participation. The learners are at the centre of the learning process and the role of the teacher is to stimulate, structure, challenge, and develop their contribution – not to impose upon it (Morgan and Saxton, 1997).

Drama provides an opportunity to develop performance skills which allow one to be able to perform to others. It is empowering. It provides an opportunity for investigation, reflection and challenge. It sharpens perception and enables personal expression and the exploration of ideas and feelings and the making of meaning (Bowell & Heap, 2001).

In a process drama session, learners take on roles and engage in an imagined world. They may be asked probing questions about their role which compels them to think about what they know and relate it to what they are being asked. If they do not know, they can imagine. The learner responds by answering questions and as they do so they have to choose the right vocabulary which adequately articulates their response. Therefore, drama has a significant contribution to make in language development (Chilver as cited in Nixon, 1982). John Somers (1996) as cited in Diemont (2003) found that drama is a useful tool as its processes “mark it out from other approaches such as a discussion, the use of videos and didactic pedagogy” as it requires children to be actively involved in problem solving (p.13).

Morgan and Saxton (1987) suggest that “the most significant learning which is attributable to experiences in drama is a growth in learners’ understanding about human behaviour, themselves and the world they live in (p.38). Thus drama experiences provide an authentic context in which learners are able to construct their own meanings and to find their own solutions to problems.

Development of emotion and logic too can be done through the movement within drama. This could help a child achieve mastery of his physical self and achieve an emotional harmony while exploring the potential of his own body. Personal confidence and sensitivity are the main elements.

Bowell and Heap believe that drama is embedded in culture and provides a means by which children can understand themselves and those around them. For Saldana (1995), writes Donelan (2000), classroom drama can be the foundation of a multi-ethnic education that builds people’s knowledge about respect for traditions, history, values, and the languages of various ethnic groups. It is perceived as a potent means of communication and collaboration which can change the ways people feel, think and behave (Bowell & Heap, 2001). Having a diverse group of people with an array of distinct elements that make them unique individuals; language, race, ethnicity, age, marital status and religion to mention, I hope to be able to realise how drama can help achieve Saldana’s assertion in my multicultural classroom.

4.3 Mantle of the Expert

When children are young, they are filled with a sense of wonder at the world and they have no problem expressing themselves. However, as they age, they become self-conscious and conscious of how people perceive them which modifies their interaction with the world. The power of harnessing that inquisitiveness through drama and giving it back to the learner through affirmation, giving them back power and responsibility is what will be discussed under this heading.

To view a learner as simply an empty vessel waiting to be filled with knowledge is a serious error on the part of the educator. He has a wealth of knowledge which could be drawn upon to contribute to the learning process and enrichment of the learning experience.

Pupils are too consistently treated as consumers of knowledge in a context where they have little status and few rights... A large group of pupils has to behave for considerable periods of time as one subordinate participant. Their main communicative role is to listen. (Edwards & Furlong 1978:24 as quoted in Heathcote and Herbert, 1985:173).

In order for a drama session to be successful, meaningful and effective, learners must participate with some degree of enthusiasm. Therefore, educational drama is dependent to a greater extent on the learner's participation. Heathcote and Herbert (1985) present a system of teaching which they call the 'mantle of the expert' (*ibid*). The system does not only acknowledge the learner's critical role in participating actively in his own learning but places them in a fictional role of the one who knows (*ibid*). They explain the genealogy of this system as originating in the fields of sociology and anthropology. The mantle of the expert system is a socially based system which allows learning to take place simultaneously at conceptual, personal, and social levels.

In the mantle of the expert the power of communication is invested with the group, the teacher does not assume the role of the main communicant. The traditional role of giver of information is relinquished in favour of becoming a member of the group and sharing in the group construction of knowledge. The child now becomes the expert and the teacher assumes a more flexible enabling role. (*ibid*:174)

The mantle of the expert system is a reversal of the conventional teacher-learner relationship in which the learner draws on the knowledge and expertise of the teacher. When the system is used in drama, "the students inhabit their roles as experts with conviction, complexity and truth. They grow into their roles in a way that goes far beyond the functional as they experience the enlargement of both identity and capacity within the tasks they undertake and the challenges they encounter." (O'Neill as cited in Heathcote and Bolton, 1995:vi).

Teachers assist by providing a structure and framework within which learning takes place. They provide an enabling environment which allows the learners' 'expertise' to come to the fore, within a 'safe' environment while nurturing and extending this knowledge. The teacher could do so by taking on a number of roles which will be discussed later in the chapter.

Heathcote and Bolton (1995) believe that the mantle of the expert approach provides a pool from which knowledge is generated by learners themselves. "Participants in the mantle of the expert

are framed as service providers committed to the enterprise” (*ibid*:32). They are active generators and agents of knowledge and not merely vessels who simply take it in. Most importantly the knowledge is embedded in their own context. The traditional teaching tendency depicts a top-down approach where the teacher being the expert brings knowledge which may be far removed from the learners’ experiences. In O’Neill’s foreword of Heathcote and Bolton’s book titled *Drama for Learning*, she articulates that the mantle of the expert is an approach for the whole curriculum, “and one that resonates with . . . active learning and whole language. It is a rare example of truly integrative teaching.” (O’Neill as cited in Heathcote and Bolton, 1995: vii)

The system also sets up a supportive, interpretive and reflective environment. It compels learners to question, negotiate, cooperate and collaborate as they develop their own knowledges and competencies. The teacher is admitted as a member of this community of experts. Her knowledge as a group member is necessary to drive the process and experience forward. Her important function is to cultivate a supportive environment that is conducive for this shared experience. As teachers engage with this system, they begin to understand their own learning processes and are likely to be sensitive to learners’ ways of learning as a consequence. The mantle of the expert system is a unique system which I as a teacher educator should aspire to utilize with the hope that it will provide a model for my students.

4.4 Teacher-in-Role

Heathcote and Herbert (1973) define role as “a change in attitude to a stance that will generate the working through of problems inherent in the selected task” (p.174). Morgan and Saxton (1997) posit that in role play the participants see the world through someone else’s eyes and show the outer aspects of that person while trying to step into their shoes to realise how they think and feel. They suggest that the most effective teaching technique is that of teacher-in-role. They identify nine roles that a teacher can assume in the classroom; authority, second in command, authority outside the action, authority opposed to the action, devil’s advocate, one of the gang, the helpless, the absentee, the fringe role. Each role has advantages and disadvantages and is accompanied by status which could be high, medium or low. The status is essentially the amount of power that the teacher relinquishes to the learners as they both set out on a journey of

discovery. The higher the status the more power the teacher retains and the lower the status the more power the teacher relinquishes to the learners.

4.4.1 The Authority

This is the traditional teacher role whereby the teacher is the only source of knowledge and is in charge. The status is high and no power is given to the learners. In this role, the teacher feels comfortable because she is in control of the pace and tension of the drama. Learners feel secure because they are being 'taught'. However, there is little opportunity for the class to take responsibility as they have not been given any power (Morgan and Saxton, 1987).

4.4.2 Second in Command

When the teacher assumes the role of second in command, she becomes the intermediary between the commander and the learners. This role comes with medium status. It allows the teacher the flexibility to be a part of the class and an outsider. She does not always have the answers but she offers to find out. "She is not overtly in control but may refer to the higher authority for instructions"(Morgan & Saxton, 1987, p.43). Power can be relinquished to the learners, but the teacher must be careful not to take full control of the class, reneging back to the authority figure.

4.4.3 One of the Gang

In this role the teacher is a part of the class. She is at the same level as the learners and knows as much as they do. Her status is low and she is there to provide an enabling environment for learners to engage freely with the drama. Power is in the whole class and decisions should be made as a collective. Her opinions should carry no more weight than those of the class. The advantage of this role is that the teacher is one with the class and can suggest and question at their level. She must be seen to respect authority chosen by the class and be willing to accept the decisions taken by the class. The role is challenging and requires confidence and skill on the teacher's part so that the decisions made do not hamper progress in the lesson.

4.4.4 The Helpless

According to Morgan and Saxton, this role requires a complete handover of power to the learners. She needs their help and is at their mercy. Within this role the teacher still has control over the class, which requires some level of skill and quick thinking, in the questions she asks. A disadvantage could be that since the teacher is at the mercy of the learners, it can be difficult for her to inject important information that will advance the drama.

4.4.5 Authority Opposed to the Action

Here the teacher antagonises all decisions made by the class in order to infuse tension into the drama. She is the authority from the opposing camp who can manipulate the learners and the situation to further the drama. The status for this role is high and so the teacher must be sensitive to the ability of the class to work as group.

4.4.6 Devil's Advocate

In this role, the teacher is a member of the group but challenges decisions made by the class. Her reasons for challenging the decisions must be strong. "The role gives the class an opportunity to defend its ideas and decisions." (Morgan & Saxton, 1987:46) However, her opposition must be carefully planned such that the class does not crumble. The status is high and through her opposition she is able to manipulate the class.

4.4.7 The Absentee

The teacher has no knowledge of the situation to be explored which has to be explained to her. For example, the teacher could take the role of a white South African who has been in a coma since 1990. She only gains consciousness in 2010 and wakes up to a different country. Her objective is to enquire about what happened while she was in a coma as she finds herself mixing with people who, before the accident she never mixed with. The role offers an opportunity for

checking learners' memory and reflecting. The danger is that the teacher must accept the information that she is given.

4.4.8 Authority outside the Action

This role allows the teacher to facilitate learning. She is usually the administrator who will be at service to the group (Morgan & Saxton, 1987). The teacher is an observer but can oppose action when learners take easy solutions instead of challenging themselves. The disadvantage though is that the class does not need the teacher and can move the drama in its own direction.

4.4.9 The Fringe Role

The last role is called the fringe role. In this role the teacher may oscillate through all the above described roles depending on the direction the drama takes. She is a facilitator and has the right to be there to ask questions and provide suggestions if she so wishes. The role may deteriorate into an interrogation role if the teacher does not choose her questions carefully. But it is a desirable role as it can provide an opportunity to deepen understanding through probing.

