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‘We want more drama!’: An Action Research project in a lower secondary EFL classroom

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List of Abbreviations

AR.....	Action Research
CLT.....	Communicative Language Teaching
DBP.....	Drama-Based Pedagogy
EFL.....	English as a Foreign Language
FL.....	Foreign Language
FLA.....	Foreign Language Anxiety
FLE.....	Foreign Language Enjoyment
L1.....	First language
L2.....	Second language
RIS.....	Austrian Legal Information System (<i>Rechtsinformationssystem des Bundes</i>)
WTC.....	Willingness to Communicate

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0. Introduction

Encouraging foreign language learners to express ideas, thoughts and beliefs is one of the key objectives of foreign language classes as it allows learners to use language for negotiating “the relationship between individuals, society and the environment in intercultural interactions” (Chen et al., 2022, p. 1). Thus, fostering students’ speaking competencies is integral to the Austrian curriculum, where successful oral communication is a key objective of English language teaching (*Rechtsinformationssystem des Bundes* (RIS) 2025). Although the curriculum requires students to be able to complete monological speaking tasks, it also places a strong emphasis on communication through dialogical and group activities (RIS, 2025). Therefore, language teachers need to provide learners with an array of tasks that allow them to practise speaking in varying social contexts.

A learner’s speaking competence can be viewed “as a pool of systemic resources and the ability to use them in real contexts” (Bygate, 2012, p. 64). Thus, speakers must not solely possess knowledge about the structures of a language, but also be able to apply this expertise in everyday speaking situations while responding to their counterpart’s utterances with varying amounts of planning time. Oral competence is therefore considered “a product of literacy learnt through education and experience” (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, 2020, p. 61); however, gaining oral proficiency in a foreign language can be challenging as learners are not usually exposed to many speaking opportunities outside of the classroom. Consequently, students should make the most of every speaking opportunity presented in the language classroom. Nevertheless, it is often observed that, contrary to expectations, students exhibit considerable apprehension towards speaking tasks, even though their language level would easily allow them to participate. One concept that explains this discrepancy is ‘Willingness to Communicate’ (WTC), which suggests that students not only need speaking skills but also the readiness to engage in speaking activities for successful participation in oral tasks. This approach has attracted increasing interest from researchers and educators in recent years (Chen et al., 2022).

Having worked as an English teacher in middle and grammar schools Vienna for over seven years, I have frequently observed the dichotomy between students' oral competencies and their readiness to participate in speaking activities. However, my personal experiences as a slightly introverted individual who often felt frustrated by not feeling confident enough to express my thoughts during speaking activities in the English classroom or at university contribute to my profound understanding of the apprehension associated with situations in which language barriers lead to increased vulnerability and a hesitance to engage in oral communication. In order to address my fears, I applied for advanced training in drama-based pedagogy (DBP). Nevertheless, as the date approached, I grew increasingly nervous at the thought of having to participate in these drama-related activities in the presence of strangers. However, during the first warm-up task I began to set aside my fear of making mistakes and focussed solely on generating ideas and storylines for the activities. After completing both parts of the training, I was captivated by their effectiveness in helping workshop participants overcome their inhibitions and, thus, decided to focus on the impact of drama pedagogy on closing the gap between learners' speaking competence and actual language use in my Master's thesis.

Current research on the impact of drama pedagogy on students' WTC in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom is limited, and there are only a few suggestions for integrating drama-based activities into the foreign language classroom to enhance students' WTC. Therefore, this thesis seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. Based on teachers' perceptions, in what ways can DBP contribute to increasing students' WTC in an Austrian lower-secondary EFL classroom?
2. What are the students' perceptions on the usefulness of the methods of DBP in terms of their WTC?

The objective of this Master's thesis is to answer these research questions through an Action Research project conducted in a lower-secondary EFL classroom in a Viennese middle school in May 2023. It aims at demonstrating the potential of drama pedagogy to

effectively enhance students' WTC as well as highlighting effective tasks and techniques for EFL teachers to incorporate into their lessons.

The present thesis is divided into two main parts and structured as follows: The first part provides an extensive review of the literature published on the concepts of WTC, DBP, as well as potential effects of DBP on learners' WTC. Building on the conclusions drawn from the theoretical framework, the second part of the thesis outlines the design of the action research project and details its implementation. The lesson plans implemented during the project are described and data collected through observations, research diary entries, questionnaires, and focus group interviews are analysed. In the final chapter of the thesis, conclusions are drawn, and implications for language teachers are discussed.

I: THEORETICAL PART

1. WTC in the Foreign Language Classroom

In order to establish a theoretical framework as a foundation for this thesis, the term "Willingness to Communicate" will be defined in the following chapter. In general, this concept refers to a learner's intention or readiness to enter into interaction using the target language, regardless of whether they actually do so in practice. It describes the probability that a learner will choose to participate in communication when the opportunity arises. WTC aims to identify explanations for the significant discrepancy between students' competence in a language and their actual performance (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Ever since the concept's introduction some 40 years ago, a considerable amount of literature has been published on its topic area. This might be due to the fact that there has been an increased interest in discovering ways of creating conditions that allow learners to communicate fluently and confidently in the foreign language (FL) they are studying. Initially, James McCroskey and Virginia Richmond (1987), who were the first to define the concept, proposed WTC to be a feature of first language (L1) use and considered it to be a stable personality trait that rarely changes over time or under different circumstances.

However, it was soon incorporated into the realms of Foreign and Second Language (L2) Learning, and can nowadays be considered a valuable explanatory model employed to gain an understanding of students' readiness to interact in the FL or L2 classroom. It is important to mention that WTC in a FL or L2 nevertheless clearly differs from WTC in one's L1 insofar as it is considered to be "a dynamic temporal-contextual phenomenon" (Lee, 2022, p. 454). In contrast to L1 settings, accordingly, WTC in the L2 or FL largely depends on situational and transient variables. Although WTC in the L2 context and WTC in the FL context share, to a large extent, the same features, they vary in the sense that learners who learn English as a L2 are usually extensively surrounded by the language, while students in an EFL classroom do not have as many chances to communicate in English. Despite the growing availability of opportunities to listen to and speak English, the lack of authentic speaking practice situations outside the English classroom can reinforce students' reluctance to communicate (Mesgarshahr & Abdollahzadeh, 2014). Nevertheless, due to their strong similarities as well as the fact that academic literature predominantly uses the terms interchangeably, this thesis will refrain from establishing a clear delineation between WTC in the L2 context and WTC in the FL context.

It is necessary to specify what WTC means in the context of this paper. In the literature, WTC tends to be used to refer to situations in which "despite excellent communicative competence, spontaneous and sustained use of the L2 is not ensured" (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 545). This implies that students, although in possession of the necessary linguistic capacities, are unable to put them into practice when participating in oral activities due to numerous different reasons and influences. While a variety of definitions of the term "WTC" have been suggested, this paper will use the definition brought forward by MacIntyre et al. who see it as "a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2" (1998, p. 547). This definition brings forth two pivotal determinants of the concept, namely speaker-related factors, which are in general of more permanent nature, as well as temporary, situational ones (Dewaele, 2019). In the field of psychology, long-lasting aspects are commonly referred to as 'trait' factors, while 'state' features relate to a specific situation and are thus less constant

(Maderthaner, 2021). A more detailed discussion of the factors influencing WTC will follow in the ensuing chapter.

The extent to which WTC can have an influence on the language learning process is disputed amongst researchers. Joe et al. demonstrated in their study that a greater level of WTC does not directly have “an influence on final L2 achievement” (2017, p. 140). This might be due to the fact that pupils who show WTC are not necessarily presented with sufficient chances to interact in the target language (Joe et al., 2017). However, when this factor is taken into consideration, it can be assumed that a high level of WTC allows learners to employ the target language and, as a result, significantly contributes to an improvement of their language competencies (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2018). Several researchers focus on the learning opportunities fostered by high levels of WTC in students. Dörnyei, for example, argues that WTC is both an instrument as well as an aim for successful language learning (2005). MacIntyre et al. (1998, p. 545) go so far as to consider it “the primary goal of language instruction”, and imply that it is fundamental for any kind of language learning. This goes hand in hand with Wei and Xu’s (2021) perspective that WTC is a prerequisite for the acquisition of communicative competence. Interestingly, it was found that students who show high levels of WTC in the classroom are generally also more willing to communicate outside the classroom (Denies et al., 2015). Thus, the identification of factors which contribute to students’ aversion to target language communication and the development of strategies to foster their readiness to participate in conversations in language learning lessons is of utmost importance not only to improve language learning in the classroom but also to prepare learners more efficiently for communicating in different social settings outside the classroom.

1.1. Measuring WTC

Since the primary aim of this thesis is to investigate whether students perceive an increase in their WTC through participation in drama-based activities, the following section will discuss various approaches to measuring WTC. Assessing WTC is challenging, as it relies heavily on the description of internal, often unobservable, processes. According to MacIntyre and Ayers-Glassey (2020), WTC can be measured either as a temporally stable

construct, shaped by features like an individual's character, their degree of competence and their sociocultural context or a situation-dependent phenomenon, highly influenced by an individual's immediate environment. Ideally, participants' WTC should be measured several times in the course of a study in order to capture its dynamic nature (MacIntyre & Ayers-Glassey, 2020).

One potential method of measuring WTC is classroom observation, as it has been found to correlate positively with students' self-reported assessments (Barin & Eyerci, 2021). However, applying observation in this context not only involves common methodological limitations, such as observer bias, but also raises the issue of limited access to the internal states of the individual being observed. Speakers' WTC can also be measured using qualitative methods, such as interviews, focus groups or diaries (MacIntyre & Ayers-Glassey, 2020). In such approaches, the issues of qualitative research designs such as limited comparability and transferability need to be considered in advance (MacIntyre & Ayers-Glassey, 2020).

One of the most widely used tools is a self-report questionnaire which measures trait-like WTC, developed by McCroskey and Richmond (2013). It requires participants to rate how likely they would be to initiate communication across various situations. Although it is considered "a reliable, valid measure of individual differences in the propensity to initiate communication" (MacIntyre & Ayers-Glassey, 2020, p. 285), Peng (2013) suggests that the assessment in an EFL classroom might require more context-specific items.

In the context of the present study, three of the methods mentioned above were applied to measure WTC, namely focus group interviews, observations and a questionnaire that was partially based on McCroskey and Richmond's instrument (2013). Further details regarding the survey instruments employed will be provided in a subsequent section (chapter 3).

1.2. *Influencing factors and predictors of students' WTC*

Whether students show high levels of WTC or not depends on a number of different variables that influence a learner's choice to leave their comfort zone in order to interact with others (Nematizadeh & Wood, 2021). Nowadays, this decision is considered to be a result of the interplay between a range of factors (Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pawlak, 2017), which include trait as well as state attributes (Dewaele, 2019). This is to say that some influences are permanent while others change depending on the respective situation. In the subsequent chapter the potential predictors of WTC, particularly motivation, students' foreign language anxiety (FLA) and foreign language enjoyment (FLE), teacher's support, learners' perceived communicative competence, their age and gender, the classroom environment as well as attitudes towards the FL and culture will be discussed. However, before examining the individual factors, a model proposed by MacIntyre et al. (1998) will be presented to offer a possible explanation of the relations between trait and state factors regarding WTC.

1.2.1. *MacIntyre et al.'s multilayered WTC pyramid model*

A substantial amount of literature published on WTC is based on MacIntyre et al.'s multilayered pyramid model (1998). This concept takes into account a range of relatively stable as well as situational factors "including the broad social context and individual factors, affective and cognitive factors, motivational inclinations, situational experiences, and behavioral intentions." (Khajavy et al., 2021, p. 171). Although the model examines WTC in the context of L2-learning and is thus not tailored to the FL classroom, the majority of variables overlap with factors that influence WTC in the FL classroom. Furthermore, MacIntyre and his colleagues' approach proves useful to illustrate the basic interactions between the different elements. The model's factors are arranged into a (two-dimensional) pyramid shape, with layers I to III being state layers (*communication behavior, behavioural intention* and *situated antecedents*) which depend on the circumstances of the immediate interaction, while layers IV to VI refer to factors that have a long-term impact on a person's overall WTC (*motivational propensities, affective-cognitive context* and *social-individual context*) (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547). While factors on the lateral face of the pyramid

describe social influences on WTC, variables in the right sector examine more individual elements.

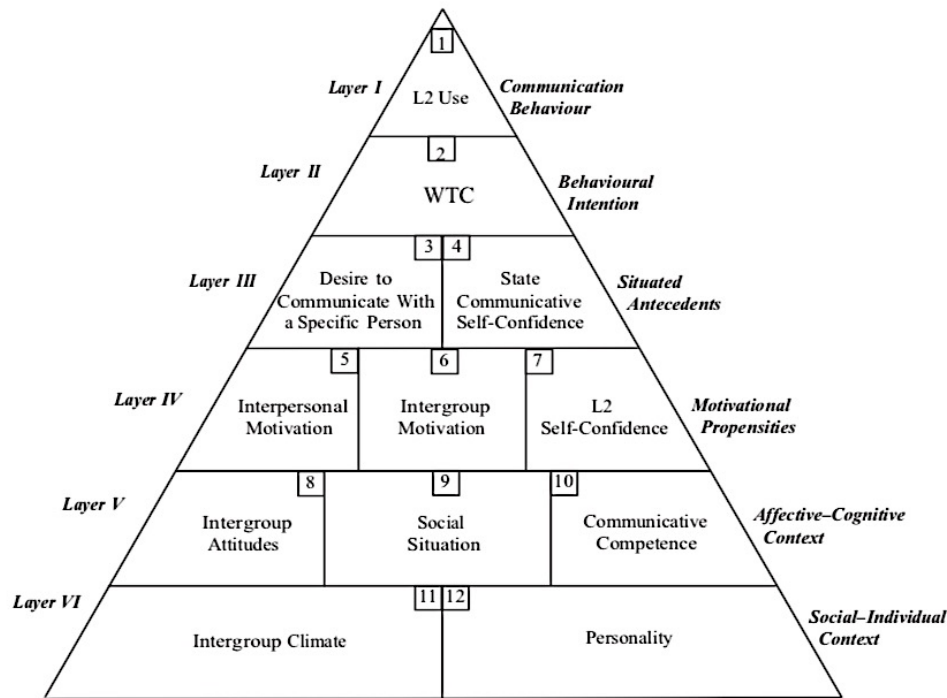


Figure 1. Heuristic model of variables influencing WTC (MacIntyre et al. 1998: 547)

Figure 1 shall be discussed starting at the bottom as these factors establish the foundation for the subsequent layers. Both *intergroup climate*, referring to the social framework in which speakers communicate, as well as *personality* are considered to be rather resistant to change and highly influential on an individual's WTC. Layer V includes *intergroup attitudes*, which encompass the desire but also the reluctance to become a member of the target language community and the resulting presence or lack of motivation to acquire the language. The *social situation* is established by the following factors: "the participants, the setting, the purpose, the topic, and the channel of communication" (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 553). Box 10 of the same layer describes the *communicative competence* of an individual, although it is to be noted that this does not necessarily match the speaker's actual competence but depicts their personal perception. Within the layer of *motivational propensities*, the element of *interpersonal motivation* is affected by both the level of independence present in a particular situation as well as the extent to which the individual has a motive to build a connection with their interlocutor. *Intergroup motivation* is obtained

by an individual's association with a specific group and is heavily influenced by the factors *intergroup climate* and *intergroup attitudes*. Box 7 on layer IV represents *L2 self-confidence*, which refers to the general idea that one's self-perceived competence allows for successful interaction. On layer III, *situated antecedents* of communication are displayed, such as the *desire to communicate with a specific person* (box 3) and *state communicative self-confidence* (box 4), which describes the level of self-confidence an individual has in a certain situation. Layer II presents the person's *WTC*, which is derived from all factors below that layer. The reason why *WTC* is both an outcome and an influencing factor in MacIntyre's model is that it operates on immediate, situational and enduring levels. Previous experiences with *WTC* can shape a learner's future readiness to communicate by influencing factors such as their motivation and perceived competence, which, in turn, affect their willingness to engage in communicative situations. This readiness then leads to actual *L2 use*, the topmost layer or tip of the pyramid model (MacIntyre et al., 1998, pp. 547-548).

It is noteworthy, however, that while this model delivers a clear portrayal of the different elements preceding a decision of whether to speak or stay silent, it has been criticized for not depicting the interrelationship and the weighting of the various components" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 208). It is furthermore worth mentioning that the model was published twenty-seven years ago and thus changed conditions of language learning may be not adequately reflected in the model. In response to recent developments, the two-dimensional model was adapted into a three-dimensional one by Henry and MacIntyre (2024). This newer version illustrates the complex and dynamic relationships among the components of the original model and offers a comprehensive perspective on *WTC* in multilingual contexts (Peng, 2025). This study employed the two-dimensional model, as it remains foundational and widely recognised in the field. Additionally, the theoretical framework and data collection were completed prior to the publication of the three-dimensional model. Nevertheless, the original model's conceptual clarity and well-established components offer a solid theoretical foundation appropriate to the specific scope and context of this research. However, as mentioned above, since the MacIntyre et al.'s model seeks to explain influences in the realm of naturalistic L2 learning, not all elements might be equally applicable to describing phenomena in the instructed EFL learning process. Therefore,

the following subchapters will further elaborate on those factors that are equally relevant in the EFL context, in addition to highlighting further variables at play within this setting.

1.2.2. *Students' motivation*

The role of motivation in language learning has been extensively studied. One of the most influential models that addresses this relationship is Dörnyei's (2009) *L2 Motivational Self System*. According to him, three elements ultimately shape L2 motivation, which is not considered a static trait but rather a dynamic process:

1. The *Ideal L2 Self* refers to a learner's internal vision of themselves as a skilled L2 user.
2. The *Ought-to L2 Self* encompasses traits that learners believe they need to have in order to fulfill external demands and prevent negative consequences.
3. The *L2 Learning Experience* pertains to immediate, situational motives that arise directly from the language learning environment (Dörnyei, 2009).

While motivation is fundamental to language learning as a whole, it has a particularly significant impact on learner's WTC. Several researchers examined the effect of students' motivation on their WTC and found a significant relationship between learners' motivational state and their willingness to enter in a conversation in the classroom (Lao, 2020; Altiner, 2018; Wang et al., 2025). Regarding types of motivation, Saeedakhtar et al. (2018) found that intrinsic motivation is a stronger predictor of learners' WTC than extrinsic motivation, which means that learners are more inclined to communicate when they experience genuine interest, rather than being influenced by external incentives or obligations. Interestingly, Wang et al. (2025) found that motivation and, by extension, WTC may be adversely affected by FLA, a concept which will be discussed in greater detail in the following subchapter.

1.2.3. *FLA and FLE*

Another predictor for learners' WTC is the feeling of anxiety and its subtype FLA. In general, anxiety is defined as

a tense unsettling anticipation of a threatening but formless event, a feeling of

uneasy suspense. It is a negative affect so closely related to fear that in many circumstances the two terms are used interchangeably (Rachman, 2020, pp. 2-3).

While anxiety itself does not entail a specific focus, FLA certainly does. The latter is strongly connected to a sense of mental stress and fear that arises when required or encouraged to use a new language (Lou & Noels, 2020). Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 128) define it “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process”. This implies that in these cases learners’ anxiety can be triggered by everyday activities such as the invitation to participate in a speaking task.

It is evident that students who experience such negative emotions in the language learning process might be limited in their learning capacities. Their association of the FL classroom with negative emotions can ultimately result in avoidance behavior and a lack of motivation when it comes to studying and preparing for lessons (Horwitz et al., 1986). Then, of course, fewer experiences in interacting in the FL paired with less time spent on studying the language might lead to more experiences where learners doubt their abilities to interact with others competently in the L2. As a result, learners’ level of FLA might increase and consequently, their WTC decreases. Studies corroborate this correlation between higher levels of anxiety and lower degrees of WTC (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2018; Wang et al., 2022). In a study including 210 participants, Dewaele found that FLA even proved to be the most detrimental factor in reducing learners’ WTC (2019).

In line with the paradigm shift from deficit-oriented psychology to positive, resource-oriented psychology, research in the field of language learning has also changed its perspective from negative to more positive concepts. Instead of solely setting the focus on research about FLA, an increasing number of researchers are analysing FLE (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Dewaele et al., 2018; Lee, 2022). FLE refers to “the extent to which classroom L2 learning is perceived as providing pleasure” (Lee, 2022, p. 453). Contrary to the common assumption that FL classroom anxiety and FLE can be set on two opposite ends of a scale, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014, p. 265) found that they are “different dimensions and not two sides of the same coin”. This means that students who lack FLE do not automatically experience FL classroom anxiety.

Language enjoyment was found to correlate strongly and consistently with learners' WTC and can thus be considered highly beneficial with respect to increasing students' WTC (Khajavy et al., 2021). Commenting on the influence language enjoyment has on students' WTC, Khajavy et al. argue that FLE has been strongly underrated to date (2021). This is in line with Lee's observation that "classroom enjoyment is predictive of all cohorts' L2 WTC" (2022, p. 461). In sum, it seems necessary to not only target the reduction of FL classroom anxiety in one's lessons but also to work towards the expansion of FLE to successfully increase students' WTC.

1.2.4. Teacher support

A crucial aspect influencing the students' WTC is their language teacher. Considering that language lessons are still, to a large extent, teacher-centred, students' attitudes towards their EFL teacher are likely to influence their intention of engaging in discourse with them. In a study conducted among 858 Chinese EFL learners, an immediate correlation between teacher-student relationships and the learners' WTC was found (Cai, 2021). In this study, a "teacher's immediacy and teacher-student rapport" were identified as major contributing factors to students' WTC (Cai, 2021, p. 6). Here the "desire to communicate with a specific person" mentioned in MacIntyre's definition (1998, p. 547) appears to come into play. While it is to be noted that students' approval or disapproval can be regulated by the teacher only to a certain degree, other aspects, such as the aforementioned immediacy, seem to be situated more in the teacher's sphere of control.

Further factors that appear to be particularly relevant when it comes to encouraging students to actively participate in interactive activities in the FL classroom are the teacher's support and their own use of the target language. Firstly, the students' perception of the degree of their teacher's support plays a pivotal role in their WTC. Wei and Xu (2021) discovered that when pupils felt that their teachers showed them encouragement and approval, both explicitly as well as implicitly, positive effects on their "ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, and the acculturation to the L2 culture" could be measured (2021, p. 274). As a result of their teacher's affirmative behaviour, students were more willing to take risks and participate in the classroom discourse. Zarrinabadi

found that support can be signalled relatively easily by observing that students perceive teachers who respond to their learners' utterances in a reassuring and friendly manner or smile at them to be particularly supportive (2014). Another potential source of students' WTC that is not to be underestimated is the frequency of FL use by the teacher. A regular use of the FL by the teachers in their lessons will likely lead to imitations by the students and will reduce their uneasiness towards engaging with others in the FL (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018).

Further teacher-related methods of supporting students' WTC include providing them with sufficient time to plan their answers and oral contributions (Zarrinabadi, 2014) and employing the already well-established practice of "delayed error correction" (Zarrinabadi, 2014, p. 293). This means that instead of interrupting pupils to correct them immediately, teachers allow them to finish their utterance before addressing potential errors, thus making the situation less stressful for their students (Zarrinabadi, 2014). Another aspect controlled by the teacher that can have a significant impact on students' WTC is the selection of subject matters to be discussed in class (Zarrinabadi, 2014). When pupils are allowed to converse about topics they are familiar with and interested in, they are more likely to participate in an interaction as it "enhance[s] learners' security and render[s] more ideas for communication" (Zarrinabadi, 2014, p. 293). In another study, Zarrinabadi et al. came to the conclusion that praising learners for their efforts likely influences their WTC positively (2021). Another factor within a teacher's influence is creating an environment that supports student autonomy in the classroom. According to a study by Tan et al. conducted among 510 international students, perceived autonomy in the classroom can significantly increase students' WTC (2023). In summary, in addition to establishing positive relationships with their students and signaling their support, teachers should frequently use the target language, thoughtfully handle students' errors, and create an inspiring and autonomous working atmosphere to enhance students' WTC.

1.2.5. Perceived communicative competence

Another aspect that can be a vital determinant for students' WTC is their perceived communicative competence. Students' perceived communicative competence can, of

course, differ significantly from their actual level of proficiency, and is established by the learners' self-evaluation of their ability to communicate in a linguistically correct, coherent, cohesive, adequate and strategic manner (Joe et al., 2017). Thus, perceived communicative competence is based on the results of this assessment. Perceived communicative competence partly explains the phenomenon of how some learners with outstanding language competencies might avoid any opportunity to interact with others in the L2 or FL, while far less competent students leap at chances to engage in conversations (Mesgarshahr & Abdollahzadeh, 2014).

Whereas Joe et al. reported no link between learners' perceived communicative competence and their WTC (2017), a considerable number of studies found positive correlations between perceived communicative competence and WTC (Ghonsooly et al., 2012; Piechurska-Kuciel, 2018; Zarrinabadi et al., 2021). A connection between the two concepts seems plausible: Learners who are convinced of their ability to interact competently are more inclined to start a conversation, and thus show higher levels of WTC (Ghonsooly et al., 2012). This in turn, might lead to more memories of situations in which they interacted competently, which then again affirms their perceived communicative competence. Additionally, when learners practise a FL regularly, their actual communicative competence is also amplified. However, to sum up, learners' WTC can ultimately be more anticipated by the self-evaluation of their competence rather than their actual competence.

1.2.6. Students' age and gender

In contrast to the clear influence FLA and FLE exert on students' WTC, research concerned with the factors of age and gender is much less conclusive. When it comes to the effect of age on learners' WTC, research has brought forward different results. On the one hand, in their study involving 189 students from London, Dewaele and Dewaele (2018) found that older learners showed higher levels of WTC than younger pupils. The authors link these results to the generally higher language levels of older students, which make them feel more prepared to communicate (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018) and which might also be related to the aforementioned influence of students' self-perceived

communicative competence. Similarly, in a study conducted among 612 Iranian students of English, Amiryousefi encountered a positive correlation between the learners' age and their WTC (2018). However, other studies found no association between learners' readiness to participate in spoken interactions and their age (Tavakoli & Davoudi, 2017; Barrios & Acosta-Manzano, 2021).

Concerning a potential correlation between students' WTC and their gender, study results are similarly mixed. A link between gender and WTC was reported by Cheng and Xu in their large-scale investigation including 860 learners who studied English in China: Their results showed higher levels of WTC in female participants (2022). A study carried out in Iran published corresponding outcomes (Khajavy et al., 2018). However, in the aforementioned study conducted by Dewaele and Dewaele, the participants' gender had no effect on their WTC (2018). Likewise, the results published by Barrios and Acosta-Manzano showed no interrelationship between gender and students' WTC (2021). A possible explanation for the inconsistencies among the different studies concerning the links between age, gender and WTC is provided by Barrios and Acosta-Manzano (2021: 3), who point out that influences of "the classroom culture, the wider culture outside the classroom, the proficiency level and the motives to learn" could have a considerable impact on the research results.

1.2.7. Classroom environment

The assumption that creating a classroom atmosphere that is considered positive by students could have an impact on their WTC seems plausible for many researchers, which is the reason why it is examined in several studies. Khajavy et al. (2018) found that a classroom environment in which students experienced support through their teachers as well as their peers and were provided with tough but stimulating assignments positively affected their WTC. Wang et al. (2022) came to a similar conclusion. However, in contrast to Khajavy et al. (2018) their results showed that a positive classroom environment did not influence learners' WTC directly, but evoked positive emotions which in turn led students to be more willing to interact. Likewise, another study published by Joe et al. (2017) concluded that a positive social climate in the classroom can have an indirect

positive impact on pupils' WTC. The authors of this study explain that a classroom atmosphere concerned with the fulfilment of learners' basic psychological needs leads to an increase of their WTC (Joe et al., 2017). This is accounted for by the fact that individuals who possess higher levels of motivation, comfort, and self-assurance are more inclined to initiate and sustain L2 communication (Joe et al., 2017). Regardless of whether the effect of a classroom atmosphere that supports students in their learning on a social as well as an academic level is direct or indirect, it can be ascertained that its establishment can certainly entail, inter alia, increased WTC.

1.2.8. Attitudes towards the Foreign Language and culture

Besides students' personal features such as their age, their gender or their perceived communicative competence, their stance regarding the FL they are learning as well as the respective culture can have a noticeable impact on their readiness to interact using that particular language. According to Dewaele and Dewaele, a learner's "attitude towards a FL is not just shaped by the classroom environment but also by the broader societal, political and historical context" (2018, p. 34). This means that students' WTC might also be affected by their personal views on the culture and traditions of the societies or countries associated with the language they are acquiring. In their study, Dewaele and Dewaele (2018) examined the relation between the attitudes of British students who studied French, Spanish or German towards the respective FL and their WTC. Their results demonstrated a positive link between the two factors (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018). However, a study published a year later by one of these authors reported no correlation between the attitude of Spanish students towards English and their WTC (Dewaele, 2019). This result could be attributed to the circumstance that many learners study English because of its omnipresence as a global language rather than their personal interest in "any specific English-speaking culture" (Dewaele, 2019, p. 531). Interestingly, a large-scale study conducted by Wei and Xu (2021) which examined 1007 Chinese learners of English came to a different conclusion; the more the Chinese students identified with the cultural background of English, the more willing they were to interact using it. A possible explanation for these contradicting results could be the students' own cultural backgrounds which shape their views on the culture beyond the FL they are studying.

The preceding discussion of potential predictors of WTC amongst FL students illustrates that several interrelated factors are at play. The following diagram serves to provide an overview of the aforementioned predictors.

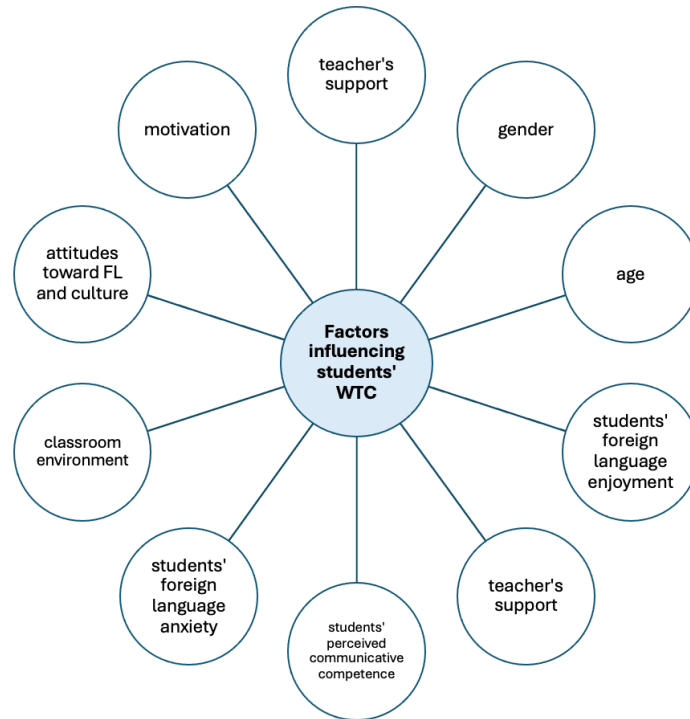


Figure 2. Factors influencing WTC

The following chapter will aim at providing insights into how this knowledge of factors influencing learners' WTC can be put into practice in the FL Classroom. It is evident that not all factors fall within the teacher's sphere of influence. The following discussion will therefore focus exclusively on those variables that can be influenced or modified by teaching staff.

1.3. Implications for the foreign language classroom

One aspect repeatedly pointed out in literature with regard to optimising learning outcomes is the necessity of a "positive climate in the classroom" (Lee, 2022, p. 461). Overall, teachers should aim at reinforcing students' FLE while minimising their FLA (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2018). Eradicating unnecessary stress factors for students to make

them feel secure enough to participate in classroom interaction can be a helpful strategy in this regard (Wang et al., 2022). This could include simple measures such as planning speaking tasks in small groups rather than carrying them out in front of the entire class, providing pupils with sufficient time to prepare before they have to speak in front of others or reflecting on how to correct learners' mistakes in an empathetic manner. This feedback could be adapted individually acknowledging that introverted students may have to summon more willpower to share thoughts in class than their more outgoing peers.

Also, as discussed in the previous chapter, students' self-perceptions of their communicative competence play a vital role in the development of their WTC. Thus, their self-confidence as FL speakers should be fostered. For this strategy to be successful, teachers have to acknowledge that they cannot solely engage in academic matters, but also need to address the "social and emotional functioning in class" (Wei & Xu, 2021, p. 277). By signaling to their students that they are genuinely interested in building a relationship with them and by addressing social interactions and conflicts among the students, teachers can help create a safe and inclusive environment in which learners feel confident enough to take risks, make mistakes, and ultimately see themselves as competent L2 speakers. Students should sense that they are "valued members of a community with a similar goal" (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018, p. 35). Instead of perceiving their peers as potential critics judging their mistakes, learners are thereby reminded of their similarities. Furthermore, students should be made aware of the fact that there is space for their thoughts and input in the classroom (Wei & Xu, 2021). By showing interest in their ideas and asking for their opinion, teachers will encourage them and make them feel more confident to share their points of view.

In addition, the selection and execution of classroom activities can be beneficial for the development of their students' WTC. Overall, teachers should provide their pupils with a combination of "moderately challenging tasks, necessary instructional support, and regular experiences of success" (Joe et al., 2017, p. 139) in order to buttress a feeling of self-assurance, which can lead to an increase in students' readiness to interact. Working transparently and offering students the opportunity to select assignments, partners and methods to some extent can furthermore signal support (Joe et al., 2017). In terms of

choosing appropriate tasks, Lee (2022) advocates for performance-based tasks where students need to actively communicate in the target language. By designing activities to be meaningful and relevant students are further encouraged and motivated to interact with one another, as they can perceive a direct connection between classroom tasks and real-life communication which in turn enhances their sense of purpose. In addition to using the target language as much as possible as a teacher, including input by advanced-level or native speakers with the help of videos or audio material can increase the learners' range and, as a result, their perceived confidence in using the FL. Also, by incorporating "cultural aspects of English such as the daily lives of the native speakers" (Amiryousefi, 2016, p. 230), students' identification with the culture beyond the target language can be promoted, which in turn might increase their WTC. In addition to regular tasks, including entertaining elements such as games in the language classroom can also have beneficial effects on students. In their study, Liu et al. (2021) demonstrated that the introduction of educational games in the classroom can have notable effects on learners' WTC. This corresponds to Piechurska-Kuciel's (2018) findings, who also considers tasks that address students' emotions a valuable resource in promoting higher levels of WTC. A possible explanation might be that participating in games will distract students from their focus on avoiding mistakes in their speech.

However, after analysing the literature, a critical point to consider is that the existing studies reviewed do not address WTC in the Austrian context, which may limit the generalisability of their findings. Nevertheless, a few theses on this topic have been published and provide initial insights. For instance, Waldschütz (2020) examined the effect of distance learning on students' WTC during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Austrian EFL classroom among 428 students. Her findings show that both grades as well as students' FLE correlate with their overall WTC in face-to-face learning settings (Waldschütz, 2020). Another study comparing Austrian and Serbian students found that the Austrian learners' aim to develop speaking skills, their engagement with the topic, intention to achieve high marks and their self-assurance in their speaking skills strongly influenced their WTC (Simic, 2014). A third thesis examined WTC among 204 lower secondary students in Austria and found that teacher-related factors, such as grouping students in small teams and providing encouraging feedback, along with low levels of FLA

and learners' perceived competence, had a considerable influence on their WTC (Scheba, 2024). Although these studies should be regarded as preliminary findings, they reveal parallels with the literature cited, suggesting that the identified factors are also relevant in the Austrian context.

In summary, it can be stated that educational approaches which create a safe and supporting classroom climate, characterised by low-pressure, game-like and engaging activities, can significantly enhance students' WTC. Incorporating different social settings as well as tasks that foster social and emotional development is vital to achieving this objective. Also, students' sense of self-efficacy ought to be nurtured by offering opportunities for autonomous learning. While these features are present in various teaching methods, DBP integrates them in a particularly effective way. Therefore, this approach will be discussed in the following.

2. Drama-based pedagogy

The considerable number of dialogues, sketches and plays found in English schoolbooks indicates that role-play and performance activities can be claimed to be an integral part of English classes in Austria. As these activities are frequently carried out in relaxed and engaging lesson sequences, it is a common observation among teachers that they encourage students' risk-taking skills as well as their creative and spontaneous language use, and thus also their WTC. In the following chapter, the concept of DBP will be delineated in order to set the stage for the research project of this thesis.

While a multitude of different approaches, such as 'process drama' (Bowell & Heap, 2013), 'informal drama' (Dougill, 1987) or 'drama for learning' (Heathcote, 2015), have been conceptualised to describe the use of drama within learning contexts, this thesis will use the broader term 'drama-based pedagogy' to refer to the framework that will be defined in the following. Considering the similar characteristics of these approaches as well as the overarching aim of this paper, there is no intention of embarking on a lengthy discussion

of the differences between the respective methods. Instead, the approaches will be scrutinised in order to determine which elements seem most effective in fostering students' WTC.

While the roots of drama trace back to theatre in ancient civilisations, DBP was cultivated from the 1950s onwards "as a result of the political, social and educational conditions present in the mid to late twentieth century" (Anderson & Dunn, 2013, p. 3). Drama therapist Peter Slade and theatre practitioner Brian Way noticed its potential to increase participants' self-expressive and creative capabilities (Dougill, 1987). Subsequently, the work of Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton resulted in "drama being seen as an educational tool rather than a separate subject" (Dougill, 1987, p. 3), which is an observation that is still valid today. By viewing drama as a method applicable across various disciplines rather than exclusively as a subject in its own right, its benefits can be applied in a more multifaceted and effective manner. The potential of DBP has been examined by Lee et al. (2015), who conducted a meta-study reviewing 47 drama-based programmes, and found that they have a beneficial impact on academic performance as well as a range of associated psychological and social aspects.

A rough delineation of the concepts underlying DBP requires the mentioning of a controversial debate in the field which has its origins in the 1960s, when an ardent discussion emerged between supporters of a process-based drama approach and theatre practitioners who followed a result-oriented line of thought (Baldwin, 2012). The former mainly focused on working with their students' input to develop a joint story line and to support their pupils' self-reflective competences as well as their overall learning process employing methodology from the field of DBP (Baldwin, 2012). Neither audience nor performance were of great importance to them (Baldwin, 2012). Theatre practitioners, on the other hand, set their focus on "developing theatre skills towards performance to an audience" (Baldwin, 2012, p. 11). Each party accused the other of being overly concerned with irrelevant elements.¹

¹ For a more detailed discussion, Gavin Bolton's chapter on "A brief history of classroom drama" (Bolton

After some time, an increasing number of researchers recognised the futility of the debate and advocated for reconciliation. Dougill suggests that instead of perceiving these two approaches as mutually exclusive, they should be considered as ends on a “continuum” (1987, 2) as their core features are unarguably similar. Baldwin further elaborates on this dichotomy by maintaining that “the different camps did not explore sufficiently the immensely fertile middle ground and the necessity of children experiencing both” (2012, p. 11). Modern DBP is based precisely on this middle ground between the two opposing sides, merging both the “learning process” as well as the “theatrical product” (Baldwin, 2012, p. 11). Hence, when it comes to incorporating drama in learning processes, the origin of a selected method is not as vital as its efficacy.

Throughout this thesis, the term DBP is used to refer to a didactic practice with the following characteristics outlined by Lee et al. (2015, p. 4)

- a) it is facilitated and directed by a classroom teacher, teaching artist, or other facilitator trained in DBP
- b) it works towards academic and/or psychosocial outcomes for the students involved
- c) it focuses on a process-oriented and reflective experience [...]
- d) it draws from a broad range of applied theatre strategies.

In other words, DBP promotes a comprehensive learning approach that supports students in achieving both academic as well as personal developmental objectives. The aim of this method is to foster a “deepen[ed] understanding of self, others, or the subject of the drama; [focusing] on fostering creativity and critical thinking skills; on exploring modes of expression and communication; and on bringing together [...] cognitive, emotional and kinaesthetic domains” (van de Water et al., 2015, p. 8). It is based on the assumption that drama activities provide students with opportunities to work on their self-awareness, their cooperative skills as well as on their subject-specific knowledge and competences. In the

1993) can be consulted.

context of FL learning, DBP offers students means to actively and creatively use the target language, thereby holistically facilitating their linguistic, communicative, and intercultural competences. This is achieved through methods such as improvisation, role-play, writing-in-role or ensemble work, while scripted, rehearsed performances for an audience or the assessment of acting skills are explicitly excluded from DBP.

In DBP, drama itself is not considered the object of the learning process but rather a vehicle that facilitates such learning processes (Manna, 2011). Through this medium, various subjects such as history, languages or natural sciences can be explored and knowledge can be acquired, consolidated, applied and connected. Students can, for example, interview a historical figure to apply what they have learned about a specific time period, simulate a scientific debate on climate change or reenact a maths problem. According to Maley and Duff, drama “does not respect subject barriers” (1982, p. 15), but ensures interdisciplinary learning. In contrast to traditional drama activities, tasks from the field of DBP aim at increasing students’ engagement with a narrative by offering ways of adopting various angles throughout the work on a specific topic and allowing them to react and interact in different styles (Belliveau & Kim, 2013). These methods encompass all sorts of communicative tasks such as “mime, role-playing, extended role playing (or improvisation), simulation, interaction activities such as various forms of dialogues, and dramatized story-telling” (Davies, 1990, p. 88). All of these exercises seek to utilise theatre techniques in order to work towards pedagogical or social objectives (Göhmann, 2003). Activities may be chosen based on the age and interests of the target group: Younger students commonly enjoy activities which require a high amount of active participation and imagination, older pupils might prefer tasks which encompass more speaking time and reflective elements (Dougill, 1987).

In DBP, the transition between performers and the audience is often fluent as “the learner is both participant and observer, playing a role while interacting with others in role” (Andersen, 2004, p. 282). As a result, students are constantly required to engage actively in the tasks set. Though a large part of DBP focuses on the process itself rather than a product, working towards a performance may be considered enriching by both students and teachers and not staging some activities might result in “a sense of incompleteness

in the class” (Davies, 1990, p. 87). However, performances do not have to happen in front of formal audiences, instead, they can be easily carried out at the end of a lesson in a low-key manner with students switching between the roles of spectators and performers.

In order for drama-based activities to be successful, traditional roles of teachers and students need to be amended as the usual hierarchy prohibits the unfolding of the dramatic potential. The teacher can “no longer be the source of all knowledge nor the sole arbiter of what is ‘right’ and ‘wrong’” (Maley & Duff, 1982, p. 22). Instead of centring the students’ attention on themselves, the teacher is required to deliver the instructions in a clear manner and then slip into the role of an observer, “controlling but not directing” (Maley & Duff, 1982, p. 22). Some activities, however, require teachers to participate ‘in role’ which can provide them with more controlling elements. Nevertheless, even if the teacher is working in a more regulating position, it is of utmost importance not to correct students’ mistakes and, instead, to address potential knowledge gaps in ensuing lessons as pupils ought to be able to communicate in a relaxed atmosphere (Maley & Duff, 1982). This principle may be a cause of criticism to many educators, which is why it is further discussed as a potential drawback of the approach in chapter 2.2

2.1. Reasons for using DBP

As it is often claimed that the use of DBP entails an array of benefits, the advantages that are listed most frequently, namely its potential to address various learning goals at the same time, its promotion of social and inclusive skills, its use of role-play as a method as well as its physical engagement and motivational factors, will be discussed in the following.

DBP has the capacity to simultaneously target several learning objectives. Heathcote (2015, p. 43) lists seven features of DBP that support learners in working towards the set objectives:

1. [...] Drama demands cooperation.
2. [...] Drama puts life experience to use.
Drama makes factual experience (information) come into active employment.

3. [...] Drama uses fiction and fantasy but makes people more aware of reality.
4. [...] Drama stresses an agreement among participants to sustain mutual support for each other while allowing everyone a chance to work differently – to bring personal ideas to the whole.
5. [...] Drama makes people find precision in communication.
6. [...] Drama stresses the use of reflection.
7. [...] Drama allows you to live out crises in a testing kind of way. It tests attitudes and presents capacities.

In other words, the use of DBP not only aims at encouraging students to take into consideration the abilities and needs of their peers; it also supports the development of their communicative, self-reflective and cognitive skills. Several studies support these claims. For example, Joronen et al. demonstrated that incorporating drama activities can improve interpersonal relationships between peers as well as between pupils and their teachers (2012). More specifically, Celume et al. found that incorporating drama-based activities into lessons led to significant increases in students' collaborative behaviour (2020). After conducting an action research study, Kumar et al. concluded that DBP has a positive impact on learners' communicative competencies (2022). Similarly, Mede and Vardar, found that drama activities supported students in expanding their vocabulary (2021).

These competences can be fostered through DBP as its employment allows students to gather "kinaesthetic as well as cognitive and emotional educational experiences" (Belliveau & Kim, 2013, p. 8) throughout their participation in the activities. Commenting on the potential of DBP to address several learning aims, Howell and Heap furthermore state that educators consider drama techniques to allow students to "develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of drama, explore issues from across the curriculum, come to a better understanding of the world around them and hone skills that are transferable to the real world" (2017, p. 2). Again, it is pointed out that DBP not only supports students in understanding the subject matter, but can also stimulate linking processes between knowledge acquired at school and the outer world. This potential of DBP to make abstract concepts more understandable while simultaneously connecting them to the real world was also demonstrated in a study by Tshuma and Nyamupangedengu (2024). Moreover, as DBP also fosters their performative competence

(Hallet & Surkamp 2015), pupils not only acquire new information but also become able to present the information to others. Overall, the ability to address several learning objectives at the same time and therefore to work efficiently towards objectives set by the curriculum can be considered a major benefit of drama-based techniques.

Another strong argument as to why the inclusion of DBP can be a valuable addition to the planning of learning processes is its frequent use of role-play as a method. Various authors argue that engaging in roles and make-believe games is a common element of our daily lives and can thus be considered natural and, consequently, appealing to many (Baldwin, 2012; Maley & Duff, 1982). This stepping in and out of roles extends beyond childhood play and remains an integral part of adult life, where individuals regularly shift perspectives and navigate social, professional, and personal roles. Considering that we spend a substantial amount of time adhering to expectations and social roles attributed to us, providing students with the opportunity to slip into various roles is undoubtedly of advantage. When it comes to FL learners in particular, being able to promptly adapt one's behaviour and linguistic expression to different situations and their norms and requirements can be considered a substantial benefit. Referring to further advantage of working with roles, Heathcote observes that "[t]he actual moment in time can be isolated, tried again, turned around and replayed with different solutions" (2015, p. 41); hence offering participants an opportunity to reassess their decisions and, if discontent, alter them. As a result, their problem-solving skills can be trained through drama techniques, as affirmed by Maley and Duff (1982). Also, by being able to step in and out of a role, participants can practise metacognitive strategies (Andersen, 2004) since reflecting upon one's thinking processes might be easier when stepping in and out of a role.

Additionally, incorporating activities from the field of DBP can result in the improvement of students' social and inclusive competences, given that most activities from the field of DBP are carried out in pairs or small groups. Students need to collaborate with their peers for most drama-based activities, and are hence required to discuss different opinions and consider the perspectives of others in order to successfully accomplish the tasks (West, 2011). As DBP makes use of different methods and techniques to work towards its aims, it is furthermore often observed that it is an inherently inclusive approach particularly

suitable for heterogeneous groups. Since every student has individual requirements when it comes to learning, being offered various options enhances the chances of encountering a suitable approach as students are provided with “different ways of accessing information, and thus different ways to acquire knowledge” (Bowell & Heap, 2017, p. 2). This can be of help to students at both ends of the performance spectrum as activities from the field of DBP can include both challenging aspects as well as supportive elements (van de Water et al., 2015). In contrast to traditional theatre, drama-based activities explicitly invite everyone to participate regardless of their talent or experience (van de Water et al., 2015). Not only is DBP inclusive in terms of addressing the different needs and abilities of students, but it can also play an eminent role in the acquisition of intercultural competence. By including students’ personal experiences and beliefs, allowing them to change perspectives during role-play and providing them with tasks that prompt relevant reflective processes, intercultural learning can be stimulated (Hallet & Surkamp, 2015). Keeping in mind that cultural as well as performance-based diversity plays an increasingly relevant role in our classroom, applying methods that meet students’ different needs is of utter importance.

A further benefit of including DBP in lessons is its potential to foster students’ emotional and reflective competences. The use of techniques that require them to observe their own emotions as well as those of others “can evoke certain emotions and help learners to experience a range of different feelings” (Galazka & Trinder, 2018, p. 195). Students are allowed to experiment with diverse sensations, their identification, understanding and expressions in a safe space. The competences acquired in this setting can subsequently be transferred into the outer world. As students should receive an opportunity to reflect on their experiences at the end of every drama lesson, the verbalisation of emotions is practised as well, which will facilitate their accessing in the future.

Apart from stimulating the development of students’ inclusive and emotional competences, many drama techniques require physical involvement of the participants, which can also be considered an asset of such methods. Though neglected for a considerable amount of time, more importance is attributed to the role of movement in learning nowadays. Bräuer goes so far as to argue that “[w]hen seen as a phenomenon

of the mind alone, learning is stripped of half of its medium and educational potential” (2002, p. X). This statement is further supported by neuroscientific research which suggests that movement can enhance the absorption, processing and storing of new content as well as increase students’ memory capacity (Sambanis & Walter, 2019). Movement not only facilitates learning processes, but also “supports empathy, belonging, and collective experience” (Johnson, 2015, p. X) and is thus strongly connected with the aforementioned promotion of social skills. Furthermore, with regard to language learning, DBP promotes students’ capacities “to utilize their nonverbal communication strategies to compensate for their linguistic deficiencies” (Liu, 2002, p. 61). As a result, students can acquire knowledge about the use of facial and bodily expressions necessary for the meaning-making processes of communication. Thus, by incorporating bodily movement even in subjects in which physical activity might not seem to be particularly obvious, DBP effectively fosters knowledge production

A further reason for including DBP in the planning and teaching of lessons is the motivational aspect it entails. When the main focus lies on cognitive and instructive learning, pupils can easily feel frustrated and overwhelmed (Moraitis, 2016). Since DBP involves games and playful elements, students might consider it a welcome alternative to teacher-centred instruction. Maley and Duff point out that “motivation is not needed when working through drama, because the enjoyment comes from imaginative *personal* involvement, not from the sense of having successfully carried out someone else’s instructions” (1982, p. 13). Although published forty years ago, it is noteworthy that this statement addresses both the importance of personal identification with tasks and learners’ self-determination, two factors which play a crucial role in determining the perceived relevance of subjects and in increasing students’ motivation (Dörnyei, 2001). Additionally, the unpredictability of drama activities to a large extent accounts for the motivational effect they have on students. Since DBP “draws on the entire human resources of the class” (Maley & Duff, 1982, p. 13), the inclusion of pupils’ personal experiences captivates their attention on the one hand and results in entirely unpredictable outcomes on the other. At times, identical activities carried out repeatedly may evoke utterly different realisations of the task, given that situational factors may alter their proceeding. By including all students, drama-based activities are capable of “making

use of the dormant potential in the room” (Maley & Duff, 1982, p. 12). Boosting students’ activity levels, reducing teacher while increasing student talking time is desirable in every subject and can result in a rise in motivation among the students.

2.2. Challenges in using DBP

Although the inclusion of DBP can have striking effects on learning as illustrated above, a considerable number of teachers remain hesitant when it comes to implementing such techniques in their classrooms (Belliveau & Kim, 2013). First and foremost, the role of students who do not respond well to drama shall be discussed. Then, other reoccurring concerns, including time-constraints, the fear of a loss of control and misconceptions about the need of formal training will be reviewed in this chapter.

Despite the advantages of DBP, some students may struggle with its implementation due to various factors. Interestingly, there is a limited body of research on this topic. However, it can be stated that some shy students may feel anxious about participating in drama activities as performing in front of others can heighten their apprehension (Angelianawati, 2019). Others may experience a general lack of interest in taking part in the activities as they may initially not see the benefits of drama tasks (Farrah et al., 2021). Also, students’ cultural background might impact their level of comfort when it comes to participating in drama activities. As most drama activities are conducted in groups, these issues may lead to problematic group dynamics and must be carefully addressed to ensure a positive learning environment.

A further potential drawback of DBP is the time commitment required from teachers. Since reforms in the Austrian education system have increased the number of standardised exams, teachers often feel overwhelmed with the content demands they have to meet in order to properly prepare their pupils for these exams and, consequently, to meet the standards set by the curriculum. Thus, the introduction of a teaching approach such as DBP might not be appealing to many educators at first glance, as it can appear to be time-consuming throughout its preparation while not setting its main focus on standardisation

(Hulse & Owens, 2019). DBP can indeed require a considerable amount of time as it needs intense planning beforehand, close monitoring throughout, and detailed reflection following the interventions (Liu, 2002). However, it is argued that some components can be shortened if necessary (Liu, 2002) to increase the method's appeal to teachers. Additionally, DBP can, as mentioned above, foster various competences at the same time and may consequently be convincing due to its efficiency.

Another reason that might restrain teachers from including methods from the field of DBP might be attributed to the aforementioned challenging of the traditional hierarchies regarding the roles of teachers and students. As many drama techniques require teachers and their students to work on a project together as equals, some educators appear “to fear losing their grip on power or at least the hard-won control of their classrooms” (Bowell & Heap, 2017, p. 32). Additionally, when being ‘in role’, the element of improvisation might not seem to be appealing to many as it entails unforeseeable replies which then require a considerable amount of flexibility from the teacher (Bowell & Heap, 2017). In fear of losing their students’ respect or not being able to regain discipline, teachers seem to continue employing methods they have already tested. However, Cahnmann-Taylor and McGovern seek to address this issue by arguing that when teachers want to promote risk-taking behaviour in their students, particularly in the language classroom, they ought to be prepared to “model taking risks and being ridiculous” (2021, p. 17) in front of their students. Keeping in mind that successful learning, particularly language learning, is tightly linked to the ability to take risks and experiment, this can be considered a valuable learning strategy. For drama-based activities to work, a comfortable, non-threatening atmosphere needs to be established. However, this might stimulate some students to misbehave. Therefore, in order to ensure that this “transfer of responsibility for learning from teacher to learners” (Maley & Duff, 2010, p. 1) does not result in chaos, learners need to acknowledge that drama-based activities are no unnecessary frill or a break from a lesson. To warrant that students perceive drama activities as purposeful, and to avoid that DBP appears “like a bit of play that has been tossed into the day” (DuBose Ranzau & Horowitz, 2017, p. 103), it is essential to carefully plan the objectives of a specific activity. At times, it might be beneficial to openly point out these aims when teaching in higher school levels.

Additionally, each drama-based lesson can be introduced by establishing a contract that involves a set of specific ground rules for everyone to adhere to in order to allow for participation (van de Water et al., 2015). Hence, a structure is created in which productive teaching and learning can occur.

Besides time-constraints and insecurity about unfamiliar conceptions of teacher and student roles, some educators believe that DBP can solely be employed after undergoing formal training. Refuting this assumption, Maley and Duff argue that within the realm of DBP, it is more important that the teacher is convinced of the effectiveness of the method as pupils easily notice feelings such as anxiousness or stress (2010). In this regard Manna suggests that the most important competences for successful DBP are identical to techniques employed on a daily basis in order “to organize, structure, and orchestrate classroom content and to rally students around the tasks at hand” (2011, p. 3). This argument may seem even more valid in connection with teaching languages to learners at a beginner’s level, when communicating using “mime, gesture and acting-out” (Karbowska Hayes, 1984, p. 8) is essential. Additionally, since the use of DBP does not require time-consuming and elaborate performances at the end of a lesson or term in order to be considered successful, a further potential stress factor can be omitted (Choi, 2018). Nevertheless, while formal training is certainly not a requirement for employing DBP, the participation in workshops might prove helpful insofar as they can provide teachers with insights to the perspective of students. Also, testing tasks before implementing them in the classroom and observing more experienced educators applying drama techniques can help teachers to gain an understanding of potential caveats to be taken into consideration.