Teacher in role allows both teacher/facilitator and participants to engage fully with the dramatic situation and action and, most importantly, it enables the teacher to upset the usual power relations in order to ensure experiential learning and independent thinking takes place.

4.5 Current Pedagogical Approaches

Drama in education at Wits School of Education is offered as a sub-major. There is no pre-requisite, therefore any students can register for the course. It is made up of four modules named from A to D. Those who wish to take it further can register for modules E and F which are only offered as and when there is need. Modules E and F are designed to deepen content knowledge. Those who will teach drama as their second major have to further take Curriculum Studies D, a course designed to equip students with methodological and pedagogical practices. Students who opt for drama can be put into three categories; the first group includes students in their third year

of study who would have failed some courses in the previous years. At this stage of their degree they are desperate for credits as they are hoping to be able to graduate the following year and they opt for drama because they believe it is an easy option. The second category is of students who wanted to become performers but could not make it into performance at the School of the Arts. After taking drama A and B, they have to audition and if they are accepted they transfer to the School of the Arts. The final group is that of students who have opted for drama as a sub-major. They are training to teach drama at Further Education and Training (FET) level, grade 8 and 9 only. As a result we end up with a mix of students who are there for very different reasons.

My colleagues and I have found it extremely difficult to design a curriculum that caters for the needs of all these various students as their reasons for being in the course vary significantly. We usually register about 30 students for the A and B modules and between 10 and 15 for modules C and D. Further modules can have as few as one student. But apparently it is mandatory and legally binding to offer the course, regardless of the number of students because when the students applied the rule book stipulated that the course is on offer.

It was only in 2009, with the arrival of the Limpopo teachers that the A and B course experienced an unprecedented number of registered students. This was attributable to the fact that the teachers had a set curriculum with course choices made for them as stated above. I guess it was in line with their training for foundation phase teaching. The courses cover: basic improvisation skills, characterisation, play building, children's theatre, story-telling and ritual, Greek theatre and South African theatre. The objective is to offer experiential learning and to link the theory and practice. They are encouraged to go to the theatre and to write theatre reviews.

At the end of the course, they would have acquired a basic knowledge of the above areas with a select few discovering flair within themselves to apply some of the skills and techniques in their own teaching. To this end, I am in agreement with Heathcote's (1970) assertion that "they have hardly understood how to set about structuring courses for the uncommitted classes they will teach for most of their lives" (p.30)

It is important to discuss staffing in my department which I believe has influence on the curriculum and course design. The department consists of highly qualified and skilled professionals who are energetic and competent in their fields. Before my arrival in 2008, the drama department was headed by Bonny²¹, who trained as a performer and is a most sort after facilitator and who is also one of the few registered Drama therapists in South Africa. She did a sterling job in designing the drama and movement courses as we find them now.

Bonny worked with Mildred, the movement specialist who trained at Rhodes University and The Laban School of dance in London. Her training is in contemporary dance. Mildred had to leave our department to take up an offer in another department within the university. She was replaced by Kofi, a Ghanaian national who trained at Wits for his undergraduate and post graduate studies. He has a strong traditional dance background influenced by his roots in Ghana. Then there is Tinashe, another drama lecturer who trained at the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) and Wits. UZ is in Harare and was one of the leading universities in the African continent before the economic meltdown in Zimbabwe. Many lecturers left to take up employment at institutions in the region, the African continent and overseas. The University draws its educational influences from the British education system because of its colonial history. Zimbabwe (formerly named Rhodesia) was colonised by Britain until 1980. Before the current crisis the education system was one of the best in the region. And finally there is me. I have spoken about my training in the previous chapters.

The curriculum is influenced predominantly by western practices which have been written about extensively. Due to the nature of academic writing which demands referencing, it is easy and convenient for us to assign students work on western theatre because there is existing material to refer to. We often find ourselves wanting to do work that speaks to our students' experiences but are limited by the lack of literature which will support their writing. Kofi has recently created personal work that fuses contemporary with African dance and has written about it. His joining the department will certainly bring the richness of experience in African dance coupled with his training in contemporary dance and his ability to fuse the two, which will enable us to review our

²¹ *This is a pseudonym, as are all the names*

curriculum in order to make it ‘Afrocentric’ in acknowledgment of who our students are and where they come from.

There is a trend that emerges from the above staff profiles. Most if not all the staff in the department trained at Wits. In most cases, people trained at Wits go on to become lecturers. I am unsure of the effectiveness of this arrangement but my speculation is that it stems from the staff development policy. Staff are encouraged to acquire further qualifications; Masters and PhDs. If they do so at Wits, their studies will be fully covered by a staff bursary. But if they want to enrol with another institution they must find external funding or pay for themselves, which is quite difficult. I am currently a beneficiary of this arrangement. Later on I will have to start a doctorate and unless I secure funding externally I have to do it at Wits and be supervised by a colleague, unless a distinguished scholar arrangement is in place as is currently the situation with my Masters studies. My concern is that the practice encourages a perpetual, almost ‘incestuous’ recycling of teaching strategies as more experienced colleagues teach and supervise the less experienced ones. Even in the presence of centres like the Centre for Learning and Teaching Development (CLTD), I flag this practice and wish that staff could have an opportunity to enrol at other institutions in order to gain best practices from these to enrich teaching and learning at Wits.

4.6 Espoused Pedagogical Approaches

Reflective teaching has been identified as one of the important practices in teaching. The term reflection ‘means so many things to so many people’ (Russell, 1993:144; see also Calderhead & Gates, 1993; Zeichner & Liston, 1996; Farrell, 1998, 2001; Cordingley, 1999 as cited in Reed et al (2002). Zeichner and Liston describe a teacher who is reflective as one who ‘examines, frames, and solves the dilemmas of classroom practice; is aware of and questions the assumptions and values he or she brings to teaching; is attentive to the institutional and cultural contexts in which he or she teaches; takes part in curriculum development and is involved in school change efforts; takes responsibility for his or her own professional development’ (1996:6 as quoted in *ibid*: 256). They also believe that reflective teachers ‘evaluate their teaching by asking the broader questions, ‘are the results good, for whom and in what ways’, and not merely

the narrower, technical question ‘have my objectives been met?’ (*ibid*:11). I believe that an educator has to be reflective so as to evaluate what works and what doesn’t in their practice.

Heathcote’s pledge for a teacher-trainer resonates with practices which could lead to an ideal curriculum. They articulate what every teacher-trainer should aspire for in their vocation and I list them below:

- Avoid withholding information from students;
- Allow students to take decisions and to test them in action;
- Allow students to prove to me and themselves that they understand the nature of their own functioning as teachers, thus starting a lifelong process;
- Allow students to prove to me and to themselves that they will still be, however experienced, students of teaching;
- Constantly review my priorities in teaching;
- Prove that my ideas are open to review by the students;
- Give evidence to my ability and readiness to listen;
- Give evidence to having patience, positive and unfailing commitment, so long as students give evidence of work;
- Be honest at all levels of praising and criticising work – my own and others;
- Be a ‘restless spirit’, understanding when to move forward, press for more effort, or be content with present achievements, yet give each moment of achievement its due;
- Be interesting’
- To be professional always;
- To be task-oriented, not coming between the student and the task in self-interested ways.

(Heathcote, 1970:27)

The reflective practitioner will be able to put her pledge into practice. Another important element of a desired curriculum, I believe should include a skilful handling of language in the classroom. Sensitive handling of language allows one to open up the feelings and understanding of students and in the process acknowledge and embrace the diversity that exists. The curriculum should have the flexibility to allow use of mother tongue, not so much to exclude but to embrace

difference. It is my mission to learn a language of one of the many spoken by my students. I fully understand the limitations of this ambition and am under no illusion that I will be able to learn all languages spoken by my students. But I firmly believe that acknowledging where my students come from will assist my colleagues and myself to design course content that is relevant and inclusive while contributing to the university's vision of being a leading research and teaching institution.

4.7 Conclusion

The principles encapsulated in drama in the classroom are driven by relinquishing power to learners through mantle of the expert and teacher-in-role, taking into account what the learners bring to the classroom and advocating for reflexivity in the teacher. I conclude this chapter by referring to Heathcote's quote which succinctly sums up the contribution that educators owe to education; "...the biggest revolution in the world will not provide our schools with teachers of great calibre unless we trainers of teachers start the revolution ourselves" (Heathcote, 1972:30).

CHAPTER 5 TECHNIQUES FOR PEDAGOGICAL REFORM

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the practical aspects of the research. It details part of the methodology used in the research data generating process. I begin by discussing Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed system. Osterlind (2008) suggests elements of empowerment in stating the purpose of the system. "The purpose of Theatre of the Oppressed is to offer tools for liberation by using theatre methods to examine social injustice, power relations and oppression, and to experiment with problem-solving on societal, group and individual levels" (p.72). She cites Boal's comment on the empowering nature of the Theatre of the Oppressed techniques in that if someone who is oppressed performs an action in theatrical fiction, this prepares him or her to perform it in real life (Boal, 1995, as cited in Osterlind, 2008).

The system consists of several techniques which include Forum Theatre, Image Theatre and Invisible Theatre. These techniques are interrelated. They involve participation on the part of both the researcher and the participants. I go into greater detail in discussing Forum Theatre because it bears great significance to the conceptualisation of this research. I used it in the presentation that marked the beginning of the process that would set this research in motion (described in Chapter 1).

Furthermore, I explore the potential of Popular Theatre as a pedagogical and research methodology, as the drama students and I enacted it in our encounters. I discuss its historical background and its utilisation as a participatory action research technique.

Ross Kidd is credited as one of the practitioners to utilise popular theatre in his work with marginalised communities predominantly in Africa and in some other parts of the world. He speaks of five strands of popular theatre which are (a) the struggle for national liberation; (b) mass education and rural extension; (c) community or participatory development; (d) conscientisation or popular education; and (e) popular education and organizing (Kidd, 1984). The use of popular theatre in data gathering in this research focuses on conscientisation or

popular education and the educational and empowerment strand. Empowerment is used in this context differently from the highly contested use in Theatre for Development (TfD)²² where it carries negative connotations. Here it is used to highlight the awakening of the consciousness of the participants. I give a historical background of popular theatre as discussed by several scholars whose discussions revolve around Ross Kidd's use of the technique.