2.3. Use of DBP in the foreign language classroom

As mentioned above, DBP consists of a broad range of different methods that can be applied in most school subjects. Its versatility stems from the aforementioned incorporation of various competences, which can be applied in different disciplines. Although all of the benefits discussed in the preceding chapter are valid for the language

classroom, techniques from the field of DBP offer a number of additional advantages specific to the context of teaching a FL. Ever since the 1960s, experts have proposed the inclusion of methods from the field of DBP in the FL classroom (Via, 1976; Maley & Duff, 1982). This demand has been further reinforced by the introduction of the Communicative Language Teaching approach (Dodson, 2002). The subsequent chapter will address the advantages of employing DBP in the FL classroom.

Since the use of drama in the language classroom has repeatedly been described as highly beneficial for L2 learners, it has gained particular popularity among language teachers (Belliveau & Kim, 2013). Stinson points out that the application of drama techniques results in increased “spontaneity, fluency, articulation, vocabulary and the use of diverse language registers” (2015, p. 306). As the use of DBP can increase the amount of language students produce in the classroom, it also provides them with more time to “test hypotheses about the target language and promotes routinization of language use” (Even, 2008, p. 163). While the fostering of oral competences such as fluency, interactive skills or the improvement of both formal and informal communication through DBP might seem obvious, students’ writing and reading skills may also improve once drama activities are incorporated into their language learning (Wagner, 2002). In their study, Bataineh and Salah found that after nine weeks of exposure to drama-based methods, students showed significantly better results in the writing of their thesis statements as well as in the unity, coherence, cohesion and organisation of their texts (2017). Similarly, students’ understanding of grammar items can be enhanced through DBP and their overall attitude towards grammar can be changed for the better (Even, 2011). Although, as mentioned before, teachers should avoid correcting their students in the course of a drama activity in order to promote their fluency, self-confidence and willingness to take risks (Ortner, 1998), they can influence them more implicitly throughout participating ‘in role’. During this process, language teachers can analyse their pupils’ knowledge and competences, assist them with their interactions, introduce them to language suitable for specific contexts, ask critical questions and challenge their answers (Liu, 2002). Even when they are not actively involved in the activities, focusing on the competences of individual students is easily practicable for teachers as most drama-based activities require them to split their classes into smaller groups (Hawkins, 1993).

An important benefit of DBP is its adaptability to all levels of language proficiency. It can support students throughout all stages of language learning to communicate with each other in purposeful and relevant interactions using their L2 (Cahnmann-Taylor & McGovern, 2021). Still, as with any other method, teachers need to adjust the aspired linguistic output of a task to their pupils' competences (Hulse & Owens, 2019), thus creating a suitable degree of difficulty for their students. Here, Lee et al. differentiate between "controlled approaches", which provide students with dialogues, "semi-controlled approaches", which allow students to influence the outcome while still determining some structures, and "open communication", which refers to impromptu process drama (2020, p. 79). Depending on the underlying objective, the teacher can either incorporate less structured drama techniques which include an array of improvisational elements fostering the creative use of already acquired language structures, or more controlled methods, such as the preparation of scripted dialogues that promote accurate language use (Galante, 2018). When focusing on one specific language item or structure, specific games can be employed that require students to repeatedly restate them. As a result, students who are "situationally motivated" (Hawkins, 1993, p. 62) can unknowingly practise repetitions which they might otherwise find tiresome. By encouraging students of all levels to use acquired language structures in meaningful tasks, their attitude towards language learning can be improved and their overall motivation increased.

Moreover, the inclusion of tasks from the field of DBP can foster students' communicative competence in various contexts. According to *The Common European Framework*, the ultimate goal of language learning and teaching should be directed towards "enabling learners to act in real-life situations, expressing themselves and accomplishing tasks of different natures" (2020, p. 23). These aspirations can be achieved by providing students with tasks that require the use of the target language for meaningful purposes. Based on the principle that "language is above all a means of communication, not an abstract body of knowledge to be learnt" (Dougill, 1987, p. 5), students should receive tasks that challenge them to engage with purposeful activities that simulate real-life situations. Instead of giving students predetermined and decontextualised language tasks, DBP, especially when applying unscripted material, allows for situations in which students need

to think and react spontaneously. As a result, pupils do not focus particularly on the language but rather aim their attention at working towards the goal of the task (Hawkins, 1993). By including these elements of spontaneity and unpredictability (Dougill, 1987), DBP allows students to practise their handling of unforeseen events, which is a skill required in discourse taking place outside of the classroom as well. Through the acquisition of language structures in appropriate, meaningful and purposeful situations, new language items are furthermore tied to spoken language, movements and facial expressions, which makes them easily learnable and understandable for all participants (Elis, 2016). When it comes to interacting with others, participants can explore various means to meet communicative goals, by employing “body language” and engaging in the “joint negotiation of meaning” (Even, 2008, p. 162). With regard to these processes, Cahnmann-Taylor and McGovern observe that “the language classroom is a place where students prepare improvised scripts in the target language in preparation for unpredictable scripts they are likely to encounter in the lived world outside the classroom” (2021, p. 33). Though it is acknowledged that the authenticity of DBP is nonetheless restricted by its classroom setting, it is argued that the set of skills developed through its methods can be transferred to situations outside the classroom context without difficulties (Maley & Duff, 1982).

2.3.1. DBP in the context of the Austrian curriculum

Since one of the main aims of classes is to work towards goals set by the curriculum, it is necessary to discuss to what extent DBP can support educators in achieving this aim. The underlying principle of the Austrian English curriculum is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), an approach stating “that language instruction should not only focus on teaching grammar and vocabulary but also include the study of the meanings and functions of utterances in a variety of authentic contexts” (Qasserras, 2023, p. 17). Therefore, language learning should take place in interactive, learner-centred settings, in which students can purposefully experiment with language. As interactiveness and student-centredness are core principles of DBP, it may be considered an effective method to work towards the goal of CLT.

With respect to the key principles of English instruction in Austria, the curriculum for lower secondary education emphasises that learning English should be active, varied, multisensory and creative, with as much English used as possible for interaction (RIS, 2025). In addition, the integration of reflective processes is regarded a key component of English language learning (RIS, 2025). As these are all characteristics of DBP, it can be considered a valuable method for supporting curriculum aims. In the upper secondary classes, one main goal of English instruction is to expose students to an increasing variety of different situations in which they have to respond appropriately (RIS, 2025). This can be effectively practised through short dialogues or scene-based activities. Moreover, social skills such as conflict resolution and problem-solving, as required by the curriculum (RIS, 2025), can be effectively developed through drama-based techniques. In conclusion, drama-based methods represent a valuable pedagogical approach that can contribute meaningfully to achieving the objectives outlined in the Austrian curriculum.

2.4. The connection between DBP and WTC

After having discussed the aspects of both WTC and DBP, the current state of research regarding the relationship between these two concepts shall be reviewed in this chapter. Several aspects that positively influence learners' WTC, such as the creation of a positive and safe classroom environment (Galazka & Trinder, 2018), the reduction of FLA (Dewaele, 2019) and an increase in students' perceived communicative competence (Lee et al., 2020) can be achieved through the implementation of drama-based activities, given that "the problem of not wanting to speak or, more often, not knowing what to say is practically resolved because the activity makes it necessary to talk" (Maley & Duff, 1982, p. 14). Through the introduction of games, which constitute a considerable part of drama-based activities, students feel more at ease when participating in a speaking activity. Also, as drama-based tasks commonly include movement, learners can incorporate facial expressions and gestures when faced with a lack of vocabulary, which can reduce stress and thus make them more willing to experiment with oral interaction. Additionally, considering that games are typically conducted in small groups, pupils may feel less inhibited to talk, since their audience will comprise a limited number of peers rather than

the whole class. Due to its flat hierarchies, DBP can also contribute to an improved perception of teachers, and considerably increase students' talking time.

Although a considerable number of studies on the connection between language anxiety and DBP has been conducted, hardly any research has been published on the effect DBP can have on students' WTC. Lee et al. published a study that reveals the potential impact of drama-based activities on learners' readiness to interact (2020). After having been introduced to methods from the field of DBP in an English for Academic Purposes Class in Canada, students stated that their communicative competence had grown and their teacher observed that the classroom atmosphere was improved through these activities, which led to an increase of student speaking time (Lee, 2020). Correspondingly, Asimidou et al. found that by including DBP techniques in their lessons, introverted pupils began to "express and share their thoughts and emotions openly" (2021, p. 54). According to Lee et al., these results can be ascribed to the potential of drama-based activities to establish "safe, supportive, enjoyable, interactive, motivating language learning environments" that promote learners' self-assurance, strengthen their L2 oral skills and lower their language anxiety (2020, p. 84).

In summary, existing research suggests that DBP can positively influence learners' WTC in an L2 by creating low-anxiety, meaningful and socially engaging learning environments. Studies highlight its potential to support both perceived language competence and affective factors such as confidence, enjoyment and social interaction, which are key components of higher levels of WTC. However, despite these promising findings, there remains a considerable gap in empirical research on the application of DBP to promote WTC within the Austrian educational context, as, to my knowledge, no study to date has addressed the connection between these two factors. To address this gap, the present study adopts an Action Research approach to explore how DBP might support L2 learners' WTC in an Austrian classroom setting.

II: EMPIRICAL PART

3. Research methodology

This research project aims to explore how specific methods from DBP can enhance students' WTC in English within a lower secondary classroom setting in Austria. It also seeks to find answers as to how language practitioners can make effective use of the drama-based approach in this context. The study further aims at learning to which extent EFL learners in a lower secondary classroom consider these techniques to be beneficial with regard to lowering their speaking inhibitions and creating a classroom atmosphere which invites them to engage in oral communication. Additionally, this research project sets out to determine which didactic actions practitioners ought to consider in the context of implementing drama-based activities to increase their pupils' WTC. Thus, this thesis seeks to find answers to the ensuing two research questions:

1. Based on teachers' perceptions, in what ways can DBP contribute to increasing students' WTC in an Austrian lower-secondary EFL classroom?
2. What are the students' perceptions on the usefulness of the methods of DBP in terms of their WTC?

In order to answer the research questions of this thesis, an empirical study was conducted in the form of an Action Research project. After an explanation of the method of Action Research, the following subchapters will outline relevant information about the applied research tools, namely questionnaires, focus group interview, observations and research journals.

3.1. Action Research: Possibilities and limitations

In the following subchapter the features of the method of Action Research (henceforth referred to as AR) will be delineated and its potentials and constraints discussed. Generally, AR starts with the incorporation of a reflective approach in the classroom by "taking a questioning and 'problematizing' stance towards [one's] teaching" (Burns, 2010,

p. 2). By openly reflecting on processes in one's teaching, educators can then identify problematic areas or practices they wish to optimise, which they want to work on thoroughly and methodically using AR (Burns, 2010). This focus on "collecting and analysing data systematically" (Burns, 2010, p. 10) clearly differentiates AR from reflective processes that are part of teachers' daily practices. Also, as many educators feel that there is a gap between research concerning teaching and classroom reality, pursuing one's own interests by conducting AR in this field might feel empowering for many (Mertler, 2017).

In the following, features specific to AR shall be discussed. Banegas and Consoli (2020, p. 179) characterise AR as a "context-driven, practical, collaborative, cyclical, ecological, and transformative" research methodology. Firstly, the results acquired through AR are deeply connected to the surroundings in which the research took place, as well as to the agents involved, which accounts for its *context-driven* nature (Banegas & Consoli, 2020). Secondly, AR is *practical* since teachers take on the dual role of researchers and educators. As such, AR allows them to immediately incorporate even interim findings of their research into their teaching practices (Banegas & Consoli, 2020). Thirdly, AR is *collaborative* as it is so closely connected to the context in which it is situated. It requires collaboration with students, but also other teachers and researchers (Banegas & Consoli, 2020). Another feature of AR is its *cyclicity*: Educators "observe, plan, act, [...] and evaluate a course of action" (Banegas & Consoli, 2020, p. 182). After reflecting on the outcomes of their intervention, another cycle is initiated (Banegas & Consoli, 2020). Thus, although AR has a distinct starting point, it is possible that it does not have a definite end point (Mertler, 2017). Also, Banegas and Consoli claim that AR is *ecological* insofar as it steps away from the idea of unidirectional effects in educational settings and acknowledges "the complex and dynamic patterns which emerge between teachers' and learners' practices" (2020, p. 183). Additionally, it is argued that AR is *transformative* insofar as its overall target is to systematically find ways to change and improve one's teaching practice (Banegas & Consoli, 2020).

To guarantee systematicity, AR needs to undergo a specific cycle of phases, which was first introduced by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988). This cycle includes four steps: *planning*, *enacting* and *observing* as well as *reflecting* (Kemmis et al., 2014). The first step of *planning* the AR project involves setting a research focus and ensuring that it is suitable and feasible considering the specific setting and situation (Kemmis et al., 2014). Once the intervention has been planned, it is put into practice in the course of the *enacting* stage for a limited amount of time (Kemmis et al., 2014). The plan can be adapted whenever the researcher sees the need during this stage of the project (Kemmis et al., 2014). However, the *observing* stage takes place simultaneously to this enacting phase, in which the researcher has to gather data in order to draw reliable conclusions from their project and, if necessary, implement another adapted action phase (Kemmis et al., 2014). In the fourth phase, the *reflecting* phase, the data collected is analysed, unforeseen issues are discussed and conclusions as well as consequences are derived at (Kemmis et al., 2014). During this stage, knowledge gained through the project can be shared with interested colleagues and ideas for future AR projects can also be collected (Kemmis et al., 2014). Although adhering to these stages during the research project certainly is of help, some AR projects might progress in a less regulated manner. However, it is crucial to include all four phases at some point (Kemmis et al., 2014). Additionally, it is necessary to be prepared for potentially undesirable results derived from the AR project, which still should be discussed and at best be integrated in one's teaching practices (Kemmis et al., 2014).

While AR comprises an array of advantages, this research method also has limitations which need to be considered. As mentioned above, AR is highly “context-bound” (Banegas & Consoli, 2020, p. 184) and since most research is conducted within single classrooms, sample sizes are commonly rather small. Thus, acquired results are often not “generalisable or replicable” (Banegas & Consoli, 2020, p. 184). However, they may serve as a starting point for more large-scale research projects. Additionally, the teacher's dual role in the research process is a crucial caveat, as their subjective stance inevitably influences the entire process. Furthermore, their potential unfamiliarity with conducting studies can lead to unreliable and invalid research results (Dörnyei, 2007). By including an experienced researcher, one can counteract these limitations to a certain extent.

Despite these drawbacks, the potential of the AR method to systematically and theoretically analyse and work on a practical issue I encountered in my classroom accounts for its suitability to approach the research questions of this thesis.

3.2. Questionnaires

At the outset of the AR project, a questionnaire was administered to collect quantifiable and anonymised data from the students participating in this study in order to gain a systematic overview of some relevant data. This method was particularly suitable as participants generally value the anonymity of questionnaires, which increases their willingness to take part in them (Dörnyei, 2007). According to Dörnyei, questionnaires can provide researchers with *factual*, *behavioural* and *attitudinal* information about the participants (2007). With the first type of questions (*factual questions*), data such as demographic features can be collected (Dörnyei, 2007). By asking *behavioural questions*, researchers aim at acquiring information about people's activities and way of life, while the posing of *attitudinal questions* targets the addressee's thoughts and viewpoints (Dörnyei, 2007).

Depending on the information sought to be acquired, the phrasing of the questions in the questionnaire can differ. There are two types of questions: *closed-ended items* and *open-ended items* (Burns, 2010). Closed-ended items only include a restricted set of potential responses to a question, such as "yes/no (or true/false); rating scales; numerical scales; multiple choice; and ranking scales" (Burns, 2010, p. 82), which makes them a time-saving, and thus also more attractive, research instrument for participants. These closed-ended items also allow for "quantitative, statistical analysis" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 104) of the collected data. Open-ended questions, on the other hand, require participants to write down their own answers to the questions (Dörnyei, 2007). Although these questions are more complex in their analysis (Dörnyei, 2007), they allow for "far greater richness than fully quantitative data" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 107) since they can include recounts of personal experiences or drawings. Also, at times, it is impossible for researchers to predict all potential answers to a question (Dörnyei, 2007).

When formulating questions for a questionnaire, a few features need to be taken into account. Items ought to be composed in a straightforward and brief manner, their wording should be precise and negations should be refrained from (Dörnyei, 2007). In order to motivate people to participate, analog questionnaires should only have around four pages and particular attention should be paid to their design and layout (Dörnyei, 2007). When it comes to organising the items in the questionnaire, it is suggested to aim for variation in the type of scales and positioning more open-ended items last (Dörnyei, 2007).

As designing a questionnaire is a complex undertaking, it is recommended to conduct a pilot study with people similar to the study participants and ask them for feedback on the clarity of the questions (Burns, 2010). In this study, three experienced colleagues were asked to read through the items and give feedback on their clarity. Additionally, two classes were asked to fill out the questionnaires and to comment on their clarity. I then incorporated the feedback of these two groups in the questionnaire before asking the target group to fill it in. Apart from the risk of including unclear items which may yield unsound data, another drawback of questionnaires is their limited “depth of the investigation” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 115). Therefore, it was decided to not only collect data via questionnaires but also implement other data collection methods in the course of this AR project.

In this AR project, a questionnaire was conducted to record students’ self-assessment concerning their WTC to determine the status quo prior to the start of the research project (see Appendix 8.3.). It was phrased in German to ensure the learners’ full understanding. The questionnaire included twelve close-ended questions with three-, four-, and five-point rating scales and three open-ended questions. It was organised in three parts: Part A focused on discovering how comfortable students felt about speaking English in different social settings (outside and in the classroom, in front of another student or a small group, in front of the whole class and in front of their teacher). Part B addressed potential fears with regard to speaking English (making mistakes, fear of teacher’s corrections, colleagues’ reactions and grades) and part C looked into reasons for speaking English during the lessons and facilitating activities and situations. Here the participants could

select more than one option. Before administering the questionnaires, I reassured the students that there were no wrong answers and that their responses would remain anonymous, in order to create a comfortable and non-intimidating environment. However, given the well-documented limitations of questionnaires in capturing detailed responses, focus group interviews were used to supplement the data.

3.3. *Focus group interviews*

In order to acquire more in-depth data regarding the students' opinions on the drama-based lessons, focus group interviews were conducted with two groups of pupils. As opposed to regular interviews including a single interviewee, focus group interviews are carried out in groups of six to twelve participants (Dörnyei, 2007). In addition to this research method being more time-efficient than one-on-one interviews, inviting several interviewees to discuss the issues at hand and allowing them listen to each other's contributions can lead to more complex and informative results (Dörnyei, 2007).

There are three types of interviews: *structured interviews*, *unstructured interviews* and *semi-structured interviews* (Dörnyei, 2007). These kinds of interviews mainly differ in their degree of pre-arrangement, as in *structured interviews* interviewers ask a pre-determined set of questions in a precise and unchangeable order, while *unstructured interviews* ask open-ended questions which allow interviewees to share their views quite freely and intervening as little as possible (Dörnyei, 2007). *Semi-structured interviews* form the middle ground since they provide participants with a few questions and cues while "the format [remains] open-ended and the interviewee is encouraged to elaborate on the issues raised in an exploratory manner" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 136). This interview type is appropriate for interview topics which the researcher is adequately familiar with to formulate questions for the interview guide and yet does not want to restrict the interviewee's responses (Dörnyei, 2007). As this combination of open- and closed-ended items has proven to yield valuable and interesting insights, most focus group interviews are conducted in this manner (Dörnyei, 2007).

Before carrying out focus group interviews, researchers have to specify the arrangement of participants as well as the number of focus group interviews to be conducted (Dörnyei, 2007). With regard to assigning interviewees to focus groups, it has been noticed that “the dynamics of the focus group works better with homogeneous samples” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 144) in terms of age, gender, social status, or similar measures, depending on the research context. To ensure that representative data is collected, various groups should be interviewed (Dörnyei, 2007). During a focus group interview, researchers are required to moderate the participants’ contributions to ensure that everyone is heard and to establish a space where all participants can openly express their thoughts and opinions (Dörnyei, 2007).

While focus group interviews surely have their advantages, certain weaknesses of the method need to be considered as well. Firstly, developing interview guides, organising the groups and the setting as well as transcribing the results can be time-consuming (Dörnyei, 2007). Additionally, potential technical issues, such as problems with the recording devices need to be taken into account beforehand. Also, the moderator needs to fulfil a complex task and be well prepared for the interview to be successful (Dörnyei, 2007). When it comes to the classroom context, one needs to consider that, in contrast to data collected in questionnaires, students’ responses in interviews are not anonymous and that it might be challenging for them to speak freely in front of their teacher (Burns, 2010). Hence, creating a supportive and open atmosphere is of utmost importance (Burns, 2010).

For this AR project, 12 students (6 boys, 6 girls) took part in the focus group interviews. The interviews were conducted during their German lessons in a separate classroom the week after the drama intervention. To ensure comparability, all participants were asked the same set of open-ended questions (see Appendix 8.4.). The initial questions focused on their WTC during speaking activities in their regular English lessons, their speaking habits as well as suggestions for prerequisites that might help them to speak more English. The latter part of the interview guide prompted reflections on the drama project. I assured the students that there were no wrong answers and that their grades would not

be affected by their responses before we started the interviews. To prevent any technical issues, the interviews were audio recorded using both my iPhone and my iPad.

Although all participants belonged to the same class and can thus be considered a fairly “homogenous sample” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 144) in terms of age and educational level, I chose to divide them by gender, as I was familiar with the dynamics in this class and had found that this grouping facilitated a more open and confident atmosphere for discussion. For reasons of anonymity, student names were replaced by numbered speaker codes. Interestingly, the interview conducted with focus group 1 lasted considerably longer (18:12) than the one conducted with focus group 2 (10:52), as the girls in focus group 1 were keen to express their opinions and justifications in much greater detail. Before the analysis, the two interviews were transcribed (Dörnyei, 2007) (see Appendix 8.5.).

3.4. Observation notes

In addition to collecting data through questionnaires and focus group interviews, classroom observation was conducted, which provides a useful tool to systematically generate data collected by another professional in a research project, making AR less prone to the researcher’s subjective view. It is easily adjustable to different settings and allows researchers to also collect data from students with little language proficiency, as unlike questionnaires and interviews, this method does not require students to produce language (Dörnyei, 2007). According to Burns (2010, p. 57), the method of observation in the context of AR is “focused, [fairly] objective, reflective, documented, evaluated and re-evaluated”. It can be carried out in a *participatory* or *non-participatory* manner – depending on whether the observer interacts with the participants and engages in the activities or not (Dörnyei, 2007). Also, *structured* and *unstructured observation* have to be differentiated (Dörnyei, 2007). While structured observation requires the observer to fill out a pre-defined form which sets a clear focus, observing in an unstructured manner means that “narrative field notes” without a specific focus are produced (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 179). However, most AR projects combine the two techniques (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 179).

Similar to other research methods, classroom observation also has its drawbacks. Firstly, observations can only be used to answer a limited number of research questions as many research projects are interested in exploring phenomena that are not observable (Dörnyei, 2007). Also, data derived from observation commonly does not provide reasons for specific behaviour (Dörnyei, 2007). Additionally, students might behave differently due to the presence of the observer (Dörnyei, 2007). Lastly, the use of observation sheets might hinder the observer from noticing different vital situational aspects as they are overly fixated on the pre-set categories (Dörnyei, 2007).

Although WTC is not a phenomenon that can be easily observed, I concluded that observation notes taken by an external party could provide valuable additional insights and help me avoid potential blind spots. Therefore, my co-teacher, who had been teaching the class for two years prior to my research, recorded observation notes during my AR intervention using an observation sheet I provided. To offer some structure for her observations, I provided her with a form listing the activities for each lesson. Given her familiarity with the class, I decided against providing more detailed instructions, believing that her unstructured observation notes would offer more insightful perspectives. Due to timetable constraints, however, she was only able to observe my interventions on three out of five occasions.

3.5. Research journal

Another instrument that proves valuable for collecting data in AR is research journals. They are a useful tool to “[capture] significant reflections and events in an ongoing way” and enable researchers to document their thoughts, interpretations and views throughout the AR process (Burns, 2010, p. 89). Keeping a journal is highly recommended as it can structure and promote the reflective process throughout the project and helps researchers remember details of the process more vividly in the phase of data analysis (Kemmis et al., 2014). Research journals do not have to follow specific requirements and can be structured according to the researcher’s personal preferences (Burns, 2010). Although research journals show an array of benefits, they are not very common amongst researchers (Dörnyei, 2007). This might be due to the fact that continuous note-taking is,

on one hand, time-consuming (Dörnyei, 2007), but also that this way of collecting data simply does not attract many researchers (Burns, 2010).

Throughout the entire AR project, I maintained a research journal to document the process. For this, I chose a pen-and-paper approach, where I recorded my thoughts and impressions after each lesson. Although I did not analyse the data, I used it to enrich the field notes with my direct impressions and to compare them with my colleague's notes.

3.6. Ethical considerations and procedures

As all of the students were minors, I handed out declarations of consent, which had to be signed by their parents or legal guardians if the pupils wanted to participate in the project (see Appendix 8.6.). In the form, I sought to only use short sentences and straightforward wording, since most parents spoke first languages other than German. I offered the parents to answer further questions via email or during my office hour, of which one family made use. Also, I repeatedly assured the pupils that their grades would not be affected by whether or not they took part in this project to ensure that their participation was voluntary. In the end, all of the students' parents or legal guardians gave their consent and all pupils, except for one, confirmed that they wanted to participate in the project. In a subsequent one-on-one conversation with the student who had declined her participation, she explained her reasons for not wanting to take part in the activities and we agreed that she could observe her colleagues and join them whenever she might feel ready to do so. Additionally, I discussed this project with my headteacher and obtained his written consent (see Appendix 8.8.).

Since holding the dual role of both researcher and educator in the classroom requires careful consideration, I continuously reflected on my position throughout the project, kept notes and discussed observations and concerns with my colleague. Acknowledging that my role as their teacher might influence students to participate out of obligation, I repeatedly reminded them during the project that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. In the course of the drama project, I primarily adopted a supportive and observant role, focusing on maintaining a positive working atmosphere by

managing background noise rather than intervening in their group work processes. I supported the learners by helping with group formations and time management while taking in an observing role. Also, I refrained from evaluative feedback or influencing their responses in order to allow more natural behavior. Although I am aware that it is ultimately impossible to carry out such a project without any degree of bias, I made a conscious effort to reduce my impact and create a space that allowed students to act authentically.

4. ‘We want more drama!’: An Action Research project in a lower secondary EFL classroom

The central aim of this AR project is to depict how methods from the field of DBP can support students with low levels of WTC to increase their readiness to communicate in the EFL classroom. In the following, the central aspects of the research, such as the participants, the setting and the procedure will be outlined. Additionally, the results of the questionnaires filled out prior to the study will be presented. The lesson plans, my research journal entries and my colleague’s observation notes will also be discussed.

4.1. Participants

This AR project was conducted in a Viennese middle school in May 2023. At that time I had been a teacher in this school for nearly three years. I decided to work with one of the classes I had been teaching since they had started at this school – class 2A. 2A consists of 25 students, 22 of whom attend school regularly, two of whom are frequently absent, and one who participates in the German course most days. Out of the 22 students who participated in this study, 10 are female and 12 are male. Most of the pupils have a first-generation migratory background and thus speak various languages. At the time of the study, they were between 11 and 14 years old and had been studying English for at least two years.