I insert the narrative constructed from the workshop that I conducted later in the data gathering process. The aim of the workshop was to subvert the privileging of English over other languages, which is my practice and, I believe that of many educators in my institution. The workshop is titled *Switching the linguistic currency: Language of Theatre, A Popular Theatre workshop*. The workshop is used as a site for generating data. Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed techniques are utilised in the workshop.

5.2 Theatre of the Oppressed

Augusto Boal contributed techniques which were to change the course of community mobilization. Conrad (2004) believes that Boal was influenced by Brecht's theatrical techniques and Paulo Freire's popular education approach. Boal's approach also subverted theatrical conventions. He developed techniques he called Theatre of the Oppressed during a time when his native country Brazil was under a 'cruel and murderous civic and military dictatorship' (Boal, 2008: ix) as cited in the preface to the 2008 edition of *Theatre of the Oppressed*. He then encourages readers to "...study the past in the present, so as to invent the future" (ibid: ix).

Forum theatre and its derivatives can be seen as a form of participatory action research, in that players and spect-actors gather to identify their oppression and to rehearse for change (Boal, 1985, 1995: Burton and O'Toole, 2005, O'Connor, 2003 as cited in Cahill, 2006:63).

²² TfD work has been criticized as programmes that advance the agenda of the international funders and not those of the communities in which they are presented. Apparently performers from outside the community work on issues which they believe affect the community, without consultation or involvement of the communities and they come and present and hope to have a meaningful dialogue which will help the community. This approach has been criticized as an outside-in approach. Favoured is the inside-out approach.

Tourelle and McNamara (1998) believe that Boal's techniques are integral to his overall concept of the Theatre of the Oppressed.

The purpose of Theatre of the Oppressed is to offer tools for liberation by using theatre methods to examine social injustice, power relations and oppression, and to experiment with problem-solving on societal, group and individual levels (Osterlind, 2008:72).

Boal's theatre forms that give a complete picture of the Theatre of the Oppressed system are; Legislative Theatre, Forum Theatre and Rainbow of Desire techniques (Boal, 1995:1998:2000 as referenced in Osterlind, 2008). They indicate Boal's wide perspective in his thinking and were intended to address oppression and change at different levels; Legislative theatre at a political level, Forum Theatre on the level of social interaction and Rainbow of Desire at a personal emotional level (Osterlind, 2008). They are generally referred to as a whole because they are built from a common perspective. This chapter will only deal with Forum Theatre and its associated theatre techniques; Simultaneous Dramaturgy and Image Theatre. Their purpose is simplified but not diluted as reference to their use is intended to give participants a voice to discover plans for change. Through drama, participants are allowed to explore and try out different solutions. For Boal, Theatre of the Oppressed was a weapon for oppressed people to use toward changing their social reality– what Conrad (2004) refers to as “theatre for the people, by the people” (p.3).

5.2.1 Simultaneous Dramaturgy

Boal (1985), describes Simultaneous Dramaturgy in terms of the spectators. He says that the spectators ‘write’ (p.126) the script simultaneously as actors perform. The spectators are invited to intervene without necessarily being present on stage. Here actors present a short performance which may be a suggestion made by one of the participants. The actors may improvise from a script prepared beforehand or spontaneously. Boal believes that the performance is more meaningful if the person who proposed the improvisation is within the audience. At the end of the short performance actors ask audiences to offer solutions and they improvise the suggested solutions immediately. The audience has the right to intervene whenever they feel like to correct the actions or words of the actors who are “obligated to comply strictly with these instructions

from the audience. Thus, while the audience writes the work the actors perform it simultaneously” (Boal, 1985:132).

5.2.2 Forum Theatre

Forum Theatre aims to initiate serious and fruitful discussions through the use of the joker and techniques such as simultaneous dramaturgy. In Forum theatre a show is performed in which certain images of oppression are presented and spectators, now turned spect-actors, may enter the action and try to move it towards a different, more satisfying ending (Tourelle & McNamara, 1998). The simultaneous engagement of the audience and performers, as the performance progresses, to change and modify the end results is what Boal (2008) refers to as simultaneous dramaturgy. The following outline details the basic structure of Forum Theatre (Chinyowa, 2008).

1. Dramatic introduction

- Games
- Song
- Dance
- Poetry
- Other types of playing with the audience

The purpose of introductory activities is to break the ice and build a rapport with the audience. A cordial relationship is paramount as audiences are later called upon to partake in the performance. Once a relationship has been established, the first level of success has been achieved as the audience will feel free and open minded as they watch the show. These introductory exercises also free the body so that it can become expressive in the exercises to follow. This is even more important when the participants are not used to using their bodies as expressive instruments.

2. Introducing the rules of the Forum theatre game

- Actors negotiate with audience through the joker
- ‘First we play’, then you play, and we discuss
- ‘If you don’t play, then we won’t perform’

Audiences are not spectators but spect-actors

It is imperative that the audience are aware of the rules before the performance begins. Before the play starts, they have an understanding of what their role has got to be, which prepares them to watch critically with the knowledge that their contribution will be required at a later stage. They also know that they may be entertained, but that critical thinking as they watch the presentation is paramount. The main facilitator in the process is called the 'joker'. The role of the joker was briefly described in Chapter 1.

3. Performing the Anti-model play

Revolves around the protagonist - the oppressed character who is confronted by challenging situations presented by the antagonist who represents the oppression;

The protagonist does not achieve what s/he desires;

The play ends by problem posing (or creating dilemmas) rather than problem solving;

The anti-model play presents a problem to create an aesthetic space for performer-audience dialogue

This section of the structure presents the oppression or challenges undergone by the protagonist in such a way as to involve the audience emotionally and stimulate them to think of alternatives to what they see.

4. Replaying the key scenes (or second showing)

The audience (as spect-actors) can now intervene on behalf of the protagonist to begin the forum (or dialogue)

The audience's intervention strategies include simultaneous dramaturgy, image theatre, role reversal (or role inversion), role doubling and repetition;

Spect-actors replace the oppressed characters not the oppressor to try and change the outcome of the oppression;

The oppressed is believed to represent an unchangeable system that can only be improved through growth in consciousness.

The audience are empowered to open out the oppression for greater discussion and understanding and to rehearse possible alternative ways of behaving which might lead to a more favourable outcome for the protagonist.

5. Final dialogue

Discussion with the audience to evaluate the whole forum as ‘rehearsal for action’. What they learned most? Does it relate to their lives? If so, how? If not, why? What can be done? What are the implications to their lives?

Inviting experts to speak on the problem;

Summary of the forum by the joker

Reflection becomes an important tool in order to reinforce the learning taking place and to explore further approaches to the problem.

The above presented model sums up Boal’s Forum Theatre (1985) process and techniques as covered in the *Theatre of the Oppressed* under the chapter titled *Poetics of the oppressed*. The process has been simplified in the above model for accessibility. This was the methodology used in the original Practice as Research project (described in Chapter 1) which initiated this research, in order to interrogate the problems and experiences of the Limpopo teachers at Wits.

5.2.3 Image Theatre

In Image Theatre frozen images called tableaux are used to portray situations for analysis. Usually, participants are given a scenario and asked to represent it using their bodies. They are called upon to create three images presenting the problem, the ideal solution to the problem, and then what has to happen for the change to come about, the transition. The images allow for different points of view and are open to interpretation (Boal, 1985). When I use this technique, I ask each group to present its image, then the others attempt to interpret what they see as being portrayed. Normally, there are interesting responses to the same image which usually lead to a

discussion. Interpretation is subjective so there is no wrong or right answer. I believe that allowing participants to articulate what they see is liberating in itself because it awakens consciousness to the array of problems present in the community. The final image is the ideal situation as the participants see it. Participants are not influenced in anyway. They are simply prompted by the facilitator to awaken their stream of consciousness. For that reason I believe the technique is empowering. There is also an element of sincerity. Because expression (the image) and the instrument (the body) are non verbal what you see is what you get and is a stimulus for discussion. Theatre of the Oppressed techniques discussed above can be used together or separately depending on the practitioner's objectives.

5.3 Popular Theatre: Historical Background

According to Conrad (2004), the term popular theatre was used by Ross Kidd (1992) [among others] in the 1970s to talk about the form of development work he was doing in Botswana and Zimbabwe at the time. It is defined as

a process of theatre which deeply involves specific communities in identifying issues of concern, analyzing current conditions and causes of a situation, identifying points of change, and analyzing how change could happen and/or contribute to the actions implied (Prentki & Selman, 2000:8) as quoted in Conrad (2004:2).

David Kerr (1991) refers to Kidd as “one of the most tireless theorists of popular participatory theatre”. (p.62) Apparently Kidd models his terminology on the works of Freire and Brecht when he advocates for a theatre which will unmask “ruling class myths controlling consciousness” and concludes that theatre is capable of “demystifying the notion of social change as a neutral technical process” (People's Theatre p.10 as quoted in Kerr, 1991:62).

Kidd (1984) asserts that

popular theatre is used as a means of bringing people together, building confidence and solidarity, stimulating discussion, exploring alternative options for action, and building a collective commitment to change: starting with people's urgent concerns and issues, it encourages reflection on these issues and possible strategies for change (p.265).

He further argues that it is not an isolated performance, but “part of an ongoing process of education and organizing, aimed at over-coming oppression and dependence, and at securing basic rights” (*ibid*:265).

Conrad (2004) believes that Popular Theatre draws on traditions of participatory (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991; Kidd & Byram, 1978; McTaggart, 1997; Bydon-Miller, Hall & Jackson, 1993) and arts-based/performed ethnographic approaches (Conquergood, 1998; Fabian, 1990; Turner, 1986) as an effective means of collectively drawing and examining participants’ experiences toward producing new understandings. It draws from participants’ experiences to collectively create theatre and engage in discussions of issues through theatrical means.

The popular in popular theatre according to www.ualberta.ca/AWTY/res_theatre

implies that the process of making and showing a theatre piece is owned and controlled by a specific community, that the issues and stories grow out of the involved community, and that the community is a vital part of the process of identifying, examining and taking action on matters which that community believe needs to change (p.2).

There is also often an implication that communities involved are little heard from in the mainstream media, or that they are in some way disenfranchised or powerless. The popular refers to ‘of the people’, belonging to the people. The process sounds like the definition of the principles of democracy which allows everyone involved to have a say in the decision making process.

Popular theatre sets out to be part of a movement towards greater empowerment on the part of participants. I earlier commented on the use of empowerment in the context of popular theatre that it does not carry the negative connotations associated with the use of the word in Theatre for Development (TfD). Here, empowerment is used to mean awakening the participant’s consciousness to the reality of the situation they find themselves in so as to take action to escape or change it. Popular theatre tries to be a part of social and political change as well as individual change. It tries to enable those that are marginalised in some way to examine collectively their

issues from their perspectives, to analyse causes of these issues, to explore avenues of potential action, and to create an opportunity to take such action (*ibid*).

I chose to use a hybrid of popular theatre and participatory action research for the methodology of this research because according to www.ualberta.ca/AWTY/res_theatre, they share similar goals. Popular theatre provides a useful approach to participatory research, a research process which is owned and used by the groups most involved in an issue. The word ‘popular’ in popular theatre (the site continues) implies that the issues and stories grow out of the involved community and that the community is a vital part of a process of identifying, examining and taking on matters which that community believes needs to change. There is also an implication that the communities involved occupy positions of marginality within that particular context. In the context of this research the participants do not share the institutional culture and language. Popular theatre sets out as a movement for the empowerment of the participants. This is demonstrable in the subversion of the usually privileged culture and language as discussed later in this chapter. “Popular theatre tries to be part of social and political change as well as individual change. It tries to enable those who are marginalised in some way to examine collective issues from their perspectives, to analyse causes of these issues, to explore avenues of potential action and to create an opportunity to take action.” (*ibid*:2)

The site further asserts that popular theatre presents, elicits people’s stories and anchors discussions in lived experience. It offers a humanised look at what sits behind statistics, concepts or rules. In difficult or dangerous situations, where there are fears about speaking out about personal situations, it can offer fictionalised and therefore safer ways to tell a story and name issues. Theatre techniques are used as a way to distance oneself from issues that may be painful or those that maybe taboo in the community. It therefore embodies ways to discover stories which relate to community’s issues and to test possible actions before ‘trying them for real’(*ibid*: 2). Boal (1985) affirms this notion of trying things for real by ascertaining that theatre in itself is not a revolution, “but these theatrical forms are without doubt a rehearsal of the revolution” (p.141).

5.4 Participatory Action Research

According to Park, (2001:81 as cited in Cahill, 2006), participatory action research is “a methodology in which ordinary people address common needs arising in their daily lives and, in the process generate knowledge”(p.62) and is closely linked to process drama. She further states that both traditions (participatory action research and process drama) are “centrally concerned with dialogue, praxis, participatory exploration and transformation” (*ibid*:62). Participatory action research is a methodology in which “ordinary people address issues of needs arising in their daily lives and, in the process, generate knowledge” (Park, 2001:81 as cited in *ibid*:62). The stakeholders themselves strive to understand and to change what they and others do, as well as to change the discourses within which people understand and interpret their world (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005). The participants work collectively in a process of enquiry, action and reflection, collecting ‘data’ from each other as a means to understand their circumstances and plan for change”(*ibid*).

Kemmis and McTargard (2005) as cited in Cahill (2006) describe action research as a dialogic circle of action and reflection. Apparently, the method draws influence from critical theory and some aspects of the post-structuralist form of inquiry in which participants consider the discourses that shape their actions as well as the impact of systems or organisational practices. The key features of critical participatory action research include its social and participatory nature, the focus on practical and collaborative work and the pursuit of emancipatory goals within the critical forum. “Participants address constraints experienced through language” (*ibid*: 62). The validity of the research is measured in relation to the generation of knowledge and transformative outcomes – and the degree to which it makes a difference in the lives of the participants (Cahill, 2006:63 citing Lincoln and Guba, 2003). This statement will be tested and answered when I meet them again in their third year in 2011.

At the conceptualisation of this research report, the participants were in their first year of study during which time I was their drama educator. At the writing of this report, they are in their second year of study and are not taking drama. I discussed the participants’ curriculum at length in Chapter 3. They will be coming back to drama in their third year of study and I will meet them

again. I have been in touch with those that consented to the study and continue to have informal discussions with them in corridors. Therefore, I have not lost touch completely with them. Osterlind asks whether drama and theatre can promote change? She invokes O'Neill (1996) who states that "drama [indeed] has the power to enlarge our frames of reference and to emancipate us from the rigid ways of thinking and perceiving" (p.145 as cited in Osterlind, 2008:72).

5.5 Popular Theatre as Participatory Research

Theatre is being called upon to do something, to make an intervention, to act as a catalyst for change. There is a growing body of research that has documented the impact of participatory action research theatre to transform the understandings, attitudes and behaviours for not only those who take part but also those who watch it (Conrad, 2006). The technique is credited for its involvement of the participants as co-researchers instead of the traditional techniques which presented an unequal and undemocratic relationship between the researcher and the participants. In the traditional method, the participants are 'subjects' and the researcher is the expert whose function is to extract information for self-serving purposes.

Conrad (2004) affirms this by positing that the technique is viewed as a means of creating knowledge and as a tool for education, the development of consciousness and mobilisation for action which involves a process called 'transformative praxis' (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991) "As research 'for', 'with' and 'by' the people rather than 'on' the people, it seeks to break down the distinction between the researchers and the researched – the subject/object relationship of the traditional research instead creating a subject/subject relationship" (*ibid*:4). Conrad concludes by stating that popular theatre as a method of participatory research "involves shared ownership of the research process and community-based analysis of issues, all with an orientation toward community action" (*ibid*). In the context of this research, the orientation shifts slightly. It is as focused on achieving community mobilisation, rather it is hoped that the outcomes will inform the researcher's approach to developing an embracing and accommodating praxis in teaching drama in a multilingual and multicultural classroom.

5.6 Popular Theatre as Performative Research or Performance Ethnography

Conrad (2004) says that popular theatre as a research method builds on qualitative methods of narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Connely, 2000) and arts-based ways of knowing and representing research (Diamonda & Mullen, 1999; Eisner, 1997; Finley, 2003). Norman Denzin has written substantially on the use of performative ethnography. Denzin (2003) believes that performance ethnography is “a way of acting on the world in order to change it” (p.287). There is use of a participatory form of performance ethnography which to Conrad presents an opportunity to explore through performance. The process includes drama activities like image work, improvisation, role play and engages the audience in the generation and interpretation of data (*ibid*). Participants can represent lived experience by projecting it onto the stage. The stories can be personal or distant. The advantage is that distance is created, therefore painful stories can also be considered. The following workshop demonstrates the use of performance ethnography as a research methodology.

5.7 “Switching the Linguistic Currency: Language of Theatre - A Drama Workshop as a Site for Conducting Action Research

5.7.1 The Workshop

I was invited to run a workshop as part of the WALE (Wits Arts & Literature Experience) Festival. WALE Festival is an initiative by the Dean of Humanities at Wits to showcase the richness of the arts and literature inherent in the five schools that make up the Faculty. The festival offers a rich variety of theatre performances, film screenings, book reviews, workshops, music festivals and seminars offered by local and international creators. In his words, the Dean said “The 2010 programme features dynamic and creative South African, African and African American women and men whose innovative instincts push artistic, literacy and creative boundaries” (Kupe as quoted on p.2 of the 2010 WALE Festival programme). As part of the School of Education offering, I submitted an expression of interest to run a workshop. In planning this workshop, I realised that I could engage with faculty expectations by meeting my

obligation to the festival while also advancing my research by gathering data. I submitted a synopsis and title that spoke directly to my research. The title of my workshop was “*Language of Creativity*” (see appendix 7). The workshop was based on Boal’s “Poetics of the Oppressed” whose techniques have been discussed earlier in this chapter.

The workshop that is designed to subvert the current institutional practice of privileging English over other languages, is described in detail. The workshop aims to switch the linguistic currency by foregrounding marginalized languages. Through this workshop, I attempted to investigate what effects, if any, language and culture have in the teaching and learning of drama in the classroom. I uncovered/discovered how the multiplicity of languages and cultures found in my classroom impact on creative work considering that drama by its nature is physical and interactive. Through various activities and interactions, I explored how language and cultural values *are* negotiated while upholding the ideals of democracy within the creative space; and what strategies my students use(d) to manage, or possibly overcome difficulties presented by language or culture. I employed the strategy of role reversal, whereby the normally disempowered group is privileged. Discussions and reflection on this strategy are interesting because they shed light on what happens when one section of the classroom is disempowered.

I was worried because attendance was very poor. Only two participants had arrived twenty minutes into the workshop time. One of the two gentlemen who were to record the workshop decided to take part, which resulted in the workshop having three participants; Odille, Michel and Renee²³.

It wasn’t until I started the workshop that I noticed the richness of cultural and linguist diversity that existed in my workshop. Two participants were black; one female (Odille) and another male (Michel), both from Cameroon. They are mature students doing post graduate studies. In Cameroon the official languages are English and French which are used as lingua franca. The national languages differ from one region to another. They come from different parts of Cameroon. Therefore, they speak different national languages in addition to French and English. Odille was quick to point out that her command of her tribal language is limited to the

²³ Pseudonyms as are names of all the participants in this study.

conversational, which she also could not complete without the interference of either French or English. She expressed her inadequacy at writing in her native language and shared that she grew up in an urban area where the predominant languages are French and English. Michel is fluent in three languages; his native Lamnso, English and French. He is able to speak, read and write all three of them competently. Lamnso is spoken in the North Western region of Cameroon and taught only up to primary school. Renee is a white American female undergraduate exchange student of Norwegian descent. America is predominantly an English monolingual country. She speaks English only and has a very basic knowledge of Spanish. She has no knowledge of any Norwegian language at all.