The selection of this class was not random. Firstly, I have a supportive and mutually respectful relationship with this class, which was an essential reason informing my

decision to introduce them to drama-based methods. Furthermore, since they had learned that I was working towards my Master's degree, some of them showed particular interest in the tasks I was required to complete in this context. Therefore, I was positive that they would also be keen on taking part in a study. Another reason for selecting this class was that whenever we played games in class, I observed that they truly enjoyed participating in these activities, which I believed to be a valuable prerequisite for introducing drama-based methods. However, the most important reason for choosing this class was that as I had been teaching in all three year 2 classes, I obtained a clear overview of their characteristics and came to the conclusion that out of the three, 2A was the class in which the discrepancy between their skills and their WTC was the highest. They obviously enjoyed our English lessons, they did extra homework tasks, consumed videos and social media in English in their leisure time and some of them even approached me during breaks and started conversations in English to practice. Nevertheless, whenever speaking tasks were conducted in this class, they seemed insecure and shy. Although I acknowledge that these selection criteria are based on my subjective perceptions, this should not pose a problem in the context of this AR study, as this research method does not claim generalisability (Banegas & Consoli, 2020).

4.2. Setting and procedure

The AR project was conducted in the course of one week. After coordinating with the school's headmaster, two additional double periods were added to our regular English lessons, allowing the project to encompass five English lessons, three of which lasted 50 minutes and two lasting 100 minutes. The reason for carrying out the project within a week was that this is a period of time which, on the one hand, allows students to intensely engage with a matter, and, on the other hand, does not deduct too much time from the already filled summer term. Prior to starting the project on Monday, the questionnaire was conducted the Friday before. Also, as recommended by van de Water et al. (2015), a drama contract (see Appendix 8.8.1.) was prepared, discussed and signed by the students and me as their teacher before the drama-based interventions started. It was hung up in the classroom to ensure transparency and act as a reminder for the students. The contract included organisational aspects, such as stipulating that the students should

arrange a seating circle before each lesson and be seated and ready when the lesson began. Additionally, I incorporated behavioural guidelines designed to encourage students to speak as much English as possible and engage in the activities without fearing ridicule from others. During the lessons, my colleague observed in a non-participatory observation style (Dörnyei, 2007) and after every intervention I wrote down my reflections in a research journal. After completing the interventions, focus group interviews were carried out in the following week.

In this AR project, I did not conduct a second research cycle with my students. This decision was influenced by several practical constraints. I was responsible for three parallel classes, which were usually taught synchronously and needed to be kept consistent to ensure fairness and alignment with the curriculum. Additionally, shortly after the completion of the research project, I transitioned to a new school for the following academic year, which made it unfeasible to continue or repeat the intervention. I acknowledge that the absence of a second research cycle is a limitation of this study, as it restricted opportunities for iterative refinement and deeper analysis of the intervention's impact. However, the initial cycle offers valuable insights regardless of the study's discontinuation.

4.3. Analysis of the questionnaires

To illustrate the project's initial situation, the results of the questionnaire (see Appendix 8.3.) will be presented. The offline questionnaire was completed by 23 students during an English lesson. The results of the first set of questions concerning students' level of comfort in speaking situations were rather surprising. In contrast to the perceptions of my colleague and me, a majority of the students indicated that they felt comfortable speaking English. While more than 70% of the students indicated that they either 'strongly agree' or 'agree' with the statement "I feel comfortable speaking English in the classroom"; only 4% selected 'strongly disagree' here. However, it seems as if their comfort of speaking English correlated with the social setting of the speaking task. More than 78% of the participants strongly agreed or agreed with being at ease when speaking English in front

of a small group. Nevertheless, only two out of 23 students stated that they felt comfortable speaking in front of the whole class, while 16 strongly disagreed.

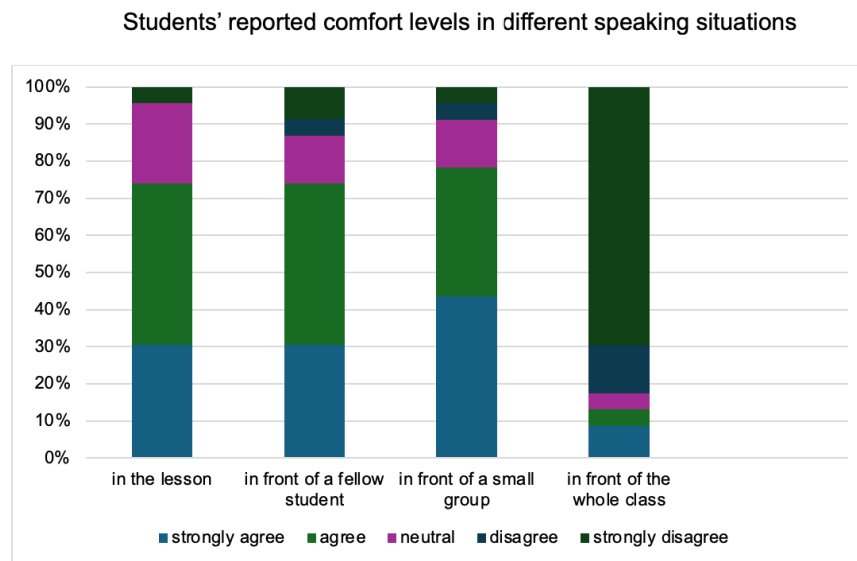


Figure 3. Reported speaking comfort

These results highlight a notable discrepancy between the students' self-reported comfort and my own impressions of their WTC in the EFL classroom. While my colleague and I tended to equate WTC with visible participation during whole-class discussions, the questionnaire responses suggest that students feel more comfortable speaking in pairs or small groups than in front of the entire class. This indicates that our focus on whole-class participation as the primary indicator of WTC may have caused us to overlook the nuance that many students are, in fact, quite willing to communicate, albeit not in high-pressure, public settings.

It also appears that students may rate their own WTC based on their desire or intention to participate, even if anxiety prevents them from acting on that willingness in more intimidating contexts. For example, a student might genuinely want to contribute but still refrain from speaking up in front of everyone. In supportive or low-pressure situations, such as pair or group work, students are more likely to perceive themselves as willing communicators. In this particular context, we judged students' willingness to engage primarily by their observable participation in whole-class settings, which led us to underestimate the actual readiness of some learners to participate.

This discrepancy suggests that the issue may not be a lack of WTC among students, but rather a lack of sufficient opportunities or affordances for them to do so in ways such that they feel comfortable. Consequently, my original assumption about the nature of the problem was only partially accurate, the challenge lies not just in fostering willingness, but in creating varied and supportive contexts that enable all students to actively participate.

With regard to the question about fear-inducing elements in the language classroom, most students appear to be worried about making mistakes or getting poor grades: More than 60% indicated that they were nervous about mistakes and 52% of the students claimed that they were anxious about getting bad marks. As discussed in chapter 1.1.6, a tense atmosphere can have an indirect, negative influence on students' WTC. However, more than 91% of the students stated that they voluntarily speak in the language classroom. This implies that, although they may not feel particularly comfortable, they still want to participate in the discussions.

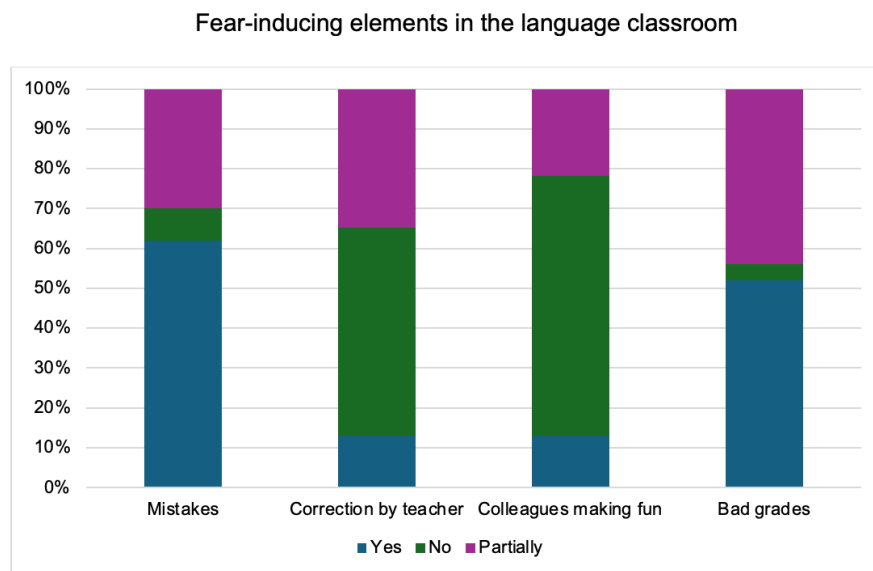


Figure 4. Fear-inducing elements

In the next set of questions, the students were asked about reasons for voluntarily participating in speaking activities. Multiple answers could be selected. Out of 23 students, 13 students chose the option 'I like speaking English' while 'I like to practise my English' was selected 12 times. Here the predictors 'foreign language enjoyment' (1.1.4.) as well as students' 'attitudes toward the FL and culture' (1.1.7.) come into play. Nevertheless, as

13 students also chose 'I like to receive good grades', external motivators likewise seem to be a crucial factor in students' readiness to speak. 'Perceived communicative competence' (1.1.3.) also appears to be an important factor when it comes to readiness to speak in this classroom as 7 students chose the option 'I know that I am good at speaking' and 12 students indicated that they speak voluntarily if they know that their answer is correct. Interestingly, 10 students also selected 'I want to impress my teacher' as an answer, which implies that the aforementioned influence of the language teacher on students' WTC (1.1.2) could also be observed.

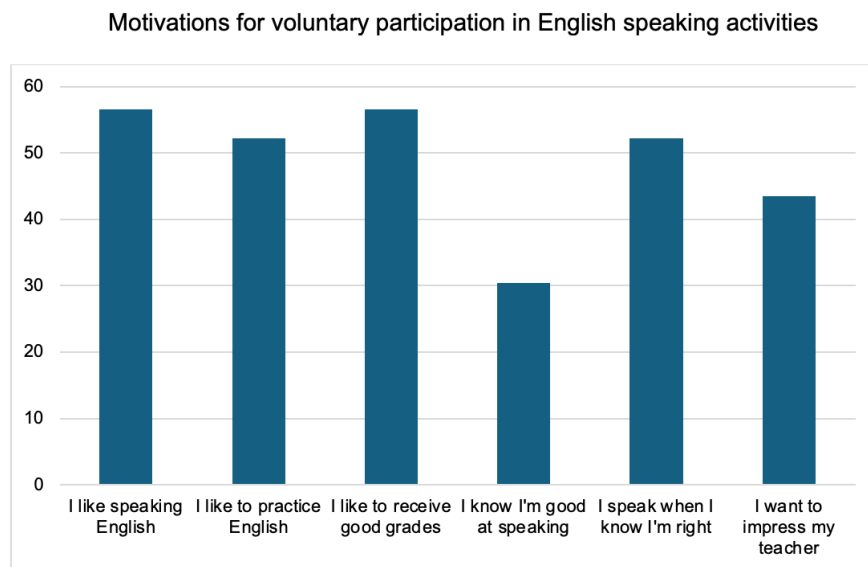


Figure 5. L2 speaking motivation

The last questions addressed activities and situations that facilitate students' readiness to communicate. Similar to the previous one, students could also select more than one answer. All of the students chose games as a method that increases their WTC, which is plausible considering that games often evoke positive feelings and are generally conducted in a relaxed classroom atmosphere. As mentioned above, these factors are likely to contribute to an increase in students' WTC. Interestingly, 87% of the students reported feeling comfortable speaking one-to-one, while 61% expressed a willingness to speak in small groups. 65% of the students indicated that they would feel comfortable speaking during well-prepared presentations. While 39% said that discussing personal topics would increase their willingness to speak, an equal proportion stated that

comparing tasks would further encourage them to participate. This might be explained by the security derived from these themes that increases students' perceived communicative competence. Only less than a quarter of the students (22%) stated that they were willing to communicate when they were addressed by the teacher in front of the class, which can probably be explained by the highly exposing character of the situation.

Activities and situations that increase students' WTC (n=23)

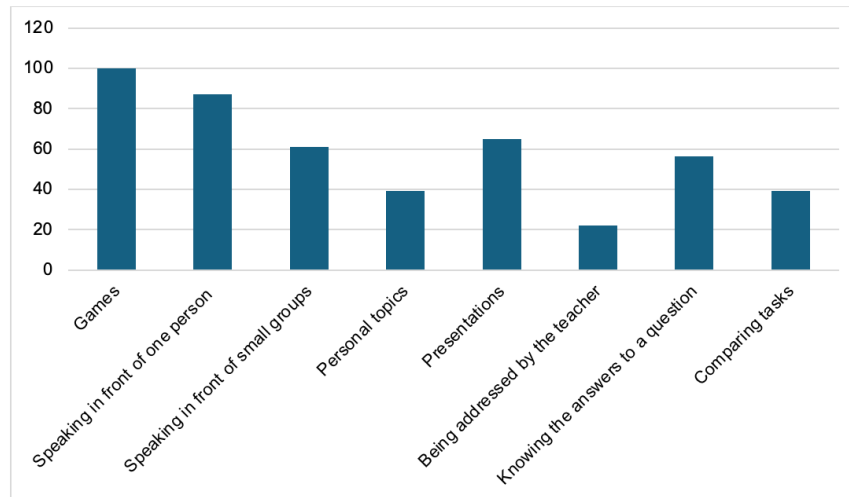


Figure 6. WTC-enhancing activities

All in all, the results indicate that the social setting of speaking tasks significantly affects students' WTC, with students indicating that they find speaking in front of small groups considerably more comfortable than speaking in front of the entire class. Also, students identified making mistakes or receiving poor grades as major obstacles to their WTC. Regarding the factors that motivate students to speak English, enjoyment of the FL and the desire to demonstrate their language competence appear to be central. Additionally for some students, the goal of impressing their teacher also plays a crucial role. Regarding factors that enhance their WTC, most students cited games and ample preparation time as important. Additionally, many students noted that working in smaller groups also contributed positively to their readiness to communicate.

4.4. Lesson plans

The following section will briefly present and discuss the five lesson plans for the three single periods and two double periods. Most activities were carefully chosen from online resources (Farmer, 2023), literature (Dougill, 1987; Swale, 2009) as well as a compiled list of drama-based activities that were received in a seminar (Eigenbauer, 2009). Throughout the process of structuring the lesson plans, I adhered to the structure proposed by Eigenbauer (2009), who suggests to start drama lessons with warm-up activities that both activate and prepare students for the following topic. This is followed by the main part, in which participants are provided with a so called “pre-text”, which are materials (for example texts, pictures or videos) that set the topic for the drama lesson (Eigenbauer, 2009, p. 68). With the help of different drama-based methods, pupils then work with this input (Eigenbauer, 2009). If the topic of the lesson was an emotional or potentially upsetting one, students should be provided with activities that help them reflect on the process and support them in distancing themselves from their roles (Eigenbauer, 2009). The end of every drama lesson should be clearly signalled, for example through rituals such as shaking the body (Eigenbauer, 2009).

The selection of the activities was closely aligned with the curricular goals set for Year 2 students in the Austrian lower secondary school system. According to the curriculum (RIS, 2025), students at this level are expected to engage in short conversations about familiar topics using simple, connected utterances. To support the development of these skills, I implemented activities such as *Matching lines* (Dougill, 1987) and *Random elements* (Dougill, 1987). Furthermore, the curriculum states that learners should be able to navigate everyday communication by giving basic information, asking relevant questions, and making simple agreements in real-life contexts. For this purpose, I incorporated methods such as *Progressive improvisation* (Dougill, 1987) and *Interview* (Eigenbauer, 2020). In addition to these practical communication skills, the curriculum also emphasises the importance of personal expression: students are encouraged to talk about their feelings, preferences, strengths and opinions in a simple and understandable way. To foster these abilities, I used methods such as *Hot chair* (Eigenbauer, 2020). In the process of designing and arranging the drama-based activities, I carefully considered these

curricular requirements and aimed to provide pupils with meaningful and motivating contexts in which to practise their speaking competencies.

Considerable effort was therefore put into the selection of topics for the lesson plans. After discarding the idea of a theme week with only one topic based on the unnecessarily limiting aspects of this approach, I decided to introduce a different topic for each day to ensure that every student finds at least one of the topics intriguing. I then aimed at finding five topics I believed would be interesting as well as relevant to the target group and also suitable in respect to the students' level of proficiency. In the end, I decided on birthday parties, conflicts between parents and teenagers, a fairytale ("Cinderella"), a mystery story and entertaining everyday situations. Concerning the materials and techniques picked to compile the lesson plans, I intended to assemble an array of different input, so as to discover which of them would prove most valuable in increasing students' WTC. I included both partner and group work activities to provide them with more or less challenging opportunities to speak in front of others. Once the lesson plans had been finished, I sent them to four colleagues who also teach English and incorporated their feedback.

Following each lesson plan, the corresponding field notes, recorded immediately after the interventions that were conducted from May 8th to May 12th 2023, will be discussed. In these notes, I included descriptions of the activities and possible deviations from the lesson plans as well as my personal reflections, thoughts and interpretations regarding students' behaviour (Curdtt-Christiansen, 2020). To ensure anonymity, the full names of students were omitted. Lessons 1, 2 and 5 were also observed by my colleague in a "non-participatory observation style" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 179). Having a colleague observe my lessons proved particularly valuable in order to "compare, contrast and cross-check" (Burns, 2010, p. 96) my own impressions of the lessons. Her notes are included following the field notes for the respective days.

4.4.1. Lesson 1 – Birthday party

The overarching purpose of the first lesson plan is to introduce the students to drama-based methods in an entertaining and lively manner. By selecting 'birthday party' as the

topic, I chose a positively connoted theme with familiar vocabulary and I deliberately picked more structured drama techniques to slowly familiarise students with improvisational elements. Before we start the lesson, the pupils are reminded of the ground rules specified in the drama contract and the voluntariness of their participation is again emphasised. Although the first two activities (*Imaginarium* and *Giving presents*) require students to speak in front of the class, they are only asked to deliver very short and pre-structured utterances. The first activity also allows them to choose when they want to participate. The third activity (*Matching lines*) starts with a more structured part in which they have to find another student, but also includes an improvisational element, where the pairs have to come up with a very short scene to be performed in front of the class (see Appendix 8.8.2.). The last activity is a repetition of the first (*Imaginarium*), in order to close the circle on the one hand, and to provide students with an opportunity to present newly acquired vocabulary items which they encountered throughout their work on the sketches.

Rough time frame	Procedure	Inter-action format	Skills / language system	Materials	Notes	Rationale
10 min	Imaginarium (Farmer, 2023) The students sit in a semicircle. The teacher announces that the whole class is now going to create a picture of a birthday party together. One by one, the students walk to the centre of the semicircle, say 'I am the ...' (e.g. 'I am the birthday cake') and freeze in the form of the object they chose. At the end of the activity, the whole class is part of the picture.	Student – Student	Speaking	-	Ensure that they do not overthink their contribution.	This method encourages students to produce simple sentences in a low-pressure environment.

10 min	Giving presents (Farmer, 2023) The students stand in a circle. One student starts and pretends to give his/her neighbour a present. They have to mime if it is big, small, heavy, etc. The person who has just received the gift pretends to open it and decides what it is ('Wow! A couch shaped like an elephant. Thank you!'). Then he/she gives the next person a present.	Student – Student	Speaking, Listening	-	Encourage students to be creative with their ideas and dramatic in how they present the gifts.	This game helps students to use descriptive, spontaneous language.
23 min	Matching lines (Dougill, 1987) Every student receives a card with a part of a birthday party dialogue and has to learn it by heart. They then have to walk around and find the person who picked the line matching theirs. Once they have found their partner, they try to build a short dialogue around these sentences. The dialogues are subsequently performed in front of the class.	Student – Student	Speaking, Listening	Cards with lines e.g., This cake is disgusting. - Oh no! It took me so long to bake it.		This activity promotes learners to create short conversations in a meaningful and interactive context.
7 min	Imaginarium (Farmer, 2023) The starting activity is carried out again but now students are asked to create a scene representing the end of a birthday party (e.g. 'I'm the last crumble left of the birthday cake.').	Student – Student	Speaking, Listening	-	-	This technique encourages reflective processes and spontaneous language use.

Table 1. Lesson plan 1 – Birthday party

Findings from field and observation notes – Birthday party

The first intervention took place on Monday, May 8th, 2023. In the previous English lesson on the preceding Friday, I had reminded the students of the project and they filled out the questionnaire as well as the drama contract. Since we had some spare time on Friday, I initiated a collective mind map creation on the blackboard about the topic 'birthday party' to reactivate their vocabulary. The effectiveness of this pre-task activity was noticeable during the first activity (*Imaginarium*), as they used many words which had occurred in the mind map. As anticipated, more outgoing students started to participate in adding to the picture before pupils with lower WTC joined in. At a moment where the game flow stagnated, I decided to join in with a mildly exaggerated contribution in order to re-enliven the activity, which was successful. According to my colleague who observed the session, students appeared highly engaged and were notably talkative throughout the task. This observation supports Maley and Duff's (1982) assertion that the inclusion of drama-based tasks can lead to increased student motivation. She also reported that all students, except for one student, actively participated, with more proficient learners encouraging the others to take part in the activity.

The second activity (*Giving presents*) seemingly created favourable conditions for students with lower WTC due to the clues provided by the other participants regarding some information about the gift (size, weight, etc.), which made it easier for the recipient to come up with an idea of what to say. This observation aligns with my colleague's notes, in which she reported that even typically shy pupils actively participated in the activity. She further observed that when less proficient students required an extra explanation, I asked one of the more advanced students to explain the task in English. This peer explanation was delivered clearly and effectively without resorting to German. According to my colleague, beginning the activity with a demonstration and seating the more proficient students next to me contributed to a smooth start of the game. This arrangement appeared to give the rest of the class more time to formulate their responses. From my own perspective, it was particularly interesting to observe that this game set off several laughing fits among students, which on the one hand lightened the mood in the classroom, but again gave pupils additional time to prepare their contributions. During this activity,

several factors contributed to students being afforded additional time to plan their oral contributions, which is an important determinant in increasing their WTC (Zarrinabadi, 2014).

At the outset of the following activity (*Matching lines*), students were instructed to find the classmate whose sentence completed their dialogue. This task was carried out promptly by most participants. My colleague noted that while some of the less proficient students initially used German to locate their partners, they quickly identified their matches and switched to English during the subsequent phases. While the participants planned their dialogues, they predominantly spoke English. Interestingly, I noticed that several students with presumably lower WTC noted down their parts of the dialogues, which seemed to serve as a form of preparation for the presentation. Also, some pairs consisted of students showcasing considerably differing speaking abilities, which resulted in valuable student-to-student learning situations as the more proficient students modelled language use and supported their partners. This observation was also emphasised by my colleague. She further remarked that students appeared highly motivated to complete the task in English and made an effort to avoid using German during the guessing activities.

However, after this stage of independent work time, the presentations of the dialogues in front of the other participants did not work out well as most students appeared not yet satisfied with their dialogues and wanted to continue working on them. Thus, I was unable to calm them down sufficiently to listen attentively to their colleagues. If possible, one could hence assign more time to the development of the dialogues. However, I do believe it to be part of the learning process to work within a predefined timeframe and present the results derived from this process.

As the last activity was a repetition of the first, the students were already familiar with the procedure. However, they came up with completely different ideas and I noted that their contributions were notably longer and more creative. This suggests that the familiarity of the task may have provided them a sense of security, enabling them to take greater communicative risks. Additionally, having direct comparison, I was noticeably less

nervous myself which might also have had an effect on the students. As I stayed in the classroom for some more time after the lesson, several students came up to me and talked enthusiastically about their experiences throughout the intervention. For me, it was particularly interesting to talk to one boy, N., who hardly ever talks during the English lessons. He came up to me and told me that this had been the 'best lesson ever'. It should be noted that everyone except for one girl, J., participated in the activities. She decided that she would rather observe throughout the week, as she felt insecure about joining in.

4.4.2. Lesson 2 – Coming home

The second lesson is based on the idea that a topic which students are likely to be familiar with and emotionally affected by, namely issues with their parents, is likely to increase their WTC. The warm-up activity (*Grandmother's footsteps*) aims at providing students with an enjoyable introduction to the lesson and at animating them to move, but also at creating a sense of the subsequent scene. The second activity (*Progressive improvisation*) represents a relatively straightforward introductory activity to improvisation due to its step-by-step approach. By asking for volunteers, more confident students can try out performing in front of the class. Less confident students might then want to participate in the third activity (*Interview*). Having observed the sketch performed by their peers during the second activity, they will be well-prepared to answer all the interview questions. The last two activities (*Shaking the body*, *Crick crack – That's that*) were selected to ensure that students can distance themselves from the roles and to clearly signal that the lesson is finished.

Rough time frame	Procedure	Inter-action format	Skills / language system	Materials	Notes	Rationale
10 min	Grandmother's footsteps One student is the parent who turns their back to the others. The other students stand in line. They are told that they have missed their curfew and have to sneak into their houses without their parents noticing. The parent can turn around at any time and send back any student who is moving to the start. Several rounds are played.	Student – Student	Speaking	-		This game sets the tone for the session and encourages a physical warm-up.
20 min	Progressive improvisation (Dougill, 1987) The teacher introduces the situation: The parents are sitting at the breakfast table and are talking about their child who did not come home last night. The teacher shortly discusses how the parents might be feeling. She then asks for two volunteers to act out the scene where the parents are discussing the child's absence. After some time, the teacher stops them to introduce them to a sibling who just got up. After that, the teacher adds the character of the missing child to the scene. Depending on the situation, other characters (siblings, police, etc.) can be added.	Student – Student Student – Teacher	Speaking, Listening	2 chairs, 1 table		This task encourages students to improvise dialogues and respond spontaneously to new developments.
18 min	Interview (Eigenbauer, 2020) Two students sit down at the table. One is the reporter from the local newspaper, the other is	Student – Student	Speaking	2 chairs, 1 table	If students feel insecure, they may also be interview-	This method promotes question-and-answer

	one of the characters from the story from the previous activity who is being interviewed about the events.				ed with a partner (e.g. both parents, both siblings, etc.)	skills in a meaningful context.
2 min	Shaking the body, Crick crack – That's that (Eigenbauer, 2020) Students are asked to shake their bodies. After that, the whole class says in a chorus "Crick crack, that's that".	Student	Speaking	-		This activity clearly signals the ending of the session.

Table 2. Lesson plan 2 – Coming home

Findings from field and observation notes – Coming home

On the following day, the session began with the warm-up activity *Grandmother's footsteps*, which the students apparently enjoyed and played with notable enthusiasm. Although it was slightly chaotic as their classroom was not an ideal setting for this game, the students made a conscious effort to use only English throughout the activity, even for spontaneous exclamations. Similarly, my colleague observed that some students appeared to be quite competitive, which contributed to the lively and occasionally hectic atmosphere. Nevertheless, she noted that all students participated actively and seemed to enjoy the task. According to her observations, they remained highly focused on speaking English throughout the game.

As I had anticipated, the task *Progressive improvisation* proved to be relatively challenging for the students, with those displaying higher WTC tending to dominate the activity to some extent. However, I noted that, whenever students with lower WTC joined in, they made genuine efforts to communicate their intentions in English. My colleague also noted that even the less proficient students exerted considerable effort and a clear eagerness to engage, even though it was challenging for them to speak English. Moreover, she observed that all learners demonstrated a solid understanding of the scenes and their respective roles. In hindsight, however, I would opt for a more controlled method to provide students with additional cues and structural support (Galante, 2018), thereby facilitating

participation among those with lower WTC and reducing the pressure associated with spontaneous language production.

In the following interview activity, the individual speaking time of the students was more balanced. This was likely due to the fact that students with lower WTC were able to take on less demanding roles, such as asking questions or playing smaller parts. This aligns with findings by van de Water et al. (2015), who argue that drama-based activities provide multiple entry points for participation. According to my colleague's observations, while some less proficient students occasionally resorted to using German words when they lacked vocabulary, they seemed to understand all the questions posed. She also noted that two of the more advanced students opted to imitate an Indian accent while speaking. One reason for this might be to mask their insecurities when talking in front of the rest of the class. However, I also observed that, overall, they seemed more distracted throughout this lesson. This might be attributed to the fact that they had a German test in the following lesson. For this reason we ended this lesson earlier after the last activities (*Shaking the body, Crick crack, that's that*).

In retrospect, I would alter the lesson plan by including an additional activity that provides students with more planning time. This would allow less proficient students to better prepare their utterances and thus gain more confidence. Interestingly, two of the students who tend not to talk a lot during the English lessons approached me after the end of the lesson and asked if in the next lesson we could do activities where everyone could participate in the next lesson, which clearly shows their interest in taking part in the games.