Before the workshop began, I asked participants to write greetings and salutations in one of the languages they speak. I started the process by writing in my mother tongue Setswana; *Dumela* (Hello) and *Ke a leboga* (Thank you). Odille preferred to write her greetings in French for reasons illuminated above, *Bonjour* and *merci*. Michel wrote in Lamnso; *asahka* and *beri*. Renee preferred to write in English but I insisted that she write in Spanish - *mocha* and *gracia*. She expressed unhappiness at not being able to write in her mother tongue, English.

I began the workshop by using Boal's games for actors and non-actors. I welcomed the participants and thanked them for coming to the workshop. Since the workshop was open to the public, participants had not signed the recording consent forms, so I started by asking for permission to record the workshop for purposes of my own research and reflection at the end. Later the WALE film crew was also to come and record part of the workshop for purposes of documentation and feedback. The first game played was the meet and greet exercise (Cahill, 2006), a name game whose purpose was to familiarise the participants and the facilitator with each other. This exercise extends to greeting each other in as many ways as possible without words; a thumb up, a wave, a hug, a nod and an index finger wagging from side to side are some of the greeting gestures used.

I gave them a word or phrase which they had to use to create an image, using their body. Their image must portray their own representation of the word. I chose the nonverbal convention of the image as I wanted participants to distil essential elements of their interpretation rather than focus

on the details of the narrative, personality or character (Cahill, 2006). Some of the words I gave included; home, food, family and happiness.

I took the exercise further by giving each participant a character to accompany the given word. For instance, the character is street kid and the first word is home. Participants contorted and morphed their bodies to carry out the instruction. Images were shared. There were significant differences between the images. For instance, a body rolled into a small ball on the floor represented a home for a street kid. I then asked them to respond to the same words this time around as a group as opposed to individuals as we did for the first two activities. Cahill (2006) refers to this as asking participants to make impact statements in response to the images. The small number of participants limited the possibilities available in this activity.

I tried to overcome this limitation by pulling out one participant to watch the frozen image to give their interpretation. I am not sure how successful I was with this, but varying interpretations emerged. I then asked them to ‘dynamise’ images to bring them to life. However, the dynamising had to be accompanied by the verbalisation of the participant’s meaning. With each participant’s interpretation of their own positioning within the image, they had to explain to the others in the language they used to write the greetings and salutations as explained at the beginning of the workshop. The others had to try and guess what they were saying.

5.7.2 Reflection

Michel and Odille shared knowledge of French so Michel understood Odille’s presentation. Being away from home, Michel expressed his delight at being able to speak his mother tongue after a long time. He said “it was liberating” and it brought back memories of home.

Renee struggled to communicate her thoughts in Spanish. During the final discussion she related a story of her community work in Soweto where she teaches young adults drama. The majority of them are school drop-outs and the purpose of the workshop is to keep them busy so they do not get into mischief. The language spoken is mainly Zulu. She is not sure whether they always understand what she is saying because at times she senses that they are puzzled. But when she

asks whether they understand those who claim to understand will try to explain to those who don't in Zulu, but she still is not sure they are able to articulate what she said accurately. She lamented that not being able to communicate in the language of the majority has taken away her self esteem and she could not wait for the programme to come to an end. She concludes that because her stay in South Africa has come to an end, she regrets not being able to learn Zulu in order to be able to go back to the community to teach because she knows that the outcome would be different and favourable.

In the workshop, I tried to get the participants to understand how shifting the symbolic power to multilingualism away from English, enables English speakers to experience and understand how it feels to have one's language devalued, the common experience of their fellow students whose main languages are not English. The workshop revealed an interesting discovery that is that English speakers are not used to being marginalized and they do not like it, which is consistent with Janks' assertions (2003).

5.8 Conclusion

“All educational institutions are required to produce a language policy that furthers transformation in South Africa” (Wits Language Policy, 2003:1). Renee's story is my story. It is the story of my research participants. It is the story of so many learners and students who find themselves in linguistically unfamiliar environments. It provides evidence of the effect of linguistic exclusion which faces the participants of my research and many more students at predominantly English-speaking universities. It is interesting when the language which always occupies a privileged position is suddenly relegated to the periphery. The outcome of this workshop presented a profound revelation which one could replicate in the drama classroom. I think it has the potential to evoke sensitivity amongst those who laugh when a second language English speaker does not speak English properly having experienced the challenge first hand.

CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the responses of the research participants and intersperses the analysis with reference to relevant literature. The interpretive account draws on a number of sources: ethnographic data from my encounter with the research participants, the practice as research project I conducted with my PGCE students, which I discussed in detail in chapter 1, the interviews with participants, the questionnaires completed by the participants and the *Switching the Linguistic Currency: Language of theatre* workshop conducted for the Wits Arts Literature (WALE) Festival (described in Chapter 5). I extrapolate the data to identify themes that resurface from these multiple sources and refer to examples in some instances to bring clarity.

6.2 Presentation and Discussion of Findings

The administered questionnaires presented limitations. The participants did not respond adequately to the open-ended questions and in many instances did not elaborate on their answers. I believe that the shallow responses provided in the questionnaires could be attributed to the language barrier. This observation is not a dismissal of a questionnaire as a valid and reliable research instrument. I am sure it works adequately in other studies. I chose to design the questionnaire in English because it is the language of instruction at Wits. Perhaps this is the paradox that Ngugi (1986) discusses. He cites scholars Chinua Achebe's 1994 speech titled *The African Writer and the English Language*. Achebe said rhetorically

“Is it right that a man should abandon his mother tongue for someone else's? It looks like a dreadful betrayal and produces a guilty feeling. But for me there is no other choice. I have been given the language and I intend to use it” (p.7)

I expressed this dilemma earlier in this report about communicating to the participants, either in class or outside in a SeTswana except English. Maybe I choose to retreat to the margin and to use the oppressor's language as a weapon of resistance. If this is so it happens unconsciously.

It was during the course of the interviews that I wished I had written it in an African language, possibly Sepedi which is understood by many participants and myself. At that time, I was not familiar with the University Language Policy which encourages multilingualism. I have always been under the impression that only those teachers in language specialisations are allowed to conduct academic work in other languages except English. Institutional knowledge (or the lack of it) robbed me of exploring what could have possibly produced interesting results-detailed responses to interview questions. But I do not think all was lost because the interview resulted in vernacular interpellations which I refer to later on in this paper.

Useful information stemmed from the interviews. Because of the immediacy of the process, probing and follow up questions were asked to get clarity on responses that I deemed required elaboration. In cases where participants chose to use other languages for certain expressions for emphasis, I asked them to write what they were saying in that language in my note pad for later reference to aid the memory. Even though I understand Sepedi, because it has variations to my home language Setswana, I felt that allowing them to capture their own emphasis would deepen my understanding and reach into areas of their thoughts that might be inaccessible to me because of my Sepedi linguistic limitations. Time was not a factor as many participants were willing to engage longer than the 20 minutes stipulated in the information sheet.

An introspection of my own views and perceptions prior to the study is necessary to provide a reflective insight into what this experience has taught me about myself and the way I do things, the way I teach, what I teach and the sensitivity with which I must tread in ensuring an inclusive drama classroom. I discuss the concepts of ‘reflection-in-action’ and ‘reflection-on-action’, phrases coined by Schon (1983).

This chapter’s analysis is informed by the research of Yvonne Banning with the second-language English speaking students in the Drama Department at UCT, and Kate Donelan’s intercultural project in Australia. There are striking similarities between their work and this study and so their writings provide the basis that underpins this study in general and the analysis in particular. I relate to Banning’s work as it speaks directly to my own experiences. Donelan’s work in Australia presents an ideal model that could be emulated in environments that value

inclusiveness, equality and tolerance while abhorring any signs of domination and privilege and cultural appropriation. I conclude the chapter by looking at how and what we can learn from Australia.

6.3 Interpretation and Analysis of the Findings

The responses of my study participants point quite strongly to a number of themes – namely: cultural domination; the ambassadorial role of students given to them by their home communities; the cultural role of ubuntu; limited career expectations; and an effective drama project which gives students the freedom and opportunity to create from their own cultures.

6.3.1 Cultural Domination

Cultural dominance is experienced both through curriculum focus and through the language of instruction. Rosaldo (1989:45) as quoted in Donelan (2002b) argues that “...all of us inhabit an interdependent world marked by borrowing and lending across porous national and cultural boundaries that are saturated with inequalities and domination” (p.35). Inequality, power and domination manifest themselves in different forms. They can be political, socio-economic or cultural. All the participants in my research made an overwhelming reference to cultural domination, pointing to Ngugi’s concept of a lurking colonial hangover which endures for years after the colonialists have left Africa (Ngugi,1986; Ngugi, 1993). Participants maintained that the drama curriculum is predominantly skewed towards western influence. “Why are we taught Greek theatre, medieval theatre and the 20th European century–isms?” she asks in wonderment. This implies that a lot of emphasis is placed on materials that are too far removed from the participants’ experiences, which results in alienation.

Ngugi (1986) contends that theatre in Africa existed long before the arrival of the colonisers. He cites African rituals and celebrations which in his opinion pass as theatre because there are performers, spectators and a performance space. Hence the question the students are asking is why there is less material on African rituals and celebrations in the curriculum as compared to the material originating in foreign lands.

My study participants complained about engagement with the socio-cultural world embodied in the western material that dominates the drama syllabus. There is indifference in the reception of the material and lack of engagement and enthusiasm. Because the material is removed from their experiences, there is a constant struggle to ‘get it’ which results in frustration and confusion.

The evidence provided by the participants suggests quite strongly that non-English speakers experience considerable stress in the discursive learning environment. Because they are inducted into learning behaviours at odds with their other social practices that are constitutive of their other social identities (Gee. 1996:135). “Real people get really hurt by the workings of language, power, ideology and discourse”²⁴ (ibid: ix).