4.4.3. Lesson 3 – *Cinderella*

The topic for the third lesson, which was a double period, was selected based on a fairy tale project in which the students participated in their German lessons, where they intensely worked on the Cinderella story. Thus, it was assumed that they would be sufficiently familiar with the storyline to take part in some activities requiring them to act out parts of it. Nevertheless, a brief discussion of the story was planned for the beginning of the lesson. The second activity (*Good evening, Cinderella*) provides students with a

pre-set utterance to facilitate speaking in front of their colleagues. Also, it encourages participants to use their voices creatively and think of interesting ways to utter the phrase. For the next activity (*Geschichtenkarussell*), students are allowed to form groups with their colleagues. Each group is assigned a scene from the Cinderella story (see Appendix 8.8.3.). After independently preparing the scenes and deciding on an approach to present them with which every group member is comfortable, the groups perform their sketches. The audience sits in a circle, as such a format makes acting in front of the class less daunting. The subsequent technique (*Forumtheatre*) includes multiple repetitions of the same scene at the beginning; thus, this part is assigned to a group with more confident students. The fact that students are then familiar with the setting of the scene and only need to exchange one character to try their ideas facilitates participation for students with lower WTC. *Forumtheatre* is followed by the *Hot chair*, an activity that allows students to put themselves into a character's position and then answer their colleague's questions from this perspective. As they are able to choose the character they want to portray, they have some control over the level of difficulty given that, depending on the amount of information the story provides on the character, coming up with answers will be more or less challenging. The purpose of the last activity (*Countdown*) is to clearly indicate that the lesson has ended.

Rough time frame	Procedure	Inter-action format	Skills / language system	Materials	Notes	Rationale
10 min	Short discussion of the story	Teacher – Student	Speaking	Cards with pictures of the key scenes and a short description to provide students with some input.	-	This activity aims at activating students' prior knowledge and setting the context.
10 min	Good evening, Cinderella (Swale, 2009) Students sit in a line; one student sits in front of them with their back facing them. One student is	Student – Student	Speaking	-	-	This game promotes interaction in an engaging way by practising speaking

	selected and says “Good evening, Cinderella”, trying to disguise his/her voice. The other student has to guess his/her name. If he/she was right, the students switch places. Otherwise, another pupils says the phrase.					with voice modulation.
40 min	Geschichtenkarusse II (Eigenbauer, 2020) The students stand in a circle. They are put into groups of different sizes depending on how many characters are required for their assigned scene. Each group receives a picture of a scene from Cinderella that they have to act out. They have 10 minutes to prepare the scene. After that, each group remains in a frozen position and watches the other scenes from this position. When they are ready, the teacher unfreezes each group, they present their scene and freeze again.	Student – Student	Speaking, Listening	Cards with pictures of the key scenes and a short description to provide students with some input.	Make sure you choose more confident students for scene 2.	This activity fosters spoken language use in a collaborative, creative and physically engaging way.
22 min	Forumtheatre (Eigenbauer, 2020) The teacher asks the students who played scene 2 to play their scene again. She tells the audience that they are allowed to say ‘stop’ when they signal the actors to freeze. Then they can swap one of the characters and / or add a new character to create alternative endings.	Student – Student	Speaking	-	-	This task encourages critical thinking and creativity while providing partly fixed structures that can help students with low WTC to participate more easily.
15 min	Hot chair (Eigenbauer, 2020)	Student – Student	Speaking	chair	In contrast to the	This method promotes

	The teacher asks a volunteer to sit on a chair in front of the class. He/She tells the others which character from the fairy tale he/she wants to be. Then, the audience asks questions, which have to be answered from the character's perspective. After a few minutes, the teacher asks another student take over and portray a different character to keep the activity interesting.				interview activity that was conducted in the previous lesson, everyone can join in now and ask questions. Optional: If students feel insecure and do not want to sit alone in front of the class, they can both choose the same character and answer questions together.	active listening, spontaneous language use and perspective-taking. By allowing to add additional information, students' engagement with the story is deepened.
3 min	Countdown (Eigenbauer, 2020) The group counts together from 10 to 0, then from 9 to 0, etc. Every time they say '0', they jump into the circle and scream 'Yeah'.	Student – Student	Speaking	-		This activity clearly signals the ending of the session in an engaging manner.

Table 3. Lesson plan 3 – Cinderella

Findings from field notes – Cinderella

The third intervention started with a discussion of the fairy tale. I had only allotted ten minutes to this activity in the planning, yet it turned out that the students were eager to share their knowledge of the story and replenish each other's contributions with detail. A few students with lower WTC also joined in. As I found that most students had the urge to share something and since we did have a double lesson on this day, I extended the time allocated to this activity. The following game (*Good evening, Cinderella*) was a success, as everyone wanted to participate and the pre-set phrases supported students with lower WTC to enthusiastically and creatively disguise their voices to trick the person guessing

who was speaking in the middle of the circle. In this case, both the scripted sentence, which provided a sense of security (Galante, 2018), and the playful nature of the activity (Liu et al., 2021) seemed to enhance learners' willingness to engage in the speaking task.

The start of the subsequent task (*Geschichtenkarussell*) was slightly disorganised as some groups needed more guidance and explanations in order to understand exactly what they were asked to do. I had previously assigned them to groups to balance out students with higher WTC and students with lower WTC and most of the groups worked very thoroughly on their scenes. However, one group struggled to perform the scene where Cinderella is transformed by the Fairy Godmother. As I noticed that J., who still refused to participate in the activity, observed them very attentively, I asked her if she could support them with their performance. After giving the proposal some thought, she joined the group and enthusiastically supported them in creating an extraordinary sketch. From this moment onwards, she joined in all the lessons. The presentation of the scenes was quite chaotic at first, as the students in the audience behaved unruly. Some of them could not await their turn to present what they had prepared, while others seemed to be rather nervous before their presentation. Thus, I decided to repeat the presentations, to provide students with lower WTC with more security and the second round went considerably smoother.

As we had spent a lot of time on the discussion and the repetition of the presentations, we did not have enough time for the *Forumtheatre*, which is why we directly skipped forward to the *Hot chair*. This activity was particularly interesting as students who usually do not speak in front of the class indicated their interest in taking part in the activity. I believe that this was partly due to the fact that the atmosphere was rather pleasant after the presentations, where everyone had joined in. Furthermore, the students were unquestionably familiar with the story and its characters at this point, which provided an additional sense of security and ultimately seemed to foster their WTC. Even students who did not want to be interviewed asked very creative questions, such as whether Cinderella thought that she would stay together with the prince or if he was just an easy way out of her situation. Once again, this activity led to several bouts of laughter from the

entire class. In contrast to the previous lesson, I felt that this lesson achieved a good balance between speaking tasks that required varying amounts of preparation time.

4.4.4. Lesson 4 – Picture

The overarching aim of the fourth lesson, also a double period, is to provide the class with some input in the form of a picture (see Appendix 8.8.4.) prompting them to creatively develop an appropriate setting as well as a storyline in groups. The first game (*Memory*) includes all relevant vocabulary items that are required for the following activities (see Appendix 8.8.4.). A second warm-up task (*Form a ...*) requires students to move around and use their imagination to form the objects introduced in the first task. This activity was selected based on its format which allows students to form random groups. In the following task (*What happened before?*), students are asked to develop a short sketch that delivers an explanation for the setting of the picture. They are allowed to choose the time period, location and characters freely. After presenting their short plays to their colleagues, they have to devise the development of the story and act it out (*What happens then?*) to further deepen their involvement in their story. This time, each group freezes after presenting their stories and the audience is instructed to suggest an appropriate title for the play (*Finding a title*) to be integrated in some part of the presentation. At the end of the lesson, students are asked to shake their bodies and close the intervention by saying ‘Crick, crack, that’s that’.

Rough time frame	Procedure	Inter-action format	Skills / language system	Materials	Notes	Rationale
15 min	Memory Each student receives a card with a word related to the picture. Two students play against each other and have to find as many pairs as possible.	Student – Student	Speaking, Listening	Memory	-	This warm-up game helps to activate and reinforce students’ vocabulary knowledge needed for the following tasks.

10 min	‘Form a ...’ (Eigenbauer, 2020) Students walk around in the room. The teacher gives them instructions: ‘Form a ... with ... others’, using items from the picture (church, boat, suitcase,...). To help accelerate the task, the teacher shows them a picture of the object they need to form. The students stay in the last group formation (groups of four) for the rest of the lesson.	Student – Student	Speaking, Listening	Pictures of objects	-	This task promotes collaboration and communication while revising the vocabulary from the previous task. Additionally, it helps finalise the group formations for the lesson.
30 min	What happened before? (Eigenbauer, 2020) In their groups, the students are handed the picture (see Appendix 8.8.4.). They need to invent and rehearse a scene which is set before the situation in the picture and explains - <i>What happened before the man got in the boat?</i> - <i>What is in the suitcase?</i> - <i>Who is waiting for him in the church?</i> The students are given a card with the questions written on it. After 15 minutes, each group presents their scene.	Student – Student	Speaking, Listening	Card with prompt and pictures	-	This activity supports collaborative communication and helps learners practise expressive and creative skills in a meaningful and contextualised setting.
30 min	What happens then? (Eigenbauer, 2020) Each group is asked to think about what happens 10 years after the picture. After 15 minutes, their sketches are	Student – Student	Speaking	-	-	This technique helps students deepen their roles and expand the storylines through collaborative speaking and improvisation.

	presented in a circle to the other groups.					
10 min	Finding a title (Eigenbauer, 2020) Each group forms a freeze frame depicting an aspect of their own scenes. The other groups suggest titles for their story.	Student – Student	Speaking	-	-	This method encourages creativity and spontaneous language use.
5 min	Shaking the body Crick crack, that's that (Eigenbauer, 2020)	Student	Speaking	-	-	This activity clearly signals the ending of the session in an engaging manner.

Table 4. Lesson plan 4 – Picture

Findings from field notes – Picture

In the fourth lesson, the first game (*Memory*) was a very straightforward warm-up activity that helped students familiarise themselves with the vocabulary necessary for the development of the sketches in one of the ensuing activities. Most students needed some time to get used to the following task (*Form a ...*) which required physical activity to depict the objects from the previous game. However, after two rounds, they came up with very inventive constructions.

Similar to the previous lesson, I had already assigned them to groups for the preparation of the sketches relating to the picture (*What happened before?*). As I presented the picture and the task to them, I already noticed that they showed curiosity and excitement about the activity. While they were working in their groups, I walked around to support them if necessary and I observed that most students sought to solely use English to communicate with their colleagues. In this phase, they remained in their groups and the work climate was very concentrated and intense. Students repeatedly approached me and told me how excited they were about their stories and how great they would be. Interestingly, as they did not want the other groups to know about their storylines, they kept their voices very low and worked quietly. Since the presentations had not proceeded smoothly the day before, we revised the behaviour rules before the performances took place. I was very

impressed by the outcomes; as each group had created a completely different narrative about the picture. Every group used their iPads for music or other sound effects and their use of objects from within the classroom as props was outstandingly creative. Most importantly, however, every member in each group participated in a more or less complex role according to their personal liking. To illustrate this, a student who usually attends the additional German course and participated as that course was cancelled on this day was included in his group's sketch as a robot who did not have to speak as it does not know words in English. This further illustrates how opportunities for autonomous task completion (Joe et al., 2017), combined with the creative nature of drama-based tasks, can positively influence learners' WTC.

When I told them about the next activity (*What happens next?*), the students seemed to be really excited to develop their storylines even further. As large parts of the story, such as characters or the time period, had already been formed, they were now able to focus on adding more complexity to their plots. This was evident when each group presented completely different narratives, ranging from a zombie apocalypse to a gangster romance. The sheer difference of the groups' productions also affected their attentiveness as an audience: In contrast to the presentation phase on the day before, where they were familiar with the content of the scenes, they were now eager to find out how the other groups processed the same input. This interest was also shown in the second to last activity where they had to find a title for the stories, which they seemed to enjoy a lot.

4.4.5. Lesson 5 – Sketches

The aim of the last lesson plan is to provide students with a joyful closing of the project. The first warm-up game (*I love you, honey!*) challenges students to present phrases in a way that makes other students laugh. As the sentences are pre-set, students with lower WTC may feel less inhibited to participate in the activity. Additionally, students with higher WTC can be chosen to start the game in order to make others feel more comfortable. The following task (*Random elements*) provides students with different elements of a scene which they have to combine in order to form a comprehensible storyline in groups (see Appendix 8.8.5.). As they make up their own stories, they are also free to choose how

much their characters will be involved, depending on their individual WTC. At the end of the workshop, students are asked to discuss the most memorable moment from the stories in their groups and depict it as a photograph (*Photography*).

Rough time frame	Procedure	Inter-action format	Skills / language system	Materials	Notes	Rationale
10 min	I love you, honey! (Swale, 2009) Students form a circle; one student stands in its centre. He/She chooses a person, looks at him/her and says dramatically "I love you, honey!". The addressee replies "I love you too, but I just can't smile" without starting to laugh. If he/she manages, the person in the middle selects somebody else. If not, he/she switches position with the person in the centre of the circle.	Student – Student	Speaking	Phrases should be written on the blackboard: <i>"I love you, honey"</i> - <i>"I love you too, but I just can't smile"</i> .	-	This game fosters spontaneous language use in a low-pressure setting.
30 min	Random elements (Dougill, 1987) Students are divided into groups of 3 or 4. Each group randomly chooses 3 cards. Each card provides them with information about the sketches they need to create (location of scene, participants, situations). They are instructed to prepare a short sketch that includes these elements within 15 minutes. Afterwards, the groups perform their work and the audience has to guess the situation, the location and the characters.	Student – Student	Speaking, Listening	Slips of paper depicting the situations, locations and characters. Maybe: chairs and desks. Situations: an argument, a surprise birthday party, etc. Locations: on the beach, on the bus, etc. Characters: a strict teacher, a police officer, etc.	Students are asked to think on their feet and create sketches including some well-known elements.	This activity fosters creativity and collaborative problem-solving by challenging students to incorporate random elements into their sketches.

10 min	Photography (Eigenbauer, 2020) Each group chooses the most remarkable moment of their sketch and creates a freeze frame, which is then presented in front of the class.	Student – Student	Speaking	-	-	This method encourages students to reflect on key moments in their performance.
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Table 5. Lesson plan 5 – Sketches

Findings from field and observation notes – Sketches

On the last day of the project, the warm-up game ‘*I love you, honey!*’ created a very positive and light-hearted atmosphere in the classroom. The participants giggled a lot while watching the pair in the middle of the circle and all students wanted to play. This observation was echoed by my colleague, who also noted the high level of engagement among the students. Once again, Liu et al.’s (2021) findings on the positive correlation between game-based activities and increased levels of WTC are reflected here. As previously observed, the use of pre-scripted sentences seemed to provide students with lower WTC with a sense of security. Overall, as my colleague had not observed the last two lessons, she remarked that the students already seemed more familiar with structure and expectations of DBP. This suggests an increased level of comfort and competence with the format over time.

The second activity (*Random elements*), however, proved to be more challenging than initially anticipated, as the students struggled to create coherent narratives from the random images they had been given, appearing unable to connect the items in a creative manner. In retrospect, incorporating a different warm-up activity that encourages the activation of this skill in advance may have prepared them better for this task. However, after helping them overcome these initial difficulties by providing additional input to each group, the learners made an effort to conceptualise their dialogues and developed very interesting sketches. My colleague made similar observations, noting that while generating random dialogues was clearly demanding, the students generally appeared to enjoy the activity and were eager to achieve good results. She also commented on the high level of collaboration demonstrated within the groups, with more proficient students regularly supporting their less advanced peers. In one group of three, composed of two

higher-achieving students and one less proficient student, she observed a particularly interesting dynamic: the less proficient girl repeatedly asked her groupmates to repeat her lines, which seemed to provide her with a sense of security and helped her feel confident enough to perform in front of the class. Overall, I had the impression that, following the previous day's session, the students were already well acclimated to the requirements of drama-based tasks. As a result, they seemed better equipped to handle less structured tasks with increasing autonomy and confidence.

Unfortunately, there was no time to introduce them to the *Photography* task, as the second task had lasted longer than planned. Instead, we did the '*Crick, crack, that's that*' activity once again. After the end of the lesson, several students approached me to express their excitement about the project and to ask whether we could continue working like this. Interestingly, one girl, S., who typically demonstrates very low levels of WTC during the English lessons, asked if I could help her and her group of friends develop a sketch to be performed in front of the other classes. Together, we worked on the sketch, which was later presented at our school's summer party.

After completing a week of drama-based lessons, I was left with a positive impression, which stemmed from my observations, discussions with my colleague, and the students' informal feedback after each lesson. However, to gain more detailed insights into their responses and to better understand how the activities influenced their WTC, focus group interviews were conducted afterwards, which will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

5. Analysis of the interviews

The focus group interviews were carried out in the following week. These interviews provided an opportunity for students to reflect on their experiences, allowing me to capture a broader range of perspectives. Participation in the focus group interviews was voluntary, and nearly all of the students in the class were eager to take part. I then selected twelve students – six boys and six girls – based on my subjective assessment of their varying

degrees of WTC. As previously mentioned, I then divided the boys and girls into two groups. The table below illustrates the participants' demographic data. For reasons of anonymity, each learner was assigned a speaker code, which is also displayed in the table.

Focus group 1			Focus group 2		
Speaker code	Age	Gender	Speaker code	Age	Gender
S1	13	f	S7	11	m
S2	13	f	S8	12	m
S3	12	f	S9	13	m
S4	13	f	S10	11	m
S5	11	f	S11	11	m
S6	12	f	S12	11	m

Table 6. Demographic information on the students

In the following, the method used to analyse the data collected in the focus group interviews, as well as the results, will be presented and discussed. To examine the data collected in the focus group interviews, the method of qualitative content analysis was employed. This approach encompasses the “assigning successive parts of the material to the categories of a coding frame” (Schreier, 2014, p. 170). First, the two interviews were transcribed manually (Dörnyei, 2007) (see Appendix 8.5.). Then, to compress the data and organise it into useful categories, “deductive coding” (Burns, 2010, p. 107) was applied. Deductive coding requires reserachers to develop categories derived from existing literature or theoretical frameworks and subsequently search the data for examples that fit these predetermined categories (Burns, 2010). However, this was by no means a linear procedure. As highlighted by Schreier (2014), it was necessary to revisit some steps and adjust the coding frame accordingly. Ultimately, however, this process resulted in seven main categories, which are presented in the table below.

Code	Description of Code
<i>Stimulating nature of tasks</i>	Statements describing the motivational or engaging aspects of drama-based activities
<i>Movement</i>	Comments about physical activity or moving during the tasks
<i>Social Setting</i>	Remarks on how pair or group work positively affected participation or outcomes
<i>Teacher-student relationship</i>	Statements about interactions with the teacher during DBP lessons
<i>Amount of speaking time</i>	Comments indicating increases opportunities or time spent speaking English
<i>Autonomy</i>	Remarks about making independent choices or working autonomously during activities
<i>Foreign Language Anxiety</i>	Statements expressing nervousness, fear of mistakes, or anxiety about speaking English

Table 7. Codes and explanations

A sample excerpt from a coded interview is provided in the appendix to illustrate the coding process (see Appendix 8.6). For the sake of clarity, these factors are discussed in two separate chapters, grouping them into those that contribute to an unwillingness to speak and those that supported WTC in the drama project.

5.1. Factors leading to an unwillingness to speak

Regarding factors that hinder their WTC in the classroom, several students mentioned that they were afraid of speaking in front of the whole class. When asked for reasons, the participants provided various explanations. Their answers, however, aligned with their responses collected in the questionnaires. The fear of making mistakes was repeatedly claimed to be a reason for not wanting to speak in front of others. S3 argues that she felt uncomfortable speaking in front of her colleagues due to socio-emotional concerns: “dann machen sie sich halt lustig über dich” [then they’ll just make fun of you]. S2 agreed, stating: “Ich fühl mich manchmal peinlich, ich hab halt Angst, dass ich einen Fehler mache” [Sometimes I feel embarrassed, I’m just afraid of making a mistake]. These statements

can be clearly linked to MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) variable of *social situation*, which, if perceived as unsupportive or tense, may significantly reduce learners' WTC.

Notably, S6 described low WTC in situations in which she is asked about her weekend activities, which, at first glance, contradicts the aforementioned results of studies claiming that learners are more willing to speak about topics they are familiar with (Zarrinabadi, 2014). However, when taking into account the setting of these conversations, it is important to note that they occur in front of the whole class. Therefore, the potential boost in their WTC gained through familiarity with the topics may be overshadowed by their unease about making mistakes in front of their peers. Additionally, as many of my students come from low-income households, elaborate leisure activities are often rare for them. Consequently, discussing their weekends might be more stressful than it would be for other children.

It is worth noting that, when asked about their feelings when performing in front of the entire class, S7, who usually is not very outspoken during lessons, remarked: "Dieses Schauspielern war immer gut. Also auch wenn man allein in der Mitte war und so" [Acting was always good, even when you were alone in the middle and all]. S6 – who typically exhibits a very low level of WTC during lessons – described her experience as follows: "Ja, zuerst habe ich mich nicht wohlfühlt, aber dann habe ich halt, wo wir das dann mal gemacht haben, dann war es mir egal, was andere denken" [At first, I didn't feel comfortable, but then, when we actually did it, I stopped caring about what others thought]. This corroborates Peng's (2025) research who argues that stimulating students with tasks requiring spoken output can foster their WTC. As previously mentioned, an initial fear of performing in front of others is quite common. However, it was encouraging to see how quickly she was able to overcome that fear and later in the interview, she also revealed that acting was her favourite part of the project. This aligns with Lee et al.'s (2020) findings which show that role-play can support learners in decreasing their reluctance to speak in the language classroom. One possible explanation is that role-play might enable more reserved students to speak more freely by temporarily 'hiding' behind the character they are portraying.

Another frequently mentioned reason for students' reluctance to participate in speaking activities was the fear of receiving poor grades. S10 claimed that he does not enjoy speaking "weil ich keine Fehler machen will und keine schlechtere Note bekommen mag" [because I don't want to make mistakes and I don't want to get a worse grade]. S8 and S9 affirmed his statement. These comments are consistent with the results of the questionnaire, which similarly highlight performance-related anxiety. S11 stated that his WTC depends on the people who listen to him: "vor Klasse ist es okay, aber vor Lehrerin einfach nein" [in front of the class, it's okay, but in front of the teacher, just no]. These findings can be interpreted in light of Dörnyei's concept of the *Ought-To L2 Self* (2009), which refers to learners' perception of obligations to avoid negative outcomes, in this case, making mistakes and receiving low marks. Interestingly, this differs from my assessment scale, where I focus on overall participation rather than accuracy in speaking. Consequently, both the interview responses and the questionnaire data offered valuable insights into how students perceive evaluation in speaking tasks and highlighted a potential misalignment between my intention and my learners' perception.

5.2. Aspects supporting students' WTC in the drama project

When they were asked about activities that would enhance their WTC in general, S6 and S11 immediately answered "drama activities". In the following, specific aspects that were identified by the interviewees as contributing to their WTC will be examined.

Stimulating nature of tasks

In response to questions about the drama project, the interviewees' feedback was consistently positive. S9 commented that "Es war das Beste, was wir in Englisch bis jetzt gemacht haben" [It was the best thing we've done in our English classes so far] with which S10 and S5 agree. The girls shared similar impressions, with S2 noting the contrast between the atmosphere she perceived during regular English lessons and that during the drama project activities:

Ja, weil beim Lesen oder so, fast keiner zeigt da auf [...]. Sie nehmen halt dran [teil], aber fast keiner zeigt da auf. Und bei diesem Projekt halt, hat es jedem Spaß gemacht, was zu spielen und ja, es hat halt wirklich viel Spaß gemacht

und ich finde, es sollte auch wirklich öfters sein. Also das ist jetzt eine Bitte an Sie. Ein request. (lacht)
[Yeah, because when we're reading or doing stuff like that, almost no one raises their hand [...]. You call on students, but hardly anyone actually raises their hand. But with this project, everyone really enjoyed acting out scenes, and yeah, it was a lot of fun and I think it should happen more often. So that's a request to you. A request. (laughs)]

This statement clearly shows the high levels of participation during the project. S2 and S3 emphasised that it was entertaining and not difficult. S2 highlighted the easiness of the tasks: “Es war urleicht, also es war echt urleicht” [It was super easy, like really, really easy]. These impressions highlight not only the central role that motivation plays in fostering students' WTC (Lao, 2020; MacIntyre et al., 1998), but also the potential of drama-based pedagogy to establish a positive and low-anxiety classroom climate encouraging of communicative participation (Lee et al., 2020).

S1 emphasised that amusement was a key element of the project: “wenn wir so etwas machen, dann müssen alle lachen und dann will man noch mehr Englisch reden, sodass sie noch mehr lachen” [when we do something like that, everyone ends up laughing, and then you want to speak even more English so that they laugh even more]. This statement highlights the ease and entertainment value inherent in the drama-based activities. Unlike many traditional language learning activities, the game-like nature of these tasks may reduce the learners' perception of effort, potentially making them feel less like they are engaged in conventional assignments. This observation aligns with Liu et al.'s (2021) findings on the motivational value of the incorporation of educational games. As an overall result, learners' FLE may be elevated, which can be linked to an increase of their WTC (Khajavy et al., 2021).

Movement

Drama activities not only have a playful nature compared to traditional language learning tasks, but also offer students significant freedom of movement within the room and, at times, even outside of the classroom. Additionally, most warm-up exercises involve movement, and the subsequent tasks also require learners to integrate movements into the scenes or games. Interestingly, S12 suggested a connection between movement and

his WTC: “Wenn ich mich bewegen kann, fällt es mir leichter, zu sprechen” [Being able to move makes it easier for me to speak]. He typically attracts everyone’s attention in class because of his restless behaviour and constant shifting. Therefore, it appears that the spatial freedom provided by the drama-based approach increased his comfort level, thereby enhancing his readiness to engage in the speaking tasks. This link between movement and an enhanced WTC in students was demonstrated by Peng (2019), suggesting that incorporating movement-based task may support learners’ readiness to engage in interaction.

Social setting

Another positive aspect that was frequently mentioned in the interviews was the benefit of working in small groups during the drama project. S1, for example, mentioned that she enjoyed working with different people in small groups: “Es war urcool, weil wir so einfach in random Gruppen gepartnert wurden” [It was super cool because we were just randomly put into groups]. S2 agreed with her on the fact that working in groups was a considerable advantage of the project: “Oh, das mit der Gruppenarbeit war wirklich auch sehr cool, weil, wenn wir in Gruppen eingesetzt worden sind, waren es nicht nur Mädchen oder so, weil wenn sie auch gemischt sind, verstehen wir uns” [Oh, the group work was also really cool, because when we were put into groups, it wasn’t just girls or anything like that, when the groups are mixed, we actually get along well]. S5 and S3 also highlighted the advantage of putting boys and girls into groups, observing that it not only enhanced the project but also led to closer relationships among participants. S9 agreed: “Das mit den Gruppen war urgut” [The group thing was super good]. It appears that the previously discussed fear of being ridiculed was primarily associated with speaking in front of the entire class, whereas dividing students into smaller groups significantly altered the atmosphere and alleviated these concerns. This observation reinforces the pivotal role of the classroom environment in shaping learners’ WTC (Khajavy et al., 2018).

Interviewees offered further insights into the perceived advantages of group work. S9, for example, also states that his fear of making mistakes was reduced through group work: “Und man hat halt nicht so viel Angst, dass man Fehler macht, weil man ist in einer Gruppe

und die anderen machen vielleicht auch Fehler” [And you’re just not as afraid of making mistakes, because you’re in a group and the others make mistakes too]. This suggests that a positive atmosphere in group work can mitigate learners’ fear of making mistakes, therefore increasing their WTC. Similarly, Li et al. (2024) found a correlation between a supportive group setting and increased WTC in their study.