6.3.2 Community Ambassadorial Role

The participants informed me of the ambassadorial role they shoulder on behalf of their communities while at university. Their community views them not simply as successful individuals who have been admitted to tertiary education at a prestigious university, but as representatives of the community, which is enhanced by their presence in the major city and primary university. After obtaining their qualifications, they have to go back to their communities where success means pride and great respect for themselves and a sense of pride and upliftment for the community as a whole. Their presence at the university is a community achievement and their success represents the success of the community. Failure is inconceivable, therefore the pressure is insurmountable. They accuse the University of failing to recognise this community role and by so doing not only marginalising the students but also the communities they represent. Once they have completed their degree and are back in their communities, they might never have to use English in their work and in their day to day interactions with their community; therefore the barrier which the English language presents academically is especially hard to accept.

²⁴ Gee (1996) defines Discourse (note capital D) as “ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking and often reading and writing that are accepted as instantiations of particular roles by specific groups of people...” (p.vii)

6.3.3 The Cultural Role of Ubuntu

The African adage that asserts that it takes the whole village to bring up a child is demonstrated in the interview responses. It stems from the African culture which was deeply rooted in the sense of community as a tight-knit unit which engaged in collective mutually beneficial activities. This community interdependence where the spirit of *ubuntu* (IsiZulu) or *botho* (SeTswana) (*I am because you are and we are because you are*) was demonstrable in communal activities, and transmitted through agencies such as the extended family.

To demonstrate the extended family as an agency and embodiment of the spirit of *ubuntu*, I relate an example from my own extended family. My mother is the only child born of her mother and father. My grandfather, who was the eldest, had two brothers and one sister who had many children. The whole family lived in close proximity to each other and so children played together while adults kept their animals together with my grandfather as the father figure as an older sibling. My mother tells me she called all her uncles' and aunts' children her brothers and sisters.

When we were born, we found all these uncles and aunts as part of a close-knit family. There are certain traditional duties which are the reserve of the uncle. And so having no biological uncle, in today's family set up I would suffer. However, in my extended family, the situation is completely different. My mother's 'cousins' perform all the traditional duties as the biological uncle would. When my older brother got married, one uncle had to conduct a ritual. When a single mother's child marries, the other siblings are supposed to undergo a ritual known as *go apesa lomipi*. In this ritual, the sheep's fatty sheath that underlies the stomach is skilfully removed during de-skinning and shaped into a cord that each one of the children has to wear briefly around their neck. I understand it is symbolic of the umbilical cord that binds the mother and her children together and is performed so that the bond that exists between the mother, her children and other siblings should continue even with the additional child in-law. So my uncle bought the sheep and aunts brought the food for the ritual, and the whole village, even uninvited people came to feast. These relations as we know them in the western culture are referred to as first cousins and distant cousins. Even to this date my mother and all her 'cousins' never refer to each other as such. We address them as uncles, and are expected to address their children as

brothers and sisters; to refer to them as cousins earns one serious wrath from the whole family. But with modernisation these community activities are slowly being eroded and the nuclear family and individualism are becoming stronger.

The spirit of *ubuntu* is not demonstrable in my class. Young students do not show respect to the Limpopo teachers as adults with much more life and professional experience, something which bothered them soon after arrival at the university. There is hesitance at extending a hand of friendship to the young students because the response could be a rude comment and so the teachers decided to keep to themselves. I believe that there is a lost opportunity here. I think young students could learn something from the wisdom and experience of the teachers and the teachers could learn about contemporary urban attitudes and ways of being from the young students. For me it is a really sad situation because this lost opportunity would enrich the interaction. It means that *ubuntu* works only in family groupings and not across tribal differences.

Barnes (1997) touches on the concept of *ubuntu* as imagined in the context of this research and describes it as “recognising the interdependence of people; it is the quality of community, but more than this it recognises that it is the community which defines humanness.” (p.45) Her research investigates a context similar to Wits University by describing the complexity of race relations and the transformation that happened to the curriculum to embrace the cultural diversity in the Drama Studies Department at the University of Natal (now University of KwaZulu Natal).

6.3.4 Limited Career Prospects in Teaching

The research participants’ views of the curriculum and what is offered are affected by what they perceive to be the limited career prospects at their disposal. In the earlier chapters I pointed out that they accused the university of teaching them material that is irrelevant to their positions as foundation phase teachers. They do not see themselves anywhere else but in the foundation phase classrooms back in Limpopo. These self-perceptions of a limited career trajectory are worrying because I believe that education is supposed to open up one’s career prospects and magnify self-realisation and ambition.

6.3.5 An Intercultural Performance

Strong references were made to the practical project embarked on for the mid-year examinations in 2009. In this project, the students' brief was to devise a performance that utilised theatre techniques covered in class up to that point: improvisation, role play, story-telling and to incorporate movement. Content and language were to be determined by them, but they had to ensure that everyone understood what they were communicating especially the external examiner who was an English-speaking Drama Department staff member from another institution. Our role as staff was limited to guiding the process to ensure that their chosen material adequately addressed all the above mentioned areas. So the projects were entirely their own original work. In the interview questions, I never made reference to this particular project, but for reasons that will become apparent later it found its way in, suggesting the strong impact this experience had made on them.

In relating their experience of this particular project, the students' perceptions were much more positive and they spoke with such delight suggesting that the exercise afforded them the opportunity to tap into areas of symbolic cultural significance for them. This included the use of code switching and code mixing. The participants alluded to the significant extent to which they use code switching when teaching back home. In the performance they also used stories whose origins can be traced to their communities. They expressed delight at the process because it allowed them to

...make significant connections between their knowledges, skills
and experiences with their home knowledges, histories, cultures
and traditions (*ibid*: 4).

Their responses were marked by considerable levels of confidence and a degree of pleasure and pride in their achievement. I vividly remember one of the strongest performances as a story of how the culture of reading started in a small village in Limpopo. It was presented delightfully with song, dance, drumming and ululation and it presented the triumph of the human spirit and demonstrated the African spirit of *ubuntu* through hospitality offered to strangers.

This process my students embarked on echoed Banning's students' experiences when they created presentations that embraced their lived experiences. She writes;

There was an expression of a strong sense of collective ownership of the process and of the material they had generated. The use of own language and story-telling as theatrical devices - emerged as key factors in forging these connections between their varied home experiences and the performative discourse they were learning. As a result there was a noticeable improvement in their vocational expertise and strong expressions of a personal sense of agency belonging within this discourse (Banning, 2003a:4).

I end this section by quoting Janks (2003) who speaks of the possibilities of an embracing curriculum...

...only when all our identities are informed by diversity and cultural hybridity, only when power is not reserved for one global language, then can we reverse the history of linguistic and cultural imperialism produced by colonial conquest and maintained by super-power domination- a history that has led thus far to the triumph of English (p.18)

6.4 Reflection and Reflexivity

At the beginning of this report I located myself within the context of the study. I detailed the multiple positionalities that I occupy and foregrounded my role as researcher-practitioner as paramount. I drew parallels between my experiences as a second-language English speaker learning Drama in English at an institution where English is the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) and began to question my own way of teaching as I interact with my students in a learning environment very similar to mine. As the participants shared their stories of sadness and triumph, memories of my own university days surfaced. Their experiences and struggles, which are similar to mine, are humbling. I am compelled to take stock and reflect on what I teach and how I present it in the light of all that has been shared with me. According to Zeiner and Liston (1996:6) as quoted in Reed et al (2002) a teacher who is reflective is one who

examines, frames, and attempts to solve the dilemmas of classroom practice; is aware of and questions the assumptions and values he or she brings to teaching; is attentive to the institutional and cultural contexts in which he or she teaches; takes part in curriculum development and...evaluates their

teaching by asking the broader questions, ‘ are the results good, for whom and in what ways...? (p.256)

They discuss ‘reflection-in-action’ and ‘reflection-on-action’, phrases coined by Schon (1983) to define how reflective practitioners engage with their own teaching. Reflection-in-action refers to the insights the teacher gains while working in the classroom while reflection-on-action refers to the recalling, explaining and evaluating after a lesson and includes thinking about the reflection-in-action (Schon, 1983). An example from my research which comes to mind is that during one of the quick-paced improvisation exercises, participants struggled to accept the improvisation offers as quickly as I would have liked or to modify them to advance the improvisation, which resulted in blocking and the collapse of the activity. It was during sessions like this that memories of my experiences at university came back and my heart went out to them. I have first-hand experience of what goes on inside of them as they hear the giggles from other peers; the feeling of inadequacy, self-hate which may result in low self-esteem and self-doubt. But now, here I am, wearing a different hat as a workshop facilitator, why can I not design lessons with techniques that will still achieve the desired objectives without leaving anybody questioning their self-worth? I believe this research will help me overcome these doubts.

Through this research, I believe that I have been conscientised of my own hypocrisy as I subject my students to the very same experiences that I went through, consciously or unconsciously. I have been able to take a step back, and through their experiences of my teaching approach, been able to look at how I teach. I have to make a commitment to ending this cycle of the oppressed turning into the oppressor when they are ‘in power’. The final chapter contains recommendations which will be my guiding principles and hopefully also be helpful for other facilitators in my position who feel the need to reflect on their practices. In that chapter I make my commitments to those renewed strategies.

6.5 Reorientation of Drama Approaches to embrace Multilingualism and Multiculturalism

Drama is believed to be central in embracing multilingualism and multiculturalism. Brahmachari (1998) as cited by Donelan (2002b) posits that the drama classroom can be transformed into a safe space that allows for the creation, development, exploration and invention of new cultures

and identities. Neelands (2002:8) calls for “all schools to adopt a humanising curriculum to foster compassion, empathy, tolerance and highly developed interpersonal skills and respect for difference” (in Donelan, 2002b:36). “Within the safe participating spaces of the drama workshop, our students can engage with other cultural perspectives; they can transcend socially defined identities and imagine themselves differently; they can explore alternative values and different roles and circumstances” (*ibid*:36).

“Can we know each other better through entering one another’s performances and learning their grammars and vocabularies?” ask Schener and Appel, 1991:1 as quoted in Donelan, 2002b, p.36. YES! Instead of using socially constructed identities to marginalise one another, new ones can be created in the make-believe world presented by drama to take cognisance of the diverse cultural backgrounds present in the drama classroom.

Donelan (2002b) believes that intercultural pedagogy engages students to put themselves in the place of others to explore, construct, interpret and represent cultural narratives using specific arts conventions and languages. “Ethnography allows us as drama teachers and participatory researchers to engage with our students as they explore, struggle with, create, resist and perform intercultural drama” (p.43) She concludes by saying that ethnographic practices provide the means for drama educators, researchers and students to experience what Pedelty (2001:247) calls “reflective and transformative explorations of self and other” (*ibid*).

The drama syllabus must have provision for the enhancement and expression of the multiple cultures and languages through different theatre techniques and games. I conclude by citing Gough (2000:56) who writes:

We need to take into account the particular backgrounds of our students, not as impediments or barriers, but, indeed, as possible resources for learning... so that students get a critical sense of “who they are supposed to be” in tertiary contexts, but also how this identity relates to other identities such as who [they] were and who [they are] as well (in Banning, 2003a:20).

The successes of foregrounding students’ lived experiences in a multicultural and multilingual community are detailed in Barnes (1999) as she describes the process of devising a physical

theatre performance by a diverse cast of students in the Drama Studies Department at the University of Natal in the late '90s. The facilitators acknowledged the historical background of all cast members by drawing stories that would form part of the production from their lived experiences. They used many of Boal's theatre techniques to build group cohesion and trust as well as a sense of self-worth and belonging by each cast member. They encouraged the use of the body as an equal partner with language in communication and the use of multiple languages, mainly first languages spoken by the cast members. They subverted the norm of privileging English over other languages but instead used this diversity of languages to enrich the process resulting in learning from one another and by extension respecting one another's culture and language.

The above mentioned paper and the process described happened not very long after the demise of apartheid, at a time when attitudes were still hardened by the institutionalised separation of races which polarised humans and instilled in them fear of the 'other'. If the successes of embracing multilingualism and multiculturalism could be counted at that time, one can conclude that over fifteen years after the dawn of democracy the response should be even better. I imagine all that is needed is the willingness on the part of the institution to be proactive in ensuring implementation of the policies (which in theory promotes language equality) and for the agents (educators) to willingly disrupt the troubled perpetuation of inequality in education. Educators should problematise (Freire, 1970) education and democracy - the oppression of the minority - which may not necessarily refer to numbers but to access and domination.

By so doing there are limitless possibilities for meaningful encounters between different language speakers and for discovering the richness of knowledge drawn from the students' lived experiences. Medina and Campano (2006) believe that in so doing the imaginative cultural work of drama participants will be more than play; "rather, it may work in the service of envisioning a just education" (p.341).

6.6 Conclusion

In reading Donelan's doctoral thesis titled *The Gods Project: Drama as Intercultural Education, An Ethnographic Study of an Intercultural Performance in a Secondary School*, I realised that there is a lesson to be learned from the Australian experience in the use of drama in promoting multiculturalism and multilingualism. She details several deliberate legislative policies adopted by education regulatory bodies in recognition of the key role that drama in the classroom can play in creating a humane society. These policies target young people and advocate using the arts (particularly drama) to allow them access to other languages and cultures, they also compel schools to engage drama students to make, explore and interpret drama, to describe analyse and evaluate dramatic processes and structures, to consider their own drama in the context of contemporary society and to compare its purposes and forms with drama from other cultures.

She further cites Rizvi (1994: 65-66) who urges drama educators to adopt practices that involve dialogue with others who speak from different traditions, locations and experiences. Drama classrooms can become "social spaces focused on critical imagination where students can represent to themselves how things might be different and perhaps better" (Donelan, 2005:51).

In 2011, I will have another opportunity to teach the participants. This will present an ideal opportunity to look back at the outcomes of this study, evaluate my pedagogical approach and strategies and strive to use concepts that utilise the non-verbal language of drama and have at their core the content that allows students access to their language and culture. Perhaps I will be able to provide students with opportunities to learn from each others' languages, values and customs in order to cultivate respect and tolerance? Sometimes it takes reverse 'injustice' to redress the wrongs of the past. Perhaps elevating those elements that have been marginalised and relegating the previously privileged ones; 'switching the linguistic currency' in my class could contribute to the humane curriculum that embraces multilingualism and multiculturalism.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I reflect on the overriding objective of the study. I highlight the most significant findings of the data to answer the overarching question of this research report:

How can multilingualism and multiculturalism be embraced in the drama classroom?

The participatory, experiential and engaged research stance (Conquergood, 2002 as used in Donelan, 2005) that I assumed allowed me to locate my experiences as a second language English speaker on the same plane as those of my research participants. It provided an opportunity for self-reflection and evaluation. I examine and draw parallels between my own experiences as a drama student at UCT with those of my students and comment on what I found. I end the chapter by making recommendations which I believe would help me, and maybe others who may wish to transform their classrooms into productive, vibrant and creative environments that recognise multilingualism and multiculturalism as invaluable resources for teaching.

7.2 Overall Conclusions

At the outset of this research report I established that the drama students that I teach are from diverse backgrounds. From over 120 students, a select group volunteered as participants of this study. They were interesting because this grouping stems from selective homogeneous factors; they represent a broad sample across age, educational qualifications, language, religion, cultural background and teaching experiences. They come from a province that is different in many respects from Johannesburg, Gauteng; the place that has become their home for the next four years. The transition from primary school classrooms in the rural areas of Limpopo to huge lecture theatres at a prestigious university posed academic challenges. On the social front, leaving families behind created enormous pressures on their abilities to cope with the rigorous academic demands. The environment that greeted them (at least at the beginning) was hostile and the people (especially young students) inhospitable. Upon their arrival, they experienced culture shock. They were greeted by unfamiliar scenes of young students publicly displaying affection and young girls smoking cigarettes. As teachers, some felt that it was their place to intervene

which exacerbated the situation and further ostracised them, inviting even more hostility and disrespect from their young peers.

It became apparent during the research that the process of re-negotiating cultural differences and bridging the generational gap took some time. During this time tensions simmered and precipitated to unprecedented levels resulting in a wedge inserted between the teachers and the young students. This proved very difficult to manage during teaching time. Drama by its nature relies on group work. Consequently, I struggled to create group cohesion and a sense of community in this group. My efforts to challenge and move students from their comfort zones of always working with friends proved fruitless. They resulted in constant arguments and reduced efficiency during class.

The participants articulated their frustration while working with young students. They claimed that young students laughed at the way they spoke English. As a result, little contribution was forthcoming from the teachers. This, points to the elevated status given to English within the university. Participants also claimed that in the process of trying to adapt to this academic environment dominated by English and the values inherent in it, they were (almost) compelled to shelve their own identities. They revealed a painful awareness of how lack of cultural understanding created unacknowledged tensions which resulted in alienation and enforced distancing from one's culture.

This context cultivated a learning environment separated by tough almost impermeable boundaries, very different from the social and cultural experiences that are shared by second language English speakers. The context (in the case of this research Wits School of Education, but one which is common across English language universities in South Africa) presents

quite strong indications of an acute and disempowering dislocation between the cultural experiences that students brought with them to the university ... this particular learning environment, the structures, teaching approaches, the content of the curriculum ... all appear to be strongly embedded in a culturally determined set of values which is associated exclusively with English (Banning, 2003a:3).

While the Wits University Language policy articulates good intentions in embracing the constitutional imperatives of language equality, it remains to be seen how the intentions manifest themselves in practice in the future, as at present English is tacitly understood to be the accepted means of academic expression.

Evidence that points to the benefits that come with acknowledging students' backgrounds is the practical exam task that allowed students to use their own languages. Participants expressed elation at being allowed to tell stories in their own languages, which had significance to their lives. They also expressed surprise at their ability to access 'true' emotions which they otherwise do not access when they perform in English because they worry about whether they are not 'breaking' English, which often resulted in them being the laughing stock. To illustrate the point of fear of breaking English, during one of the process drama presentations one of the teachers said "animals and people should not 'dirty' the water so that it is conserved". There was uproar of laughter. She was humiliated, embarrassed and very hurt. Those who think they can speak English better than she can thought it was funny, but it was not because after the incident she withdrew and participated less in discussions. "Real people get really hurt by the workings of language, power, ideology and discourse" says Gee (1990:6 as quoted in Banning, 2002a:20).

Boal (2008) strongly believes that in the world we inhabit when given an opportunity to access power the oppressed can easily become the oppressor. What also became apparent in this study is the role reversal exhibited by my oblivious and casual approach to the complexity of matters relating to second-language speakers in an institution like ours. I had 'conveniently' forgotten my own experiences and struggles as a student at a predominantly English speaking institution ten years ago. My attitude towards second-language English speakers was no different from anyone who has never had experiences similar to mine. I perpetuated the vicious cycle of excluding those in the non-dominant group. Allegiance to my employer provided a perfect excuse for me not to remember the feeling of not belonging. The fact that my conversation (in class and outside) with my students was strictly limited to English, despite my knowledge of their linguistic struggles compounds the burden that I feel as a black person teaching drama in this institution. Through this research, I learned that my interaction with my students should not

necessarily be limited to English and that I could mediate the language barrier through drama techniques that transcend linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Through the interviews and the workshop conducted during this study, there are strong indications that drama is a significant vehicle or device through which transformation could be effected. There is compelling evidence from this study that things have to be done differently to make a qualitative difference in our students' experiences. The study confirms the assertions made by Medina and Campano (2006) that "Drama can open critical spaces within which students negotiate diverse perspectives and generate knowledge that may serve their own educational and social empowerment" (p.333). Furthermore, it is through the space created by drama that students can access the opportunity to 'talk back' to dominant linguistic practices that may devalue their own rich cultural resources and identities (Gallagher, 2001 as cited in Medina and Campano, 2006).