In addition to an enhancement of one’s WTC by realising that other group members may also make mistakes, one student also noted that she benefited from the diverse levels of English proficiency within the group. She explained how working with more proficient students increased her readiness to speak: “Und ich finde, wenn in meinem Team [Name einer Schülerin] ist, dann hilft es mir mehr, weil ich weiß nicht, was ich genau sagen soll und sie sagt dann genau halt was ich sagen muss und so” [And I think that when [student’s name] is in my group, it helps me, because I don’t always know exactly what to say, and she just tells me what I need to say and stuff like that]. The sense of being well-prepared for the speaking situation might lead to more confidence during the actual event, thereby enhancing the students’ perceived communicative competence and thus their WTC (Ghonsooly et al., 2012).

Teacher-student relationship

Not only was the relationship between the students discussed in the interviews, but S2 also made an interesting point by connecting the drama project to the relationship between the teacher and the students:

Also ich finde es sehr gut, wenn Lehrer mit ihren Schülern Zeit verbringen, sodass man sie ein bisschen versteht und nicht immer schreiben, auf Tafel und so weiter, weil das finde ich sehr langweilig. Und wenn Sie dann solche Aktivitäten machen, dann können Sie uns vielleicht auch besser verstehen, ob wir das mögen, oder, wie wir uns so benehmen in solchen Situationen.

[I really think it’s great when teachers spend time with their students, so you get to understand them a bit, and not just always writing on the board, and so on, because I find that really boring. And when you do activities like that, you might also understand us better, whether we enjoy it or how we behave in those kinds of situations]

Here, she not only draws a connection between the drama project and the students' interpersonal skills, but also links the activities to their potential for enhancing the teacher-student relationship by noting that empathy for each other may increase. My observations fully aligned with her statement, as I noted a definite improvement in our relationship in the weeks following the project. Students appeared more open, communicative, and willing to engage with me both during and outside class activities. As previously noted, a positive relationship between teachers and pupils can have a strong effect on the students' WTC (Cai, 2021). When learners feel emotionally safe and respected in the classroom, they are more likely to take communicative risks and participate actively.

Amount of speaking time

Another aspect that was frequently mentioned was the amount of speaking time students had during the tasks. S11 claimed that "Wir haben ganze Zeit geredet, Englisch und so" [We spent the whole time talking, mostly in English and all that], while S11 elaborated on this point by stating that "Wenn ich spreche, dann ist es halt ein bisschen schwer, aber ich merke, wenn ich mehr in der Stunde spreche, wird es viel einfacher. Wenn wir zum Beispiel, wie beim Drama die ganze Stunde nur gesprochen haben" [When I speak, it's a bit hard at first, but I notice that the more I speak during class, the easier it gets. Like for example, when we did drama and spent the whole lesson just speaking]. Providing students with ample opportunities to speak in the FL can have a positive effect on their WTC. As learners accumulate successful experiences in communicative tasks, their confidence grows, leading to an increased sense of perceived communicative competence increases. This, in turn encourages higher levels of willingness to participate in communication (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2018).

One girl also shared her observations regarding the boys' WTC: "Ich finde, also die Jungs und so, die, die fallen sich am meisten schwer, Englisch zu reden. Aber hier in diesem Projekt und so, haben sie halt alle viel Englisch gesprochen und haben halt mehr Englisch geredet als normalerweise" [I think the boys and all, they usually have the hardest time speaking English. But in this project, they all actually spoke a lot of English, more than

they normally do]. This comment corresponds to the aforementioned study stating that girls show higher levels of WTC (Cheng & Xu, 2022).

Autonomy

Autonomy, another factor that has been shown to enhance learners' WTC (Tan et al., 2023) was frequently highlighted by students as a key advantage of the drama project, particularly in terms of their ability to make independent decisions. S1, for example, stated that "dann mussten wir etwas, irgendetwas erfinden, das war echt cool" [then we had to come up with something, anything really, and that was really cool]. This comment illustrates how opportunities for creativity and self-directed language use can contribute to a sense of autonomy, thereby promoting learners' WTC.

As S2 mentioned: "wir hatten wirklich [...] eine eigene Entscheidung, wie wir die Story machen und das war halt wirklich sehr cool" [we really [...] got to decide how we wanted to do the story, and that was pretty cool] . When asked about aspects he liked about the project, S12 also expresses his appreciation of the freedom they had. However, in their interview group, S1 and S3 also reflected on the challenges posed by the additional autonomy:

S3: Ich meinte halt es war viel schwerer, also wenn wir also ...

S1: Wenn wir selbst unsere Wörter und unseren Text erfinden müssen, weil im Buch müssen wir nur ablesen und so.

S3: Ja und da müssen wir unsere Idee selber hald machen, aber im Buch ist da halt schon alles drinnen.

[S3: I mean, it was way harder when we had to...

S1: When he have to come up with our own words and text, because in the book we just have to read from it and stuff.

S3: Yeah, and there we have to make up our own ideas, but everything's already in the book]

Nevertheless, S3 later expressed her appreciation for the freedom, as it allowed each group to use their imagination to develop entirely different storylines. S1 also provided an example in this regard: "Weil zum Beispiel bei dieser mit Boot und Kirche, da hat jeder das gleiche Bild bekommen, aber wir haben so unterschiedliche Geschichten und so

geschauspielert” [Because, for example, with that one about the boat and the church, everyone got the same picture, but we all came up with such different stories and acted them out]. As previously mentioned, perceived autonomy positively impacts students’ WTC, in that learners who feel they have the freedom to make decisions regarding their language use, they are more inclined to engage in communication (Zarrinabadi et al., 2021). Therefore, it can be assumed that the ability to decide on their storylines and presentations positively influenced the participants’ readiness to speak.

When they were asked about their favourite drama activity, the majority of students named the activity *What happened before?* as their preferred choice. During this double period, they were tasked with inventing a background story for a picture of a man in a boat, performing their scenes in front of the class and then creating a subsequent performance depicting what happened ten years later. The reasons for this choice are manifold. Firstly, while the task of creating a new storyline in groups was challenging, students appeared to appreciate the level of difficulty and showed great eagerness to develop a gripping storyline. Additionally, as previously mentioned, they were impressed by the variety of outcomes from the different groups. Also, from my point of view, these periods were the ones when students worked with utmost concentration and harmoniously.

In summary, it appears that the pupils generally enjoyed the integration of DBP into their English lessons. Consistent with the questionnaire results, students mentioned in the interviews that speaking in front of others was a significant barrier to their WTC and the fear of making mistakes was cited as a major hindrance. In the context of the interviews, they could, however, also provide reasons or explanations for their statements. Regarding the positive aspects of the drama project, students frequently highlighted the entertainment value of the activities and the support they received from peers while working in groups. Additionally, they appreciated the extended speaking time during tasks and the opportunity to make autonomous decisions about their projects. It is acknowledged that factors which positively contributed to students’ WTC, such as opportunities for autonomous work, game-like activities, incorporation of movement, group collaboration, and an emphasis on building a positive teacher-student-relationship

are characteristics of various teaching approaches. However, it can be stated that drama-based tasks appear to integrate these elements in a particularly effective and cohesive manner. This quality may explain why they had such a positive impact on students' WTC.

6. Implications and conclusion

The final chapter of this thesis seeks to bridge the gap between the theoretical framework of this thesis and the data collected during the AR project. This is also the final phase of the action research project, which is the stage of *reflection* (Burns, 2010). The aim of this chapter is to link the results to the theoretical framework outlined above, address the research questions, and draw implications from the insights gained.

The overall purpose of this Master's thesis was to show that approaches from the field of DBP can be useful tools in increasing students' WTC in the EFL classroom. The pivotal role of WTC in language learning was highlighted in the theoretical foundation of this thesis introduced above (Dörnyei, 2005; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Wei & Xu, 2021). The empirical basis to test the potential of drama-based methods to increase WTC is constituted by an AR project which was conducted with a lower secondary EFL class in Austria. Prior to the beginning of the drama lessons, the students completed a questionnaire to assess their self-perception regarding their WTC in class. Subsequently, they participated in seven English lessons using drama-based activities, conducted within the course of a week. After each lesson, I recorded my insights and reflections in a research journal, while a colleague of mine was a non-participatory observer during three of the five sessions. In the week following the intervention, twelve students participated in focus group interviews to share their perceptions. The interview data acquired was transcribed and analysed using a qualitative content analysis method in order to answer the research questions.

From the results of the questionnaire conducted before the drama project, it can be concluded that according to students' self-reflections, the fear of bad grades and making

mistakes in front of the whole class strongly contribute to their unwillingness to participate in speaking activities. When it came to factors increasing their WTC, students stated that their overall enjoyment of English as well as their wish to practise the language were crucial. This aligns with the research conducted by Khajavy et al., which found that language enjoyment significantly enhances learners' WTC (2021). Additionally, the desire to demonstrate their English skills was identified as an important factor. This confirms research by Ghonsooly et al., who found that students with confidence in their speaking abilities exhibit a greater readiness to engage in spoken interactions (2012). Considering situational factors, speaking in front of small groups and participating in game-like activities were considered particularly motivating in increasing their readiness to speak. The literature review established that incorporating entertaining elements (Liu et al., 2021) and eliminating unnecessary stressors (Wang et al., 2022), such as speaking situations in front of large groups, can effectively boost students' WTC.

The first research question guiding this thesis was concerned with how, based on teachers' perceptions, methods from the field of DBP can support the development of students' WTC in an Austrian EFL classroom. Firstly, the establishment of a positive classroom environment characterised by entertainment and enjoyment was highlighted as a positive contributing factor during the interviews and in the observations. Ensuring that learners felt secure enough to speak without fear of ridicule by consistently emphasising my strong stance against mockery proved to be effective. Additionally, since the assessment was based solely on participation rather than error rates, the frequently mentioned fear of negative marks – which, according to the interviews and questionnaires, had previously discouraged them from participating in speaking activities – appeared to be mitigated. Therefore, although negative marks and the resulting fear of them cannot be completely eliminated due to the structural conditions of our educational system, a focus on easing the stress associated with overall communication assessment and occasionally incorporating drama-based activities in EFL classrooms might provide a relieving approach for learners.

Secondly, the interviewees identified the ability to work autonomously to be a crucial aspect in terms of increasing their WTC. Although this aligns with studies showing a

correlation between learner autonomy and heightened WTC (Tan et al., 2023), reducing their own levels of control might seem daunting to many teachers, which is one reason why DBP is often approached with caution (Bowell & Heap, 2017). During the AR, it was observed that while activities which provided learners with more freedom occasionally led to a more hectic classroom atmosphere, they ultimately created a highly intense learning atmosphere and produced exceptionally creative outcomes. Interestingly, these activities were also among those most frequently mentioned as the students' favourites.

Another important factor contributing to students' WTC was a positive relationship with their teacher (Cai, 2021). On the one hand, trying to impress their teacher was a commonly mentioned factor for their WTC in the questionnaire. On the other hand, speaking in front of their teacher was also a fear-inducing aspect for many students, possibly linked to the concern of receiving poor grades. However, as mentioned by one interviewee, the drama project certainly contributed to an improved teacher-student relationship. This aligns with my own observations, as getting to know my students better throughout this project has certainly enhanced my understanding of and empathy for them. An interesting reciprocal dynamic hence emerges through drama-based methods, as on the one hand, a good relationship between teachers and students is an important prerequisite for a successful drama project, while on the other hand, a drama project can also definitely improve the teacher-student relationship (Joronen et al., 2012).

A further aspect that supported students' WTC was the social setting of the activities. Both interviews and questionnaires revealed that students felt anxious speaking in front of the class, which diminished their WTC. Consequently, working in small groups helped mitigate this issue, as practising their scenes in front of group members served as a trial run before performing in front of the entire class. Working in small groups not only reduced the number of listeners but also enhanced the cooperation among learners. More proficient speakers supported those with less advanced speaking skills, helping them prepare for their performances and thereby reducing their speaking anxiety. The inclusive nature of DBP is illustrated by an example of a student who typically does not participate in our English classes, and therefore has limited English-speaking skills. Without further

ado or input from the teacher, his group created a nonverbal role for him to participate in their scene. This demonstrates that DBP accommodates students at all levels, regardless of talent or experience (van de Water et al., 2015).

The second research question aimed at examining students' subjective perceptions on the usefulness of the methods of DBP regarding their WTC. While WTC is a complex phenomenon to examine, both my and my colleague's observations, along with the students' feedback, indicated a considerable increase in their speaking time during the project. Additionally, it can be stated that the students' descriptions as well as the subsequent analysis clearly indicated higher levels of WTC during the drama project compared to our regular language lessons. It was particularly interesting to observe that students with lower WTC repeatedly sought one-on-one settings after the lessons to ask for the inclusion of more drama activities in our regular English classes. While I observed an initial hesitance when I introduced the first drama activities to them, they showed exceptional openness towards trying these new tasks. This was also described by them in the interviews.

Nevertheless, the limitations of this thesis must be acknowledged as well. The main drawback of this study was the inability to conduct a second cycle of the AR project, which resulted in missing data on the potential improvement and validation of the drama-based intervention. Including all three parallel classes and thereby being able to extend the project by another week might have yielded more nuanced insights. Additionally, the qualitative nature of AR entails certain challenges (Banegas & Consoli, 2020). On the one hand, the relatively small sample size of a single class of 22 students precludes generalisability and restricts the possibility to apply the results to other classrooms. On the other hand, my dual role as both the students' teacher and this study's researcher might also result in drawbacks, as the students might have adjusted their answers in the interviews according to principles of social acceptability.

Additionally, conducting research on WTC is a difficult undertaking, as it is a complex construct to study within a short timeframe. Although I attempted to collect diverse data through a questionnaire, self and peer observations, and interviews, the concept of WTC

remains difficult to capture comprehensively. Thus, incorporating additional professionals such as trained psychologists in the process of measuring WTC, could lead to more precise assessments. Also, while guaranteeing anonymity in the questionnaire encouraged honesty, it also prevented the analysis of individual students' development. Further studies might benefit from collecting identifiable data and monitoring learners over an extended period to gain deeper insight into the progression of their WTC. In this light, I would argue that the present study may serve as a starting point for future longitudinal research, potentially leading to more detailed findings.

Drawing on both the outcomes of my research and my overall teaching experience, several pedagogical suggestions can be made. To begin with, teachers need to exhibit a certain level of flexibility when including drama activities in their lessons. Crucially, students ought to feel free to choose whether or not to participate in the activities. This was illustrated by the example of the student who decided to observe the tasks until she felt ready to participate. Although she required more time, she eventually joined in with high motivation and demonstrated great levels of WTC during the performances. Also, students with lower levels of WTC should be allowed to use all means of supportive techniques, such as taking notes, seeking assistance from peers or repeating tasks all together to build their confidence and routine in speaking. It can also be helpful to have more proficient students perform the activities first, so that less confident pupils can see what is expected, which in turn can increase their confidence.

Additionally, when selecting and planning activities, certain aspects need to be considered to help enhance students' WTC. For instance, tasks involving various roles allowed students to regulate the amount of speaking time with which they felt comfortable and to experiment with both more active or passive roles, depending on their level of comfort. Also, the combination of more structured activities providing students with pre-set utterances (e.g. *I love you, honey*) and tasks that allow them to create their own ones (e.g. *Interview*) was found to be an effective didactic strategy. This approach strikes a balance between security and challenge, as demanded by Joe et al. (2017). This dual focus benefits learners by fostering grammatical development while also encouraging fluency

and spontaneous language use. Similarly, combining activities of varying degrees of difficulty and seriousness can enhance students' enjoyment and contribute to a more positive classroom environment. For example, the game *Good evening, Cinderella* notably lightened the mood, while *Geschichtenkarussell* required students to focus and concentrate on the development of their scenes. With regard to forming groups, allowing students to choose their own group members can foster their sense of autonomy, which may enhance their WTC (Tan et al., 2023). However, as previously mentioned, the impact carefully assigned groups with group members exhibiting varying levels of proficiency can have on the WTC of less proficient speakers should not be underestimated. Thus, the group assignment process should be varied.

Regarding implications that extend beyond drama-based activities and hold relevance for EFL instruction more generally, starting most of my lessons with a low-pressure warm-up activity has proven effective in reducing student anxiety and fostering a positive, receptive classroom atmosphere. In my experience, establishing such routines from the outset of a learning process contributes to building learners' confidence and increasing their willingness to participate, regardless of the specific teaching method employed. Although I originally implemented this strategy in the context of DBP, it has also proven valuable in my regular language instruction.

The physical learning environment also plays a significant role in shaping learner outcomes. Providing opportunities for students to work in alternative spaces beyond the traditional classroom, when possible, can enhance a sense of safety and privacy. This, in turn, can encourage risk-taking and increased participation, particularly in group or pair-based tasks. Since completing my research I have made a more conscious effort to utilise both the classroom and the adjacent hallway, incorporating various social settings to give learners more space to complete their tasks. Also, incorporating movement-based tasks, such as physically interactive speaking activities, can boost student engagement and support language learning through kinesthetic and embodied experiences. I have applied this finding particularly in my lower-level classes by intentionally designing learning environments that require students to move freely around the room. One example for this is the implementation of weekly station-based learning activities.

Group-oriented work remains a central element, not only within drama but across general EFL lessons, as it consistently fosters peer interaction and communicative competence. The teacher's role is vital in establishing a supportive learning climate. By participating actively in classroom activities, including playful or humorous ones, teachers can model engagement and reduce affective barriers, thereby encouraging students to take initiative and feel comfortable using the target language. I have made a conscious effort to foster my relationship with learners by ensuring that I participate in games and speaking tasks as often as possible. In alignment with communicative teaching principles, it is also beneficial to prioritise meaning over form during performance or oral activities, intervening with corrections only when misunderstandings arise. Here, the feedback I received from both the questionnaire as well as the interviews was particularly revealing, as I had not previously noticed before that my assessment criteria for oral participation had not been transparent. Students appeared to believe that the number of mistakes they made, rather than their overall spoken contributions, would ultimately determine their grades. Since then, I repeatedly explain the grading process and encourage students even more to step forward and actively participate in speaking tasks.

In accordance with MacIntyre et al. (1998), I would argue that WTC is a pivotal component of language learning as it promotes active participation in communication, thereby enabling learners to gain practical experiences with the language. Thus, fostering students' enthusiasm for engaged involvement in conversations both inside and outside of the classroom is a crucial task to implement for every language teacher. This thesis has demonstrated that incorporating drama-based activities can effectively assist practitioners by creating a stimulating atmosphere which both supports and motivates students to engage in speaking tasks. Additionally, it could be shown that the activities not only enhanced students' linguistic competencies, but also stimulated their social skills. Therefore, I genuinely hope that this thesis encourages EFL teachers to explore drama-based activities as a valuable tool to foster their students' WTC in a productive and enjoyable manner.

7. Bibliography

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8. Appendix

8.1. Abstract English

Effective spoken language use strongly depends on students' Willingness to Communicate (WTC), making its enhancement a key priority in the EFL classroom. While drama pedagogy has been shown to positively influence WTC, research on its specific effects remains limited. Therefore, this thesis explores the impact of drama-based activities on students' WTC through an action-research study in a lower-secondary EFL classroom in a Viennese middle school conducted in May 2023. Over the course of one week, the students participated in five lessons centred around drama activities. The study involved 22 students and employed a mixed-methods approach, combining questionnaires, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews to gain insights into how these drama-based activities influenced their readiness to engage in spoken English. The results indicate that students were more enthusiastic about speaking English during drama-based activities than in regular English classes, and qualitative content analysis of their focus group interviews revealed several explanatory aspects, such as the stimulating nature of the activities, the role of movement, the social context of the tasks, positive effects on the teacher-student relationship, increased speaking time and enhanced student autonomy. The findings of this study aim at encouraging EFL teachers to integrate drama-based activities into their teaching repertoire as a means to effectively and enjoyably enhance their students' WTC.

8.2. Abstract German

Die effektive Nutzung gesprochener Sprache hängt stark von der Kommunikationsbereitschaft von Schüler*innen (Willingness to Communicate, WTC) ab. Deshalb ist die Förderung der WTC von großer Bedeutung im Englischunterricht. Obwohl Theaterpädagogik nachweislich einen positiven Einfluss auf die WTC von Schüler*innen hat, sind aktuelle Forschungsergebnisse zu ihren spezifischen Effekten begrenzt. Daher untersucht diese Thesis die Auswirkungen von theaterbasierten Aktivitäten auf die WTC von Schüler*innen im Englischunterricht durch eine Aktionsforschung in einer Unterstufenklasse an einer Wiener Mittelschule, die im Mai 2023 durchgeführt wurde. Innerhalb einer Woche nahmen die Schüler*innen an fünf Unterrichtseinheiten teil, die aus theaterbasierten Aktivitäten zusammengestellt waren. Die Studie umfasste 22 Schüler*innen und verwendete einen Mixed-Methods-Ansatz, der Fragebögen, Klassenbeobachtungen und halbstrukturierte Interviews kombinierte, um Einblicke zu gewinnen, wie diese theaterbasierten Aktivitäten die Bereitschaft von Schüler*innen beeinflussten, sich am gesprochenen Englisch zu beteiligen. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass die Schüler*innen während der theaterbasierten Aktivitäten mehr Begeisterung zeigten, Englisch zu sprechen als während regulärer Englischstunden. Die darauffolgende qualitative Inhaltsanalyse der Fokusgruppeninterviews offenbarte mehrere Erklärungsansätze, wie die anregende Natur der Aktivitäten, die Rolle von Bewegung, der soziale Kontext der Aufgaben, die positiven Effekte auf die Beziehung zwischen Lehrer*innen und Schüler*innen, die erhöhte Sprechzeit und die gesteigerte Autonomie der Schüler*innen. Die Ergebnisse dieser Studie zielen darauf ab, EFL-Lehrer*innen zu ermutigen, theaterbasierte Aktivitäten in ihr Unterrichtsrepertoire zu integrieren, um die WTC ihrer Schüler*innen effektiv und motivierend zu fördern.

8.3. Questionnaire

Franziska Holzmann, BEd

GESPRÄCHSBEREITSCHAFT IM ENGLISCHUNTERRICHT

FRAGEBOGEN

Bitte nimm dir Zeit, lies dir alle Fragen genau durch und beantworte sie ehrlich. Deine Antworten sind anonym, das heißt, ich kann nicht sehen, was du geantwortet hast.

VIELEN DANK, DASS DU MITMACHST! :)

TEIL A

1. Ich fühle mich wohl, **Englisch außerhalb der Klasse zu sprechen** (z.B. mit Freund*innen).



2. Ich fühle mich wohl, **Englisch in der Klasse zu sprechen**.



3. Ich fühle mich wohl, Englisch **vor einer*einem Klassenkolleg*in** zu sprechen.



4. Ich fühle mich wohl, Englisch **vor einer kleinen Gruppe** zu sprechen.



5. Ich fühle mich wohl, Englisch **vor der ganzen Klasse** zu sprechen.



6. Ich fühle mich wohl, Englisch **vor meiner Lehrerin** zu sprechen.



TEIL B

7. Wenn ich Englisch spreche, habe ich **Angst, Fehler zu machen**.

☐ Ja ☐ Nein ☐ Ein bisschen

8. Wenn ich Englisch spreche, habe ich **Angst**, von meiner **Lehrerin** vor der Klasse **korrigiert zu werden**.

☐ Ja ☐ Nein ☐ Ein bisschen

9. Wenn ich Englisch spreche, habe ich **Angst**, dass sich meine **Mitschüler*innen lustig über mich machen**.

☐ Ja ☐ Nein ☐ Ein bisschen

10. Wenn ich Englisch spreche, habe ich **Angst**, eine **schlechte Note** zu bekommen.

☐ Ja ☐ Nein ☐ Ein bisschen

TEIL C

11. **Wie oft** kannst du in der Englischstunde Englisch sprechen?

☐ Oft ☐ Manchmal ☐ Fast nie

12. **Wie oft** meldest du dich freiwillig, um in der Englischstunde zu sprechen?

☐ Oft ☐ Manchmal ☐ Fast nie

13. Wähle die **Gründe** aus, **wieso du freiwillig in der Englischstunde sprichst**.
Du kannst auch mehr als einen Grund einkreisen oder Gründe hinzufügen.

Ich weiß, dass ich gut sprechen kann.	Ich möchte Englisch üben.	Ich möchte meine Lehrerin beeindrucken.
Ich möchte gute Noten bekommen.	Ich spreche, wenn ich das Thema interessant finde.	Ich spreche, wenn ich weiß, dass das, was ich sage, richtig ist.
Ich mag es, Englisch zu sprechen.		

14. Wähle die **Aktivitäten oder Situationen** aus, **bei denen es dir leicht fällt, Englisch zu sprechen**.
Du kannst auch mehr als eine Aktivität einkreisen oder Aktivitäten hinzufügen.

Partner*innenarbeiten (z.B. Dialoge)	Gruppenarbeiten (z.B. Dialoge)	Vergleichen von Aufgaben, die ich schon gelöst habe
Wenn meine Lehrerin mir vor der Klasse eine Frage stellt.	Wenn meine Lehrerin der Klasse eine Frage stellt und ich die Antwort weiß.	Spiele
Wenn wir über Persönliches (z.B. Pläne fürs Wochenende) sprechen	Präsentationen, auf die ich mich vorbereiten kann	

15. Möchtest du **sonst noch etwas** zu Sprechen im Englischunterricht sagen?

8.4. Interview guide

Focus group interview guide

Beginning

- purpose of the interview, time frame
- ensure that students know that their answers are anonymous and do not affect their English grades
- explain that they can speak freely and that there are no right or wrong answers

1. Am Anfang möchte ich ein bisschen über das Sprechen im Englischunterricht reden. Wie geht es euch damit?

Possible subquestions:

- In welchen Situationen fällt es euch schwer/leicht, Englisch zu sprechen? (in der Klasse/außerhalb der Klasse)
- Kannst du mir ein Beispiel geben, wann es dir einmal leicht gefallen ist, auf Englisch in der Schule zu sprechen? (z.B. wenn du vorbereitet warst, wenn dich das Thema interessiert hat, wenn wir Spiele gespielt haben)
- Kannst du mir ein Beispiel geben, wann es dir einmal schwer gefallen ist, auf Englisch in der Schule zu sprechen? (z.B. wenn die ganze Klasse zugehört hat, ...)
- Fallen euch Gründe ein, wieso das so sein könnte?

2. Wie häufig sprecht ihr im ‚normalen‘ Englischunterricht Englisch?

Possible subquestions:

- In welchen Situationen/Bei welchen Aktivitäten sprecht ihr freiwillig in der Englischstunde? (Beantworten von Fragen, Spiele etc.)
- Wie fühlst du dich, wenn du Englisch in der Stunde sprichst? (fühlst du dich wohl/nervös/ängstlich...)

3. Fällt euch etwas ein, das euch helfen würde, im Unterricht mehr Englisch zu sprechen?

- Verhalten von Lehrpersonen, Aktivitäten, Materialien, etc.

4. Bitte erzählt mir, wie das Drama-Projekt letzte Woche für euch war.

Possible subquestions:

- Hat es euch gefallen? Warum (nicht)?
- Gibt es Aktivitäten, an die ihr euch besonders gut erinnern könnt?

5. Wie war es für euch, bei diesen Aktivitäten zu sprechen?

Possible subquestions

- Ist es euch leichter/schwerer gefallen, auf Englisch zu sprechen? Fallen euch vielleicht Gründe ein, wieso das so sein könnte?
- Wie würdet ihr es finden, wenn wir solche Aktivitäten öfter im Englischunterricht

machen würden? Was wäre gut/nicht so gut daran?

6. Würdet ihr ein solches Projekt noch einmal machen wollen? Warum (nicht)?

7. Möchtet ihr mir sonst noch etwas sagen?

DANKE FÜR EURE TEILNAHME!

8.5. Transcription of the focus group interviews

Group 1:

Lehrerin: Okay, dann geht's los. Ahm, passt. Also, grundsätzlich, ihr wisst, es geht um meine Masterarbeit, ja. Ich schau mir an, wie das Sprechen im Englischunterricht funktioniert und wie mans besser machen kann, ja. Ahm, genau, das Interview jetzt wird so 15 bis 20 Minuten dauern.