This research has opened my eyes to the limitless possibilities offered by drama which I could utilise to create a just environment that is considerate of all the class constituents. Drama can offer a foundation of multi-ethnic education that builds knowledge and respect for other people's history, values and languages. O'Neal (1997) as cited in Donelan (2002) writes that participatory teaching inherent in drama fosters dialogic exchange of different voices that allow for cooperation.

7.3 Recommendations

From now onwards, I see a clear path forward that has been created by my engagement with the students over the past fifteen months. With the understanding that I have now I will plan activities that tap into the limitless opportunities and possibilities presented by drama, which allow the embracing of multilingualism and multiculturalism as rich resources to inform my teaching. I should allow the teaching process and the students' creativity to evolve naturally without external imposition of societal and institutionally defined conventions because using drama could help us explore what it is like to be human, thus providing space to examine

ourselves, our similarities and our differences, with the intention of embracing tolerance and understanding. (Simon, 2000 as cited in Donelan, 2005).

I would like to recommend some strategies that I have used in the workshop that I conducted to generate data and in my drama class with the research participants. I was not aware of the usefulness of the strategies until during the research when I started grappling with the literature about drama in multilingual settings. I divide this section into two; principles and strategies. Principles are those pillars that will underpin my pedagogical approaches while strategies will be ways to implement the principles. Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed supports the principles that provide a humane curriculum while Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed offers some strategies to implement the pedagogy of the oppressed, as does drama in education praxis.

7.3.1 Principles

Through this research I have come to realise that there are three major principles which can guide the praxis of teachers working in a multicultural and multilingual context. Most importantly, embracing and celebrating difference brings an exciting richness of content into the creative space. It inspires natural creativity and frees the individual from the bondage of trying to act a specific script, from a particular culture and in one particular language. It encourages democratisation within the classroom and engagement with "otherness" as part of the norm within our society. This principle allows for code switching and includes the use of translation as a strategy for ensuring that understanding meaning is the goal of communication, and that meaning has to be struggled towards and is negotiated between all participants. A second principle embraces the belief that the best learning takes place when one feels relaxed and unthreatened by being able to move from what is familiar towards the new and unknown. Tapping into one's familiar world and then venturing into the unknown brings the feeling of acceptance and belonging as opposed to isolation brought on by being compelled to change. It also provides the courage to then engage with what is initially alien. Moreover it emphasises that the learner has agency and is in control of her own learning, and is not a mere passive recipient (Freire, 1979). The third principle embraces the concept of "scaffolding" learning, namely that

good learning takes place step by step and is carefully built up by progressively challenging experiences while at the same time it is supported to ensure confidence in the learner.

The activity that most students remembered was the devised children's stories in which they were given the freedom to use any language and stories from their communities. They speak fondly of that exercise. "Perhaps the most important drama should build off the students' own rich identities, experiences, and linguistic resources ... by doing that the imaginative cultural work of drama participants will ... work in the service of envisioning and enacting a just education" (Medina & Campano, 2006:341).

There has to be a consciousness on the side of the educator to not only acknowledge but to embrace the different cultures existing in their classroom. Gough (2000:56) as quoted by Banning (2003a) reinforces this by asserting that

We need to take into account the particular backgrounds of our students, not as impediments or barriers, but as possible resources for learning...[so that students] get a critical sense of who they are supposed to be in tertiary contexts (p.20).

7.3.2 Strategies

The practice advocated by Augusto Boal provides very useful strategies for the drama teacher wishing to embrace the principles outlined above. The use of tableaux or frozen images without talk or movement is one of them. By looking at tableaux participants have an opportunity to deeply analyse the presented image. They may do so using words or phrases. I believe they should be allowed to use a language that best articulates what they are seeing. Interpretation must then be explained to the rest of the class. Because each participant may interpret the image slightly differently the principle of negotiating meaning and acknowledging multiple possible meanings is reinforced. Tableaux seem very important because during the frozen expression, people have time to think about the complexity of meaning and time to negotiate a multiplicity of meanings from what they see.

The teacher-in-role strategies proposed by Morgan and Saxton (1987) discussed in details in Chapter 4 have a significant role to play in my classroom. I do not wish to repeat them here. In a number of the roles, the teacher relinquishes power, to varying degrees depending on the role and ‘delegates’ students to take responsibility for learning material generation and knowledge. During the use of the teacher-in-role strategies students are presented with a unique opportunity to access their lived experiences and imagination. In this process there is acknowledgement (covertly or overtly) of the students’ lived experiences since the dramatic process unfolds in an unthreatening manner in that whatever students offer is acceptable and there is no time for cynicism and doubt. What they offer is what it is and should be accepted or modified as the process unfolds, this has the potential to create ‘empowerment’, belief in themselves and a sense of belonging.

The framing of the dramatic ‘elsewhere’ should be done consciously to allow freedom and space for different voices, which in turn brings out genuine engagement. The facilitator of this process should possess insightful facilitation skills to be able to guide the process both inside and outside the drama, otherwise it is bound to be ineffective. Reflection is paramount at the end of the process. It gives the class an opportunity to discuss feelings and to reflect on the successes and failures. Again, the facilitator should guide this process by asking the kinds of questions that allow for the interrogation of the process. A positive pedagogical shift is imminent if during the reflection process the teacher and the students could discuss strategies that would enhance the successful sections of the process, and come up with collective ideas and possible solutions of how best to address the unsuccessful sections.

The body and physical expression is the performer’s most powerful instrument (Grotowski, 1968). The body through physical expression allows for the transcending of boundaries and inhibitions inherent in communicating through language. It portrays the honesty of emotions and its presence and expression in the creative space presents opportunities for genuine engagement. When the Limpopo teachers started the movement component of the course in early 2009, the majority of them expressed lack of confidence in their physical capabilities. They felt inadequate and uncomfortable with their bodies in comparison to the young students. My colleague who offered movement created a non-threatening environment that allowed them to gradually gain

confidence. She was conscious of their age and weight and in pair work or duets she ensured that until they were completely confident they worked with people they felt comfortable with. Confidence gained, they found themselves pairing with younger students and surprising themselves in their ability to access physical emotions and expressions they never imagined they were capable of. In the informal corridor conversations that I have had with some of the students, they now express looking forward to the movement component of the course; firstly because they found it useful for their teaching as Foundation Phase teachers because physical expression is important for children at a young age, and secondly that movement helped them to lose weight and keep them flexible and fit. The busy schedule and rigorous academic demands do not allow them a chance to exercise.

In class I usually ask students to engage in quick improvisation activities that compel them to think on their feet. The improvisation requires that the student receives an offer from another, accepts it and then contributes something that will advance it. I realised that trying to force students to think quickly to contribute to the improvisation is not only one dimensional but counterproductive as well. In most cases the result is a blocking of the improvisation instead of the desired advancing.

Participants informed me of how their thought processes functioned. They mentioned that their thought processes happened in two stages; stage one is thinking in mother tongue and stage two is translating the thought from mother tongue to English. They lamented that by the time the activity gets to them, the two stage thinking process would not be complete yet, hence the blocking. As I was interviewing the students, it struck me that I was in exactly the same predicament when I was a drama student. I always wished that I would be the last person the improvisation reached as that would give me time to think about what I was going to say. But then I remember not being able to think and translate as quickly as I wanted to because there was so much noise and activity that I could not concentrate. As an educator now, I ‘conveniently forgot’ about my experiences which did not help the plight of these students.

From this information I concluded that it would be beneficial to allow students the freedom to use multiple languages during improvisation, which according to Barnes (1999) will encourage

expressiveness. Also, by sometimes asking them not to speak at all, physicality is privileged over language. Other times one needs to try to use the “expressive potential of the human body and of human movement on equal terms with other elements of theatre (p.162)” such as language. In this case, Barnes concludes that “physicality is not subordinate to language and text but an equal partner in expressing meaning” (*ibid*).

I am sure this will not only enrich the exercise but also elicit interest in the different languages used during the improvisation. We encourage students to keep creative journals. One could possibly task them to include these newly used phrases and words into the creative journal, which (I hope) will elicit interest in the multiplicity of languages that exist in the classroom.

Other ways of easing students into improvisations has been the suggestion of doing improvisation in slow motion or engaging in a brief discussion before the improvisation starts to clarify ideas. The motivation is that students would learn the techniques slowly and eventually be expected to improvise spontaneously. This is scaffolded learning which allows for a step by step engagement with learning.

7.4 Conclusion

Foucault (1984) as cited in Lippe-Green (1997) contributes that there must be no assumption that education is an evenly distributed and power-neutral cultural resource. Teachers should desist from assuming the existence of homogeneity in the classroom. This assumption will perpetuate exclusion and marginalisation and promote the interests and needs of a dominant group leading to disinformation or misrepresentation of the non-dominant groups.

This study has allowed for a deep reflective process of my experiences as a student and to put myself in my students’ shoes. It has given me an opportunity to better understand their daily struggles as they try to get on with their studies while carrying the insurmountable pressures exerted on them by their families and communities as well as their sponsor. I’m also sure that as one gets older achieving is much more meaningful than when one is still young because it comes

with a lot of sacrifice. I think it will be inconceivable for my study participants to go back home empty handed after four years of sweat.

Therefore, what I feel is necessary is to offer them empathy and support by creating an enabling environment that allows them to flourish. I must strive to create a humane curriculum. I believe it is paramount that all educators constantly reflect and evaluate their practices in order to decide what works and what does not and then do something about it. Reed et al (2002) in their studies to investigate teachers' take-up of reflective practice concluded that "those teachers who are able to reflect...on their work offer [students] richer, more coherent and more appropriate scaffolded learning experiences than those who are less reflective" (p.271).

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APPENDICES

1. Copy of the article from The City Press (1 February 2009)
2. Participants' information sheet
3. Consent form
4. Questionnaire
5. Ethics Clearance Certificate
6. Wits School of Education Permission to conduct research