S6: Auf Deutsch?

L: Ja, auf Deutsch, genau.

S6: Gut.

L: Ja, also eure Antworten sind anonym, das heißt, auch wenn ich es dann abschreibe für meine Masterarbeit, werde ich euch Schülerin 1, Schülerin 2, Schülerin 3 und so weiter nennen. Ahm, es hat nichts mit eurer Note zu tun, genau wie das ganze restliche Projekt, das wir letzte Woche gemacht haben und es gibt nichts richtiges und nichts falsches. Das heißt, wenn ihr etwas sagt, das nicht ahm positiv ist, ist das genauso gut, als wenn ihr was sagt, das positiv ist. Es ist einfach wichtig, dass ihr ehrlich seid. Haben das alle verstanden?

Alle: Ja.

L: Okay, also. Am Anfang würde ich mit euch gerne über das Sprechen im Englischunterricht reden, wie geht's euch damit, wie ist das so?

S1 & S2: Gut.

S6: Ja, gut, ich kann besser sprechen, seitdem Sie uns unterrichten.

L: Okay. Ahm und gibt es Situationen, in denen es euch schwer oder leicht fällt, Englisch zu sprechen?

S2: Bei mir fällt es mir schwer, wenn ich vor allen reden muss.

S1 & S3: Ja

S3: Ja, weil dann machen ahm dann machen sie sich hald lustig über dich oder sie sagen du flexst mit deinem Englisch.

S2: Mhm.

L: Mhm.

S2: Ich fühl mich manchmal peinlich, ich hab hald Angst, dass ich einen Fehler mache.

S6: Bei mir..

S2: Es ist eh kein Problem, wenn jemand es ausbessert, aber es ist peinlich, wenn ich einen Fehler mache.

S6 (flüstert): Du kannst eh gut Englisch.

L: Okay, und wie fühlst du dich dann direkt in der Situation? Kannst du mir das beschreiben?

S2: Ja hald so ein bisschen peinlich, also ich will immer, dass ich die Zeit wieder verschiebe und dann sag ich es wieder richtig.

L: Ah, du würdest dich gerne korrigieren, wie du es beim Schreiben machst, zum Beispiel.

S2: Ja genau.

S6: Ich mag es gar nicht, ähm, mit, ähm, vor allen oder so Englisch zu reden. Weil ich kann kein Englisch.

L: Das stimmt aber nicht, dass du kein Englisch kannst!

S6: Doch!

L: Aber ich versteh dich, ja. Ahm, kannst du mir ein Beispiel geben, wann es dir leicht gefallen ist, Englisch in der Schule zu sprechen? Also gibt es Situationen oder Aktivitäten in der Klasse, wo du sagst, das ist easy?

S2: Beim Theater. Also bei diesem Projekt. Es war urleicht, also es war echt urleicht.

S6 & S4: Ja.

S6: Theater ist leichter als sonst, oder so.

L: Okay, könnt ihr euch vorstellen, wieso das so ist?

S1: Man kann vielleicht eigene Text oder so machen und man schauspielt das selber, weil das ist viel einfacher, weil man denkt sich so Sätze aus, das mans sagen kann.

L: Mhm. Und gibt es sonst noch Situationen, wo es euch leichter fällt, Englisch zu sprechen?

S3: Vielleicht... wenn wir homework... when we check the homework. Keine Ahnung, wie das auf Deutsch heißt.

L: Mhm, also, wenn du schon was vorbereitet hast, wenn du weißt, dass es stimmt oder wenn du weißt, wie es...

S3: geht...

L: ... oder was ich von dir erwarte.

S3: Ja

L: Fällt euch sonst noch etwas ein?

S3: Wenn wir außerhalb der Klasse sprechen oder so... ich spreche zuhause immer Englisch.

S2: oder in der Pause mit Ihnen.

S3: Ja

L: Mhm.

S1: Ich rede auch zuhause immer Englisch.

L: Ja? Super! Gibt es Situationen, wo es euch sehr schwer fällt, Englisch zu sprechen?

S6: Ja, vor der Klasse.

S2: Naja, so schwer jetzt auch nicht.

L: Mhm.

S1: Also bei mir nicht.

S3: Also es ist eh normal.

L: Wie ist es bei Präsentationen oder wenn ihr euch nicht so gut auskennt mit einem Thema? Wie geht es euch dann? Wenn ihr die Vokabeln dann vielleicht nicht so gut kennt?

S6: Präsentation ist schon leicht, weil man weiß auch...

S3: Ja, aber man ist auch nervös.

S1: Kommt drauf an, wenn man sich vorbereitet dafür, dann ist es leicht, weil man kann ja auch übersetzen und so, wenn man ein Wort nicht versteht.

L: Mhm

S5: Ja, wenn man nervös ist, dann kann man nicht so die Wörter richtig sagen, wenn man Präsentation hat.

S3 & S4: Mhm.

S3: Ja, man ist dann voll nervös.

S6: Was schwer ist, ist auch, wenn Sie etwas fragen, zum Beispiel, was haben wir am Wochenende gemacht und ich äh, es nicht auf Englisch erklären kann.

L: Mhm, ja, verstehe. Sonst noch etwas?

S6: Nein.

L: Ahm, wie häufig spricht ihr denn im normalen Englischunterricht Englisch?

S3: Wie bitte?

L: Wie häufig spricht ihr denn im normalen Englischunterricht Englisch?

S1: Sehr oft.

S2: Sehr, ich mag Englisch.

S3: Ich auch.

S6: Ich rede gar nicht Englisch.

S4: Ich auch nicht.

S2: Aber viele meinen immer, dass es cringe ist, wenn ich außerhalb der Schule auch Englisch rede. Aber ich red weiter.

S6: Wer sagt das? (lacht)

S2: Meine Schwester.

S3: Ich finde es voll cool, wenn man viele Sprachen kann.

S2: Meine Schwester hat mir erst gestern gesagt.. Sie so, hör auf Englisch zu reden.

S1: Meine Mutter mags auch nicht, wenn wir Englisch reden, weil sie kann kein Englisch,

S6: Ja

S1: Sie findet so ... bei meine Geschwister hald so, sie machen noch ein bisschen Fehler in englischer Sprache und meine Mutter macht sie dann immer nach und so und sagt so ‚Was ist das für eine Sprache?, redet Albanisch!‘

L: Mhm

S3: Meine Mutter kann auch kein Englisch. Also versteht sie uns nicht.

L: Also ist das so was wie eure Geheimsprache quasi?

S3: Ja (lacht)

S1: Ja, bei mir und meine Schwester und mein Bruder und dann hald solche wie meine Mutter und meine kleinen Geschwister oder so sagt macht das nicht, dann ich rede mit ihnen auf Englisch und sag so: ‚Hört zu, was sie sagt‘ und sie so ‚Was sagst du denen auf Englisch? Schau, was tust du vor mir verheimlichen?‘

L: Ah, verstehe. Ahm, gibt's im Englischunterricht Situationen wo ihr eher Englisch sprecht oder wo ihr ahm wo ihr freiwillig Englisch sprecht, also zum Beispiel, wenn ihr in Gruppen arbeitet oder wenn ihr zu zweit was machen müsst?

S2 & S6: Ja

L: Wie ist es dann?

S3: Es ist gut.

S6: Ja.

S2: Es ist geil, wenn man also in einer Fremdsprache kommuniziert mit anderen. Nicht immer in Deutsch oder so. Weil Deutsch reden wir eh die ganze Zeit, wir leben hier und ... hier kommuniziert man in Deutsch, ich finde es geil, wenn wir eine andere Sprache reden.

S3: Ich mag es auch, wenn ich mit einer Person spreche und die eine Sprache nicht kann oder ich eine Sprache nicht kann, die die Person kann und dann bringen wir uns das bei..

L: Mhm

S3: Kennen sie noch [Name einer Schülerin]?

L: Mhm

S3: Mit ihr habe ich immer... Sie hat mir Englisch beigebracht, sie hat mir Türkisch beigebracht.

L: Ah, spannend, ja. Ahm, fällt euch was ein, das euch helfen würde, dass wir im Unterricht mehr Englisch sprechen würden? Also zum Beispiel gibt es was, was ich machen kann oder irgendwelche Aktivitäten oder Materialien?

S2: Vielleicht übersetzen, also ...

S6: Aja

S2: Also wenn Sie es übersetzen, können Sie es in Englisch erklären...

L: Mhm.

S2: Sie übersetzen dann immer auf Deutsch, vielleicht kann sich ja unser Englisch verbessern, wenn Sie versuchen, dass Sie das auf Englisch erklären, was Sie meinen.

S6: Aber ich versteh dann nix, wenn sie es auf Englisch erklärt (lacht).

S1: Wir könnten auch mehr so Bücher lesen, ich glaube, das hilft auch sehr viel. Wenn wir Bücher lesen, also bei diesem Buch ‚Alice's Adventures in Wonderland' Sie haben immer auf Radio geöffnet und so, aber wenn wir selbst lesen, dann hilft das vielleicht mehr, als wenn wir zuhören und lesen.

S2: Aber das wär doch viel langsamer.

S1: Ja, aber trotzdem, dann können wir unser Englisch verbessern.

L: Aber kannst du mir erklären, wie dir das beim Sprechen helfen kann?

S1: Ja, zum Beispiel, ähm, zum Beispiel bei mir, wenn ich ein Wort ein langes, oder schwieriges Wort lese...

L: Mhm.

S1: Oder ich weiß nicht, was es bedeutet, aber nach einer Weile, ich seh dann wieder dasselbe Wort und mit, ahm, Erklärung, dann so, ah, jetzt weiß ich, was dieses Wort bedeutet.

S6: Aber sie hat doch Sprechen gemeint.

S1: Aber auch allgemein, zum Beispiel, ich, als ich kleiner war, wie hab ich Englisch gelernt, ich hab auch nur mit Zuhören und Lesen und so hab ich Englisch gelernt.

L: Mhm.

L: Was willst du sagen, [Name einer Schülerin]?

S5: Nichts.

L: Okay. Ahm, könnt ihr mir mal erzählen, wie das Dramaprojekt letzte Woche für euch war?

S1, S2, S3, S6: Sehr gut (lachen).

S2: Also ich finde es sehr gut, wenn Lehrer mit ihren Schülern Zeit verbringen, sodass man sie ein bisschen versteht und nicht immer schreiben, auf Tafel und so weiter, weil das finde ich sehr langweilig. Und wenn Sie dann solche Aktivitäten machen, dann können Sie uns vielleicht auch besser verstehen, ob wir das mögen, oder, wie wir uns so benehmen in solchen Situationen.

L: Mhm.

S2: Und ich finde es echt cool.

S5: Machen wir das nochmal?

L: Ja, da müssen wir mal schauen, wann, aber ja.

L: Hat es euch gefallen grundsätzlich oder hats, wars...

S6: Es hat mir sehr gefallen.

S5: Mir auch.

S2: Es war wirklich sehr cool.

S1: Ja voll.

S3: Ja und es war auch echt lustig.

L: Ahm, gibt es Aktivitäten, an die ihr euch besonders gut erinnern könnt?

S1: Theater, hald die ganze Zeit war Theater

S6: Ja eh.

S1: Also, ja es war urcool, wenn wir so einfach in random Gruppen gepartnert wurden und dann mussten wir etwas, irgendetwas erfinden, das war echt cool.

S2: Das mit dem Boot war wirklich das Beste! Meiner Meinung nach, weil wir hatten wirklich, äh, eine eigene Entscheidung, wie wir die Story machen und das war hald wirklich sehr cool.

L: Mhm.

S2: Das war einfach das Beste.

S6: Und ich finde, wenn in meinem Team [Name einer Schülerin] ist, dann hilft es mir mehr, weil ich weiß nicht, was ich genau sagen soll und sie sagt dann genau hald, was ich sagen muss und so.

L: Mhm. Also denkst du, dass du dann von ihr beim Sprechen auch was lernen konntest?

S6: Ja, weil ja.

S3: Auch bei diesem, ahm, ich hab vergessen, wie das heißt, aber diesem, ahm, hald wo du zu spät nachhause gekommen bist.

L: Mhm.

S3: Das war auch..

S5: Ja, das war sehr lustig.

S2, S4: Ja (lachen).

S1: Ja, als wir Mutter und Vater spielen mussten (lachen).

L: Und, ahm, wie ist es euch da bei den Vorführungen gegangen? Wenn ihr am Ende des Projekts dann das immer vor der Klasse herzeigen musstet? Wie war das?

S6: Ja, zuerst habe ich mich nicht wohlgeföhlt, aber dann habe ich hald, wo wir das dann mal gemacht haben, dann war es mir egal, was andere denken.

S2: Meinen Sie, da wo wir vor allen vorspielen mussten?

L: Ja.

S2: Das war das beste!

S1: Das war der lustigste Teil, weil dann können die anderen sehen, was wir hald, also was unsere Fantasie ist und so.

L: Mhm. Ahm, wie war es grundsätzlich, auch in der Vorbereitung, da zu sprechen? Ist es euch leichter gefallen als im Unterricht? Oder schwerer als im Unterricht?

S3: Schwerer. Sicher schwerer. Ja, weil wir mussten unsere eigenen Ideen haben, aber hald im Buch, da waren schon..

S1: Da muss man nur ablesen.

S3: Genau.

L: Im Unterricht, bei den Materialien meinst du.

S6: Es war leichter für mich.

S3: Ich meinte hald, es war viel schwerer, also wenn wir also

S1: Wenn wir selbst unsere Wörter und unseren Text erfinden müssen, weil im Buch müssen wir nur ablesen und so

S3: Ja und da müssen wir unsere Idee selber hald machen, aber im Buch ist da hald schon alles drinnen.

S1: Ja

L: Also ihr musstet euch mehr anstrengen...

S3: Jaja

L: Euch zu überlegen..

S2: Mhm.

S3: ich finde, es war besser, wir konnten unsere eigene Fantasie verwenden, und eigene Stories erstellen und so

S6: Ja, das war besser.

S1: Weil zum Beispiel bei dieser mit Boot und Kirche, da hat jeder hat das gleiche Bild bekommen, aber wir haben so unterschiedliche Geschichten und so geschauspielert.

L: Mhm.

S2: Oh, das mit der Gruppenarbeit war wirklich auch sehr cool, weil, wenn wir in Gruppen eingesetzt worden sind, waren es nicht nur Mädchen oder so, weil wenn sie auch gemischt sind, verstehen wir uns, weil wir schreiben halt so nur im Unterricht und in den Pausen sind wir auch auseinander und es war irgendwie besser, dass wir uns alle verstehen konnten bei dem irgendwie.

S5: Weil mit den Burschen konnten wir auch so viel lachen und so.

S2: Ja und voll freundlich sein.

S3: Ja, zum ersten mal waren die Jungs freundlich.

(alle lachen)

L: Ahm, und könnt ihr mir erklären, wieso das so sein könnte? Also wieso war das leichter für euch?

S1: Frei sprechen, also bei mir ist das so, wenn ich was ablese, oder so, dann spreche ich nicht frei, dann lese ich das nur ab, aber bei mir, mir fällt Englisch leichter, wenn ich einfach nur frei spreche. Zum Beispiel, ich konnte halt selbst erfinden, was ich halt sagen werde und so, und zum Beispiel, wenn ich jetzt drei Leute in meiner Gruppe habe, dann werden sie die Meinung, was wir halt machen sollen, machen und ich kann ihnen dann mit dem Text helfen. Und dann können wir das einfach vorsagen und so. Und ich finde, das ist einfach viel leichter.

L: Wie würdet ihr das finden, wenn wir das öfter im Englischunterricht machen?

Alle: Ja.

S6: Sehr, sehr cool.

S2: Also im Halbjahr schon zwei mal, also alle sechs Monate, mindestens zwei mal. Eine Woche.

S6: Ja, eine Woche.

S2: Das ist besser, weil dann verstehen wir das besser.

S6: Zwei Wochen wären noch besser.

S2: Uns macht es dann auch mehr Spaß, Englisch zu sprechen.

S1: Und dann lernen wir es auch besser.

S2: Ja genau, wenn man es wirklich mag, dann kann man es auch, weil dann macht man es wirklich von Herzen, wenn man sich denkt, ja, das gefällt mir, ich spreche jetzt und.

S1: Und zum Beispiel, wenn wir im Unterricht so ablesen und so, dann wollen wir ja nicht richtig Englisch lernen, also ich schon, aber andere Leute wollen nicht so ,och, Englisch, so langweilig', aber wenn wir so was machen, dann müssen alle lachen und dann will man noch mehr Englisch reden, sodass sie noch mehr lachen.

S2: Ja, weil wenn man nur abliest, dann kommt das halt nicht von dir, dann liest du ein paar Buchstaben, aber es kommt nicht von dir. Und wenn man so Fantasie macht und so denkt, dann sieht man, dass du auch mitgearbeitet hast und es war feiner.

S3: Es war wirklich, also Spaß, wie wir das gemacht haben und so, aber ich finde, wir sollten in ein bisschen größere Gruppen eingeteilt werden,

L: Mhm.

S3: Weil es gab manche so Gruppen, ich hatte zum Beispiel nur drei Personen in meiner Gruppe, andere hatten vier oder fünf

S2: Ja, weil wir keine gerechte Zahl waren.

S3 & S6: Mhm.

S2: Und weil [Name einer Schülerin] nicht von Anfang an dabei war.

S1: Mhm.

S2: Oder könnten wir, könnten wir vielleicht nach der Schularbeit jetzt vielleicht noch so ein Projekt machen, anstatt Spiele zu spielen? Dann könnten wir noch mehr Theater machen.

S6: Ja, Mann.

S3: So ein ganz großes Theater, das wär so cool.

S6: Ja voll.

S2: Und zwar immer zwei Stunden und nicht nur eine Stunde Englisch. Aber bitte wieder unsere eigenen Geschichten.

S4: Ja, bitte.

L: Das ist eine gute Idee. Möchtet ihr sonst noch etwas sagen, fällt euch sonst noch etwas ein zum Sprechen im Englischunterricht?

S1: Ich finde, also die Jungs und so, die, die fallen sich am meisten schwer, Englisch zu reden. Aber hier in diesem Projekt und so, haben sie hald alle viel Englisch gesprochen und haben hald mehr Englisch geredet als normalerweise.

L: Mhm.

S2: Ja, weil beim Lesen oder so, fast keiner zeigt da auf von denen, Sie nehmen hald dran, aber fast keiner zeigt da auf. Und bei diesem Projekt hald, hat es jedem Spaß gemacht, was zu spielen und ja, es hat hald wirklich viel Spaß gemacht und ich finde, es sollte auch wirklich öfters sein. Also das ist jetzt eine Bitte an Sie. Ein request. (lacht)

S6: Oder das mit Sprechen, ich wusste nicht mal was ‚How are you?‘ oder so bedeutet und ich wusste nix. Und seitdem ich Volksschule gewechselt habe, hatte ich hald gar kein Englischunterricht gehabt und dann konnte ich hald nicht lernen und seitdem ich hald hiergekommen bin, hab ich hald besser hald, ich kann jetzt besser hald Englisch verstehen, aber noch nicht gut reden.

L: Das kommt noch.

S2: Also eine Bitte. Bitte machen Sie das Projekt öfters.

S4: Bitte! Und extra lange.

S3: Aber können wir mehr von diesen Spielen machen? Das war urlustig.

L: Ja, das stimmt.

S1: Ich fands einfach urlustig, also ich fands so lustig, als das Kind zu spät kam und die Eltern hald, also wir die Eltern waren.

S4: Ja oder als einer in der Mitte steht und wir mussten hald ‚I love you‘ sagen, das war auch wirklich lustig.

S3: Ich war bei einem die Oma.

S6: Acting, also diese Schauspielen war am besten.

S2: [Name einer Schülerin], du hast noch gar nichts gesagt, wie fandest du das Projekt?

S4: Wirklich gut.

S2: Irgendwelche Kommentare?

(lachen)

S4: Nein, nix mehr.

L: Dann vielen Dank fürs Mitmachen und viel Spaß in Deutsch.

Group 2:

L: Grundsätzlich erkläre ich euch mal ganz kurz, um was es hier geht. Okay. Also, ich erklär euch mal ganz kurz, um was es geht. Ahm, wie ihr wisst, schreibe ich gerade meine Masterarbeit und hab das Projekt mit euch gemacht. Ahm, und in meiner Masterarbeit geht es darum, ahm, dass ich herausfinden will, wie man das Sprechen im Englischunterricht besser gestalten kann. Ja? Ahm, das ist der Grund, wieso ich das Interview aufnehme, es wird ungefähr 15-20 Minuten dauern, kommt darauf an, wie viel ihr mir erzählt. Ahm, ich werde eure Namen nicht in die Masterarbeit reinschreiben, ich werde euch einfach, zum Beispiel ‚Schüler 1‘, ‚Schüler 2‘, ‚Schüler 3‘, ‚Schüler 4‘ nennen und das dann so schreiben, ahm, das heißt, ich weiß nicht, also ich weiß schon, wer was gesagt hat, aber die Leserinnen und Leser der Masterarbeit wissen das nicht. Es hat nichts mit eurer Englischnote zu tun, das heißt, ihr könnt sagen, was ihr wollt und es beeinflusst eure Note gar nicht. Ahm, und was ganz wichtig ist, es gibt kein ‚richtig‘ und kein ‚falsch‘, das heißt, du kannst sagen, was du dir denkst und deine ehrliche Meinung sagen, es ist unwichtig, dass du ehrlich bist und du musst jetzt nichts schöner machen, als es war, du musst jetzt nicht ahm etwas positives sagen, obwohl du es nicht gut gefunden hast. Okay?

Alle: Mhm

L: Grundsätzliche möchte ich mit euch am Anfang jetzt mal ein bisschen mit euch über das Sprechen im Englischunterricht reden, wie geht’s euch damit?

S2: Gut

S3: Gut

S4: Gut

S1: Ja

S5: Gut

S6: Befriedigend (lacht).

L: In welchen Situationen fällt es euch schwer oder leicht, Englisch zu sprechen im Unterricht?

S6: Also wenn ich mit Freunden so rede und so.

L: In Gruppen meinst du?

S6: Ja

L: Mhm

S4: Bei mir auch

S1: Bei mir fällt es so schwer, wenn ich vor ganze Klasse rede und so

L: Okay

S2: Bei mir auch

S3: Bei mir fällt es schwer, wenn ich ja, wie (Name eines Schülers)

S5: Bei mir fällt es schwer, wenn ich weiß, was ich sagen will im Kopf, aber ich sage dann falsch.

S3: Ja, immer so, ich schwöre (lacht)

L: Okay, ahm, kannst du mir erklären, wie es dir dann geht, wenn du Englisch sprichst vor der ganzen Klasse?

S3: Ähm nervös?

L: Nervös? Okay. Wie fühlt sich das noch an?

S1: Bei mir ist normal, wenn ich rede.

L: Mhm.

S4: Bei mir ich bin auch nervös, dass ich das falsch mache und eine schlechtere Note bekomme.

S5: Bei mir auch, also vor Klasse ist okay, aber vor Lehrerin einfach nein. Aber vor Klasse egal. Also vor Schüler und so egal, aber vor Lehrerinnen nicht.

S6: Bei mir auch.

L: Okay. Ahm, kannst du mir ein Beispiel geben, wann es dir mal leicht gefallen ist, Englisch in der Schule zu sprechen?

S5: Im Projekt.

L: Okay.

S6: Ja, bei mir auch.

S2: Bei mir auch.

S5: Wir haben ganze Zeit geredet, Englisch und so.

L: Okay. Ahm, und was hat es da leichter gemacht?

S5: Weil, also, ...

S6: Weil wir waren so frei, also jeder konnte, also wir waren nicht zusammen...

S2: Also er meint, wir waren nicht die ganze Klasse sondern immer in einer Gruppe und so..

S3: Das mit Gruppen war urgut.

S2: Ja, es hat urviel Spaß gemacht.

S6: Weil wir waren so frei, also jeder konnte zu seiner Gruppe gehen und so weiter, also wir waren nicht so zusammen.

S1: Ja, wir waren halt keine ganze Klasse.

L: Mhm.

S5: Ja, und wir haben urviel geredet und nicht geschrieben und so.

L: Mhm okay. Und gibt es sonst im Unterricht noch Beispiele, wo es dir leicht fällt, zu sprechen?

S6: Ja, also nicht jede Woche ein Test, das fällt mir so schwer.

L: Ja, aber das hat nicht wirklich etwas mit dem Sprechen zu tun, oder? (lacht)

S6: Ja stimmt (lacht)

L: Aber gibt es sonst noch etwas, also wenn dich ein Thema interessiert oder gibt es sonst noch etwas, also, irgendwelche Sachen, die es dir leichter machen, Englisch zu sprechen? Oder irgendwelche Aktivitäten oder Materialien?

S3: Diese Drama.

S2+1: Ja.

S5: Ja, also wenn wir Geschichte machen und so, wenn wir diese Gruppe machen und wir erfinden eine Geschichte, von diesem Mann mit Boot und so.

S3: Ja, das war auch voll leicht und schauspielern und so.

S4: Ja, dieses Schauspielen war gut.

S6: Wenn ich mich bewegen kann, fällt es mir leichter, zu reden.

L: Wenn du dich im Raum bewegst?

S6: Ja

L: Okay. Ahm, gibt es Situationen in der Schule oder im Unterricht, die nichts mit dem Dramaprojekt zu tun haben, wo es dir schwerer fällt, Englisch zu sprechen?

S6: Wenn ich so einmal etwas lesen muss, und dann da steht so ‚I‘, also nicht so ‚I will‘ sondern ‚I‘l‘, also da steht Komma und dann so ‚I‘l‘.

S5: Also die Abkürzung.

S6: Ja, ja.

L: Okay. Aber in welchen Situationen fällt es dir schwerer, Englisch zu sprechen?

S4: Wenn wir lesen.

S2: Ja, wenn wir lesen.

S3: Wenn wir lesen, ist eh leicht.

S1: Bei mir ist nicht leicht.

S5: Bei mir ist schlimm.

S6: Bei mir genau wie Schüler 3. (lacht)

L: (lacht) Okay. Fallen euch Gründe ein, wieso es euch manchmal schwer fällt, Englisch zu sprechen in der Klasse?

S6: Nein.

S1: Nervosität vielleicht?

L: Mhm.

S4: Weil ich keine Fehler machen will und keine schlechtere Note bekommen mag.

L: Mhm.

S3+S2: Ja.

L: Ahm, wie häufig sprecht ihr denn im normalen Englischunterricht Englisch?

S4: Englisch?

S5: Also, ich versuche viel zu sprechen, ich versuche, aber ich spreche nicht viel.

S3: Ich versuche auch, also, wenn Sie etwas fragen und ich antworte auf Englisch.

S2: Ja, ich auch.

L: Ja? Ahm, okay. Wie fühlt ihr euch, wenn ihr Englisch sprecht in der Stunde?

S1: Nervös.

S5: Vor Klasse normal, aber vor Lehrerinnen nervös.

S3: Wenn ich spreche, dann ist hald ein bisschen schwer, aber ich merke, wenn ich mehr in der Stunde spreche, wird es viel einfacher. Wenn wir zum Beispiel, wie beim Drama, die ganze Stunde nur gesprochen haben.

L: Mhm. Ahm, fällt euch etwas ein, das euch helfen könnte, im Unterricht mehr Englisch zu sprechen?

S4: Gruppenarbeiten.

S2: Ja, Gruppenarbeiten.

S3: Gruppenarbeiten.

L: Gibt es Aktivitäten, die es euch leichter machen?

S1: Ja, wenn wir Geschichten erfinden dürfen und die dann schauspielern.

S5: Ja, Drama.

S3: Ja, das, was wir bei diese Projekt gemacht haben.

S4: Diese Drama ja.

S6: Ja, das war gut.

L: Aber was hat euch da so gefallen? Was war dabei leichter?

S2: Also ..

S3: Man konnte, also man konnte so erfinden, was man selbst sagen will und so.

L: Mhm.

S6: Man kann in einer Gruppe arbeiten, also die ...

S1: Man kann sich zuvor hald vorbereiten, also .. und dann wusste man hald, was man sagen muss und was man sagen mag.

S3: Und man hat nicht so viel Angst, dass man Fehler macht, weil man ist in einer Gruppe und die anderen machen vielleicht auch Fehler.

S5: Und man hat auch gemacht, was man wollte. Also auch in der Gruppe.

S4: Ja.

L: Ahm, wie war das Dramaprojekt für euch letzte Woche? Erzähl mal ein bisschen, bitte.

S2+S4: Gut.

S1: Sehr gut.

S6: Ja, sehr gut.

S5: Hat mir gut gefallen.

S4: Das beste Projekt.

S3: Es war das beste, was wir in Englisch bis jetzt gemacht haben.

S1: Ja.

S5: Find ich auch.

L: Danke (lacht). Gibt es Aktivitäten, an die ihr euch besonders gut erinnern könnt?

S3: Beim Projekt?

L: Ja.

S2: Ja, diese „Crick, crack“, diese dings.

L: Ah, du meinst, wie wir uns immer verabschiedet haben?

S2: Ja genau.

S1: Bootgeschichte.

S4: Ja, diese Bootgeschichte.

S5: Ja.

S6: Ja, das war sehr gut.

S3: Das war urwitzig mit (Name eines Schülers)

(lachen)

S6: Ich erinnere mich sehr gut an die Geschichten und so.

L: Was war eure Lieblingsaktivität?

S4: Diese Gruppenarbeit.

S3: Diese Drama.

S2: Diese Boot, also mit Boot.

S1: Ja, mit Boot.

S6: Ja, meins auch. Man konnte dazu eine Geschichte erfinden und die vor Klasse sagen und so. Das war urgut.

L: Wie ging es euch da, wenn wir dann immer wieder die Vorführungen gemacht haben vor den anderen?

S3: Das war leicht.

S1: Ja voll.

S4: Also für mich war das eh leicht.

S2: Ja, leicht, weil wir haben es in der Gruppe mit Freunden gemacht.

S6: Ja, mit Schüler 4 (lacht).

L: Wie würdet ihr es finden, wenn wir solche Aktivitäten öfters im Englischunterricht machen?

S1: Sehr gut!

S3: Ja, sehr gut.

S4: Voll!

S2: Ja!

S6: Sehr, sehr gut. Diese Gruppenarbeit war sehr gut.

S5: Ja, diese Drama war super.

L: Gibt es was, das euch vielleicht nicht so gut daran gefallen hat?

S5: Nein.

S3: Nein.

S6: Alles war gut.

S1: Dieses Schauspielern war immer gut. Also auch wenn man allein in der Mitte war und so.

S2: Also man musste hald vor allen in der Mitte so etwas machen. Wie bei den Eltern und das Kind kommt zu spät.

S1: Ja, das war schwierig.

S3: In den Gruppen war es hald leichter, weil man da mit anderen zusammen ist und mit ihnen gemeinsam spricht.

S4: Ja voll, zu viert oder so.

S2: Und man konnte sich hald vorbereiten und so.

S6: Also, manchmal haben wir uns ja nicht vorbereitet und wir machten es dann so direkt und so.

L: Das war schwierig, wenn du das so spontan machen musstest?

S6: Ja, aber wenn wir das so bereiten und dann vor Klasse, egal...

S3: Ja.

S6: ... aber wenn wir direkt machen oder bereiten ist es ein bisschen schwer.

S3: Also bei mir war es ein bisschen schwer, weil meine Gruppe wenig so vorbereitet hat, was gesprochen wird und so, deshalb war es ein bisschen schwer. Also ich weiß jetzt nicht, was ich dann sagen sollte und so. Und machen soll.

L: Okay. Ahm. Gibt es sonst noch etwas, das ihr mir sagen wollt, wenn es ums Sprechen im Englischunterricht geht? Fällt euch noch etwas ein?

S5: Ja, mehr Geschichten. Mehr Schauspielen.

S3: Ja, mehr Drama.

S1: Mehr diese Projekte.

S4: Mehr Gruppenarbeiten, also öfters.

S2: Ja.

L: Okay, dann vielen Dank fürs Mitmachen, ihr könnt zurück in den Unterricht gehen.

8.6. Sample of coded interview

Code	Description of Code
Stimulating nature of tasks	Statements describing the motivational or engaging aspects of drama-based activities
Movement	Comments about physical activity or moving during the tasks
Social Setting	Remarks on how pair or group work positively affected participation or outcomes
Teacher-student relationship	Statements about interactions with the teacher during DBP lessons
Amount of speaking time	Comments indicating increases opportunities or time spent speaking English
Autonomy	Remarks about making independent choices or working autonomously during activities
Foreign Language Anxiety	Statements expressing nervousness, fear of mistakes, or anxiety about speaking English

Group 2:

L: Grundsätzlich erkläre ich euch mal ganz kurz, um was es hier geht. Okay. Also, ich erklär euch mal ganz kurz, um was es geht. Ahm, wie ihr wisst, schreibe ich gerade meine Masterarbeit und hab das Projekt mit euch gemacht. Ahm, und in meiner Masterarbeit geht es darum, ahm, dass ich herausfinden will, wie man das Sprechen im Englischunterricht besser gestalten kann. Ja? Ahm, das ist der Grund, wieso ich das Interview aufnehme, es wird ungefähr 15-20 Minuten dauern, kommt darauf an, wie viel ihr mir erzählt. Ahm, ich werde eure Namen nicht in die Masterarbeit reinschreiben, ich werde euch einfach, zum Beispiel ‚Schüler 1‘, ‚Schüler 2‘, ‚Schüler 3‘, ‚Schüler 4‘ nennen und das dann so schreiben, ahm, das heißt, ich weiß nicht, also ich weiß schon, wer was gesagt hat, aber die Leserinnen und Leser der Masterarbeit wissen das nicht. Es hat nichts mit eurer Englischnote zu tun, das heißt, ihr könnt sagen, was ihr wollt und es beeinflusst eure Note gar nicht. Ahm, und was ganz wichtig ist, es gibt kein ‚richtig‘ und kein ‚falsch‘, das heißt, du kannst sagen, was du dir denkst und deine ehrliche Meinung sagen, es ist unwichtig, dass du ehrlich bist und du musst jetzt nichts schöner machen, als es war, du musst jetzt nicht ahm etwas positives sagen, obwohl du es nicht gut gefunden hast. Okay?

Alle: Mhm

L: Grundsätzliche möchte ich mit euch am Anfang jetzt mal ein bisschen mit euch über das Sprechen im Englischunterricht reden, wie geht's euch damit?

S2: Gut

S3: Gut

S4: Gut

S1: Ja

S5: Gut

S6: Befriedigend (lacht).

L: In welchen Situationen fällt es euch schwer oder leicht, Englisch zu sprechen im Unterricht?

S6: Also wenn ich mit Freunden so rede und so.

L: In Gruppen meinst du?

S6: Ja

L: Mhm

S4: Bei mir auch

S1: Bei mir fällt es so schwer, wenn ich vor ganze Klasse rede und so

L: Okay

S2: Bei mir auch

S3: Bei mir fällt es schwer, wenn ich ja, wie (Name eines Schülers)

S5: Bei mir fällt es schwer, wenn ich weiß, was ich sagen will im Kopf, aber ich sage dann falsch.

S3: Ja, immer so, ich schwöre (lacht)

L: Okay, ahm, kannst du mir erklären, wie es dir dann geht, wenn du Englisch sprichst vor der ganzen Klasse?

S3: Ähm nervös?

L: Nervös? Okay. Wie fühlt sich das noch an?

S1: Bei mir ist normal, wenn ich rede.

L: Mhm.

S4: Bei mir ich bin auch nervös, dass ich das falsch mache und eine schlechtere Note bekomme.

S5: Bei mir auch, also vor Klasse ist okay, aber vor Lehrerin einfach nein. Aber vor Klasse egal. Also vor Schüler und so egal, aber vor Lehrerinnen nicht.

S6: Bei mir auch.

L: Okay. Ahm, kannst du mir ein Beispiel geben, wann es dir mal leicht gefallen ist, Englisch in der Schule zu sprechen?

S5: Im Projekt.

L: Okay.

S6: Ja, bei mir auch.

S2: Bei mir auch.

S5: Wir haben ganze Zeit geredet, Englisch und so.

L: Okay. Ahm, und was hat es da leichter gemacht?

S5: Weil, also, ...

S6: Weil wir waren so frei, also jeder konnte, also wir waren nicht zusammen...

S2: Also er meint, wir waren nicht die ganze Klasse sondern immer in einer Gruppe und so..

S3: Das mit Gruppen war urgut

S2: Ja, es hat urviel Spaß gemacht.

S6: Weil wir waren so frei, also jeder konnte zu seiner Gruppe gehen und so weiter, also wir waren nicht so zusammen.

S1: Ja, wir waren hald keine ganze Klasse.

L: Mhm.

S5: Ja, und wir haben urviel geredet und nicht geschrieben und so.

L: Mhm okay. Und gibt es sonst im Unterricht noch Beispiele, wo es dir leicht fällt, zu sprechen?

S6: Ja, also nicht jede Woche ein Test, das fällt mir so schwer.

L: Ja, aber das hat nicht wirklich etwas mit dem Sprechen zu tun, oder? (lacht)

S6: Ja stimmt (lacht)

L: Aber gibt es sonst noch etwas, also wenn dich ein Thema interessiert oder gibt es sonst noch etwas, also, irgendwelche Sachen, die es dir leichter machen, Englisch zu sprechen? Oder irgendwelche Aktivitäten oder Materialien?

S3: Diese Drama.

S2+1: Ja.

S5: Ja, also wenn wir Geschichte machen und so, wenn wir diese Gruppe machen und wir erfinden eine Geschichte, von diesem Mann mit Boot und so.

S3: Ja, das war auch voll leicht und schauspielern und so.

S4: Ja, dieses Schauspielern war gut.

S6: Wenn ich mich bewegen kann, fällt es mir leichter, zu reden.

L: Wenn du dich im Raum bewegst?

S6: Ja

L: Okay. Ahm, gibt es Situationen in der Schule oder im Unterricht, die nichts mit dem Dramaprojekt zu tun haben, wo es dir schwerer fällt, Englisch zu sprechen?

S6: Wenn ich so einmal etwas lesen muss, und dann da steht so ,I', also nicht so ,I will' sondern ,I'll', also da steht Komma und dann so ,I'll'.

S5: Also die Abkürzung.

S6: Ja, ja.

L: Okay. Aber in welchen Situationen fällt es dir schwerer, Englisch zu sprechen?

S4: Wenn wir lesen.

S2: Ja, wenn wir lesen.

S3: Wenn wir lesen, ist eh leicht.

S1: Bei mir ist nicht leicht.

S5: Bei mir ist schlimm.

S6: Bei mir genau wie Schüler 3. (lacht)

L: (lacht) Okay. Fallen euch Gründe ein, wieso es euch manchmal schwer fällt, Englisch zu sprechen in der Klasse?

S6: Nein.

S1: Nervosität vielleicht?

L: Mhm.

S4: Weil ich keine Fehler machen will und keine schlechtere Note bekommen mag.

L: Mhm.

S3+S2: Ja.

L: Ahm, wie häufig sprecht ihr denn im normalen Englischunterricht Englisch?

S4: Englisch?

S5: Also, ich versuche viel zu sprechen, ich versuche, aber ich spreche nicht viel.

S3: Ich versuche auch, also, wenn Sie etwas fragen und ich antworte auf Englisch.

S2: Ja, ich auch.

L: Ja? Ahm, okay. Wie fühlt ihr euch, wenn ihr Englisch sprecht in der Stunde?

S1: Nervös.

S5: Vor Klasse normal, aber vor Lehrerinnen nervös.

S3: Wenn ich spreche, dann ist hald ein bisschen schwer, aber ich merke, wenn ich mehr in der Stunde spreche, wird es viel einfacher. Wenn wir zum Beispiel, wie beim Drama, die ganze Stunde nur gesprochen haben.

L: Mhm. Ahm, fällt euch etwas ein, das euch helfen könnte, im Unterricht mehr Englisch zu sprechen?

S4: Gruppenarbeiten.

S2: Ja, Gruppenarbeiten.

S3: Gruppenarbeiten.

L: Gibt es Aktivitäten, die es euch leichter machen?

S1: Ja, wenn wir Geschichten erfinden dürfen und die dann schauspielern.

S5: Ja, Drama.

S3: Ja, das, was wir bei diese Projekt gemacht haben.

S4: Diese Drama ja.

S6: Ja, das war gut.

L: Aber was hat euch da so gefallen? Was war dabei leichter?

S2: Also ..

S3: Man konnte, also man konnte so erfinden, was man selbst sagen will und so.

L: Mhm.

S6: Man kann in einer Gruppe arbeiten, also die ...

S1: Man kann sich zuvor hald vorbereiten, also .. und dann wusste man hald, was man sagen muss und was man sagen mag.

S3: Und man hat nicht so viel Angst, dass man Fehler macht, weil man ist in einer Gruppe und die anderen machen vielleicht auch Fehler.

S5: Und man hat auch gemacht, was man wollte. Also auch in der Gruppe.

S4: Ja.

L: Ahm, wie war das Dramaprojekt für euch letzte Woche? Erzähl mal ein bisschen, bitte.

S2+S4: Gut.

S1: Sehr gut.

S6: Ja, sehr gut.

S5: Hat mir gut gefallen.

S4: Das beste Projekt.

S3: Es war das beste, was wir in Englisch bis jetzt gemacht haben.

S1: Ja.

S5: Find ich auch.

L: Danke (lacht). Gibt es Aktivitäten, an die ihr euch besonders gut erinnern könnt?

S3: Beim Projekt?

L: Ja.

S2: Ja, diese „Crick, crack“, diese dings.

L: Ah, du meinst, wie wir uns immer verabschiedet haben?
S2: Ja genau.
S1: Bootgeschichte.
S4: Ja, diese Bootgeschichte.
S5: Ja.
S6: Ja, das war sehr gut.
S3: Das war urwitzig mit (Name eines Schülers)
(lachen)
S6: Ich erinnere mich sehr gut an die Geschichten und so.
L: Was war eure Lieblingsaktivität?
S4: Diese Gruppenarbeit.
S3: Diese Drama.
S2: Diese Boot, also mit Boot.
S1: Ja, mit Boot.
S6: Ja, meins auch. Man konnte dazu eine Geschichte erfinden und die vor Klasse sagen und so. Das war urgut.
L: Wie ging es euch da, wenn wir dann immer wieder die Vorführungen gemacht haben vor den anderen?
S3: Das war leicht.
S1: Ja voll.
S4: Also für mich war das eh leicht.
S2: Ja, leicht, weil wir haben es in der Gruppe mit Freunden gemacht.
S6: Ja, mit Schüler 4 (lacht).
L: Wie würdet ihr es finden, wenn wir solche Aktivitäten öfters im Englischunterricht machen?
S1: Sehr gut!
S3: Ja, sehr gut.
S4: Voll!
S2: Ja!
S6: Sehr, sehr gut. Diese Gruppenarbeit war sehr gut.
S5: Ja, diese Drama war super.
L: Gibt es was, das euch vielleicht nicht so gut daran gefallen hat?
S5: Nein.
S3: Nein.
S6: Alles war gut.
S1: Dieses Schauspielern war immer gut. Also auch wenn man allein in der Mitte war und so.
S2: Also man musste hald vor allen in der Mitte so etwas machen. Wie bei den Eltern und das Kind kommt zu spät.
S1: Ja, das war schwierig.
S3: In den Gruppen war es hald leichter, weil man da mit anderen zusammen ist und mit ihnen gemeinsam spricht.
S4: Ja voll, zu viert oder so.
S2: Und man konnte sich hald vorbereiten und so.
S6: Also, manchmal haben wir uns ja nicht vorbereitet und wir machten es dann so direkt und so.
L: Das war schwierig, wenn du das so spontan machen musstest?

S6: Ja, aber wenn wir das so bereiten und dann vor Klasse, egal...

S3: Ja.

S6: ... aber wenn wir direkt machen oder bereiten ist es ein bisschen schwer.

S3: Also bei mir war es ein bisschen schwer, weil meine Gruppe wenig so vorbereitet hat, was gesprochen wird und so, deshalb war es ein bisschen schwer. Also ich weiß jetzt nicht, was ich dann sagen sollte und so. Und machen soll.

L: Okay. Ahm. Gibt es sonst noch etwas, das ihr mir sagen wollt, wenn es ums Sprechen im Englischunterricht geht? Fällt euch noch etwas ein?

S5: Ja, mehr Geschichten. Mehr Schauspielen.

S3: Ja, mehr Drama.

S1: Mehr diese Projekte.

S4: Mehr Gruppenarbeiten, also öfters.

S2: Ja.

L: Okay, dann vielen Dank fürs Mitmachen, ihr könnt zurück in den Unterricht gehen.

8.6. Observation sheets

Observation sheet 1 – Birthday party

procedure	notes
Imaginarium 10:54 - 11:03	excited about the exercise the stronger Ss encourage others ([REDACTED] ⊕) chatty, funny, excited everyone participated ✓ ⊕
Giving presents 11:03 - 11:09	the weaker Ss need extra explanation ✓ [REDACTED] shy everyone participated, some of them gave extra comments (funny & interesting) the weaker Ss weren't sure about their presents, but they also said sth ⊕ great start with the demo and taking the stronger Ss around you
Matching lines 11:09 - 11:12 11:12 - 11:25 11:25 - 11:34	Some Ss weren't sure what they should do or used German, but most of them were able to find their partner quickly ✓ * Come up with the dialogue / scene Some Ss have difficulties [REDACTED] or aren't sure [REDACTED] [REDACTED] but they manage to do it with a bit of help or encouragement [REDACTED] = great because [REDACTED] helped her * Scenes you did it with a difficult S who was late, which is great because he was also included ⊕ [REDACTED] a bit nervous but gives her best
Imaginarium 11:34 - 40	Some Ss are excited and want to start at the same time and not one after the other [REDACTED], but they all manage to do it properly and quickly

Observation sheet 2 – Coming home

procedure	notes
Grandmother's footsteps 8:55 - 9:05	██████ explains the difficult word so that everyone understands it - no German ✓ - they're competitive so it was a bit difficult to control some of them, but they had fun ✓
Progressive improvisation 9:05 - 9:24	Great reaction to the task, they're curious, try to guess what's coming, talk about feelings ██████ uses German, ██████ Sometimes they were confused, but it was spontaneous and great for the 1st time. It's good that you've chosen stronger Ss ██████ ██████ uses German but tries it. ██████ was dominant, so maybe they were also confused. But they all participated and understood the scenes and their roles
Interview 9:24 -	██████ use some German words, but understand all the Qs ██████ was great * ██████ talk differently → maybe to cover up their insecurities or mistakes
Shaking the body Crick crack – That's that	

8.7. Consent form

Einverständniserklärung

Liebe Eltern & Erziehungsberechtigte, liebe Schülerinnen und Schüler der 2A,

Als Englischlehrerin bin ich besonders daran interessiert, meinen Fremdsprachenunterricht kontinuierlich zu verbessern und möchte deshalb im Rahmen meiner **Masterarbeit** für das Unterrichtsfach Englisch an der Universität Wien ein kurzes **Forschungsprojekt** durchführen, für das ich Sie hiermit um Ihre Mithilfe bitte. Das Projekt wird von Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Julia Hüttner, MSc betreut (julia.huettner@univie.ac.at).

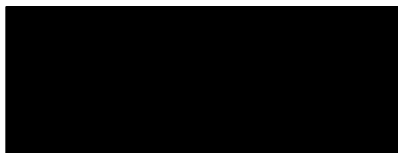
Das Ziel der Arbeit ist es, herauszufinden, wie die **Sprechfähigkeit** von Schülerinnen und Schülern im Fremdsprachenunterricht verbessert werden kann. Ein Bereich, von dem sich viele Forschende eine Verbesserung in Bezug auf die Sprechkompetenz erwarten, ist die **Dramapädagogik**. Im Rahmen dieses Ansatzes werden **Techniken aus den Bereichen Theater, Kunst und Psychologie** für den pädagogischen Kontext adaptiert und es wird versucht, Schülerinnen und Schülern Kompetenzen auf spielerische Weise zu vermitteln.

Die Studie besteht aus Videoaufnahmen der Unterrichtsstunden mit Schwerpunkt auf Dramapädagogik, der Teilnahme an einem Fragebogen (ca. 15 Minuten) und einem kurzen Gruppeninterview (ca. 25 Minuten). Es werden **keine schülerspezifischen Daten** erhoben und alle Daten werden **anonymisiert** verarbeitet. Die Teilnahme ist **freiwillig**, hat **keinen Einfluss auf die Notengebung** und findet **im Rahmen des Regelunterrichts** statt. Die Studie wird entweder im **April oder im Mai 2023** durchgeführt werden.

Ich würde mich freuen, wenn Sie Ihrem Kind die Erlaubnis erteilen, an diesem Forschungsprojekt teilzunehmen!

Sollten Fragen auftauchen oder Interesse an den Ergebnissen bestehen, können Sie mich gerne jederzeit kontaktieren 

Mit herzlichen Grüßen,



Wien, _____

Ich, _____, erteile hiermit die Erlaubnis,
dass mein Kind, _____, an der Studie über **Sprechfähigkeit im
Englischunterricht**, durchgeführt von Franziska Holzmann, teilnimmt.

Mein Kind darf ...

... im Rahmen der Unterrichtsstunden gefilmt werden.

... den Fragebogen ausfüllen.

... an dem Gruppeninterview teilnehmen.

Sollten Sie mit einem der oben angeführten Punkte nicht einverstanden sein, so streichen
Sie diesen bitte deutlich aus.

U.: _____

8.8. Headteacher's Statement of Approval

Wien, 27.6.2023

Hiermit erlaube ich, [REDACTED] im Rahmen ihrer Masterarbeit
in der [REDACTED] ein Forschungsprojekt durchzuführen und Daten zu erheben.



8.9. Teaching materials

8.9.1. Drama contract

Drama contract



Before the activities...

- I am **ready** and in the classroom when the lesson starts.
- I go to the bathroom and eat before the lesson starts.

During the activities...

- I **give every activity a try**. If I feel uncomfortable, I can always take a break after telling my teacher.
- This is a **mistake-friendly classroom**: I do not make fun of my classmates' ideas!
- I **respect** the ideas and the work of my colleagues.
- I try to speak **as much English as possible**!
- When I hear my **teacher clapping her hands**, I **stop talking** and listen.

Signatures 2A

Date: _____

8.9.2. Materials – Birthday party

This cake is disgusting.	Oh no! It took me so long to bake it.
Does anyone want to play a party game?	Yes! I would love to play 'hide and seek'!
I said I didn't want you to give her a dog for her birthday.	But it's only a little one. And it never barks!
Did you invite Tony to the party?	No, I forgot to invite him. I hope he is not mad at me.
We have to sing a song now.	Please don't sing. You sound terrible.
You have to blow out the candles on the cake.	After that, you can make a wish.
Do you want another piece of cake?	No, thank you. I've already eaten five pieces.
Thank you so much for your present. I love the sweater.	What do you mean 'the sweater'? I gave you a book!

Can you please turn down the music?	Yes, of course. I'm sorry it was so loud.
Where's the birthday boy?	He's in the kitchen, getting some cake.
Should we invite a clown for you birthday?	No, thank you. I'm afraid of clowns.
This party was great!	Yeah! I'm looking forward to my next birthday already!

8.9.3. Materials – Cinderella



Cinderella is very sad because her mother has just died.

2 people

Picture source: *Pinterest*. n.d. <https://kr.pinterest.com/pin/8373949301718399/> (13 April 2023).



Cinderella works hard in the household. Her stepmother and her stepsisters are very mean to her.

4 people

Picture source: *This is heart information*. 2021. <https://thisisheartinformation.com/2015/11/21/present-yet-invisible-keep-hope-in-despair/> (13 April 2023).



Cinderella's stepsisters get a letter with an invitation to a ball from the prince. Cinderella helps them to get ready for the ball. She is not allowed to go with them.

3 people

Picture source: *Timetoast*. n.d. <https://www.timetoast.com/timelines/cinderella-30ac6fda-aea5-4f1d-92d58fcb0f4e2789> (13 April 2023).



Cinderella is very sad. She meets the Fairy Godmother, who helps her get ready for the ball. But she has to be back at midnight.

2 people

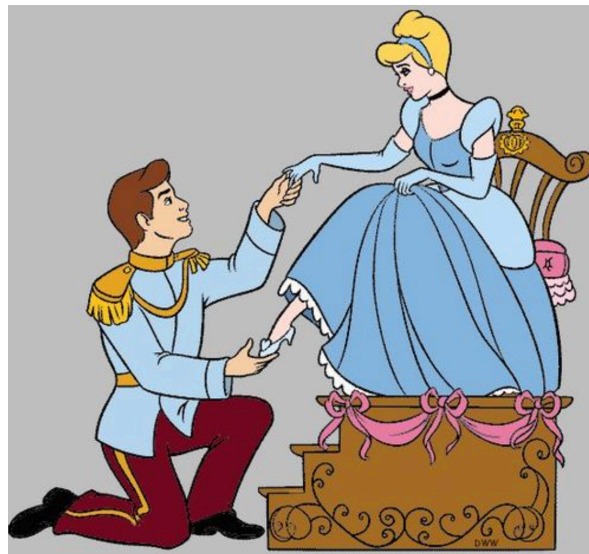
Picture source: *Timetoast*. n.d. <https://www.timetoast.com/timelines/cinderella-30ac6fda-aea5-4f1d-92d58fcb0f4e2789> (13 April 2023).



At the ball Cinderella meets the prince. He falls in love with her. But at midnight she has to leave. When she runs out of the castle, she loses a glass slipper.

2 people

Picture source: *Pinterest*. 2018. <https://at.pinterest.com/pin/407153622560955641/> (13 April 2023).



The prince looks everywhere for Cinderella. When he comes to her house, her stepsisters try the shoe but it doesn't fit. Then Cinderella tries the shoe and it fits perfectly. They marry and live happily ever after.

5 people

Picture source: *Timetoast*. n.d. <https://www.timetoast.com/timelines/cinderella-30ac6fda-aea5-4f1d-92d58fcb0f4e2789> (13 April 2023)

8.9.4. Materials – Picture



- What happened before the man got in the boat?
- How is he feeling?
- What is in the suitcase?
- Who is waiting for him in the church?

→ Create a sketch that answers these questions!

Picture source: Buchholz, Quint; Krüger Michael. 2001. *Wer das Mondlicht fängt: Bilder und Gedichte*.

München: Hanser.



man



man



boat



boat



suitcase



suitcase



seagull



seagull



sea



sea



church



church



hat



hat



moon

 moon	 night	 night
 light	 light	 island
 island	 suit	 suit

Source: Holzmann, Franziska. "Memory_drama". *Canva*.
https://www.canva.com/design/DAFhqct60Ns/OsdXS5wDIBjftB5DhNV2bw/edit?utm_content=DAFhqct60Ns&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton (13 April 2023).

8.9.5. Materials – Sketches

an argument



a surprise birthday party



an unsuccessful theft



an accident



a marriage proposal



love at first sight



on the beach



on the bus



in a restaurant



in a shop



in a school



in the kitchen



a strict teacher



**a funny
policewoman**



an unhappy baby



an arrogant princess



a nice robber



a lazy waiter



a young millionaire



a grandmother



a sleepy detective



a confused chef



an unhappy influencer



a rich footballer



a rude doctor



a bad student



**an unfriendly
boyfriend**



a mad scientist



**a grumpy
grandfather**



a boring bartender



a happy child 	a brave fire-fighter 
a hungry hairdresser 	a lazy shop assistant 
an old woman 	an annoyed teenager 

Sources:

Holzmann, Franziska. "People_drama". *Canva*.

https://www.canva.com/design/DAFhm7sV3VQ/qN7PonkZ4SYSgU1vs1ND1Q/edit?utm_content=DAFhm7sV3VQ&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton (13 April 2023).

Holzmann, Franziska. "Situations/Places_drama". *Canva*.

https://www.canva.com/design/DAFhmyP5iCk/ZWbg61uOX1KaMQhoMo1mA/edit?utm_content=DAFhmyP5iCk&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton (13 April 2023).