

**USE OF DRAMA TECHNIQUES AS A METHODOLOGY
TO TEACH ENGLISH IN INFANT EDUCATION BY
TEACHERS IN CATALONIA**

Treball final de Grau en Mestre d'Educació Infantil

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Abstract

The learning of the English language as a foreign language is an opportunity that Catalan schools are increasingly offering in their kindergarten levels. The methodology used in order to teach this language is different in each school. The research presented focused on the use of dramatic techniques as a methodology to teach English in Infant education. A questionnaire answered by 129 English teachers in Catalunya analyzes the perception about drama techniques and their application. In general, the results show lack of knowledge about this methodology.

Key words: dramatic techniques, foreign language, Infant Education, didactics.

Resum

L'aprenentatge de la llengua anglesa com a llengua estrangera és una oportunitat que cada vegada més escoles de Catalunya presenten a l'etapa d'educació Infantil. La metodologia utilitzada per introduir aquesta llengua és variada en cada cas. Aquesta recerca es centra en l'estudi de l'ús de tècniques dramàtiques com a metodologia per ensenyar anglès a infantil. A partir d'un qüestionari contestat per 129 professors d'anglès de Catalunya s'ha analitzat la percepció que tenen sobre les tècniques dramàtiques i la seva utilització. Els resultats mostren una manca de coneixement general sobre la metodologia.

Paraules clau: tècniques dramàtiques, llengua estrangera, Educació Infantil, didàctica.

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1. Introduction

There are many different methodologies to teach English as a foreign language, although some of them are more commonly used than others by English teachers of Infant education in Catalonia. The present study, which is the degree thesis of my degree in Childhood Education with the specialization in English, focuses on drama techniques as a methodology to teach English in Catalan schools. Through this research I aim to discover the use of the drama techniques as a methodology to teach English in Infant education by Catalan teachers, know their perception about the reasons for using it or not.

To carry out the study I first conducted a research of information about this technique and its use in teaching foreign languages. Afterwards I searched previous studies similar to the one I wanted to carry out. All this information, included in the theoretical framework, has been useful to set out the basis of my study. Second, I designed a questionnaire as an instrument to collect data of the study, which I sent to different schools of Catalonia. This questionnaire has been the basis of my study and from where I've extracted the results and the conclusions.

The study presented below is divided into three parts. In the first one, you will find the theoretical framework, with a brief introduction of what is drama, its application in the schools to teach English with a special focus on infant education and some samples of previous studies related to this topic. The second part includes the research questions, the methodology and the results. The third section includes the conclusions of the study.

2. What is drama?

2.1 Drama vs theater

The word *drama* refers to a wide concept which can be seen and defined through different points of views. Different authors have referred to this concept and all of them have seen the necessity to do a distinction between drama and theatre. It is important to realize this difference in order to understand clearly what drama refers to.

Wessels (1987, p7) refers to drama as a normal situation in daily life “drama is doing. Drama is being. Drama is such a normal thing. It is something that we engage in daily when faced with difficult situations. You get up in the morning with a bad headache or an attack of depression, yet you face the day and cope with other people, pretending that nothing is wrong [...] Getting on with our day-to-day lives requires a series of civilized masks if we are to maintain our dignity and live in harmony with others.”

Courtney (1980, p. 7) defines drama as “the human process whereby imaginative thought becomes action, drama is based on internal empathy and identification, and leads to external impersonation”. In other words, it represents the world of “let’s pretend”, the act of using imagination to become someone or something other than yourself. Other professionals such as Slade (1958) believe drama is the art of doing in life, whereby one may assume various roles until he finally discovers who and what he really is. Slade (1955) also states that personal play, where the whole person or self is used, is obviously drama as it’s typified by movement and characterization. Courtney also expresses that life is drama as humans are always acting and improvising.

It is important to draw a distinction between drama and theatre, because even though there is an evident close relation, they are separate concepts. Elam (1980) defines *theatre* as a phenomenon associated with the performer-audience transaction whereas he defines *drama* as the fiction designed for stage representation, the body of written plays. Fleming (2006) defines theatre as performing on stage and drama as a spontaneous and improvised work. Maley (2001) states that the most relevant difference is that in drama the process is more important than the product.

Wessels (1987) explains that drama in education uses the same tools employed by actors in theatre. However, the difference is that with theatre everything is contrived for the benefit of the audience and in classroom drama everything is contrived for the

benefit of the learners. Way (1967) makes a similar reflection explaining that in the context of drama teaching the difference between theatre and drama can be seen in the way it is perceived. He explains theatre is understood as the communication between actors and audience, while drama is understood as the experience between the participants, independent of any function of communication to an audience.

In the 1980s, in England there was a division between the approaches to teaching drama. Teachers who followed the theatre approach used words such as acting, rehearsal and performance, whereas teachers who followed a drama approach referred more to experience or living through improvisations (Hornbrook, 1989)

Fleming (2003) describes in a graphic (figure 1) the history of drama and theatre and the difference between them. In it we can see the division between both concepts, where drama (drama 1) was understood as a dynamic process for everyone where the method is learner-centered, whereas theatre (theatre 1) was understood as a static product only for a small group where the method is teacher-centred. We can also see a more contemporary view where there has been a change in the way both concepts have been conceptualized. On the one hand, drama (drama 2) has seen the necessity to be more conceptualized with the need of a structure, a script and previous knowledge of the topic. On the other hand, theatre (theatre 2) has been seen less authoritarian with more attention on the impact of the audience and a more fluid concept of acting and rehearsal.

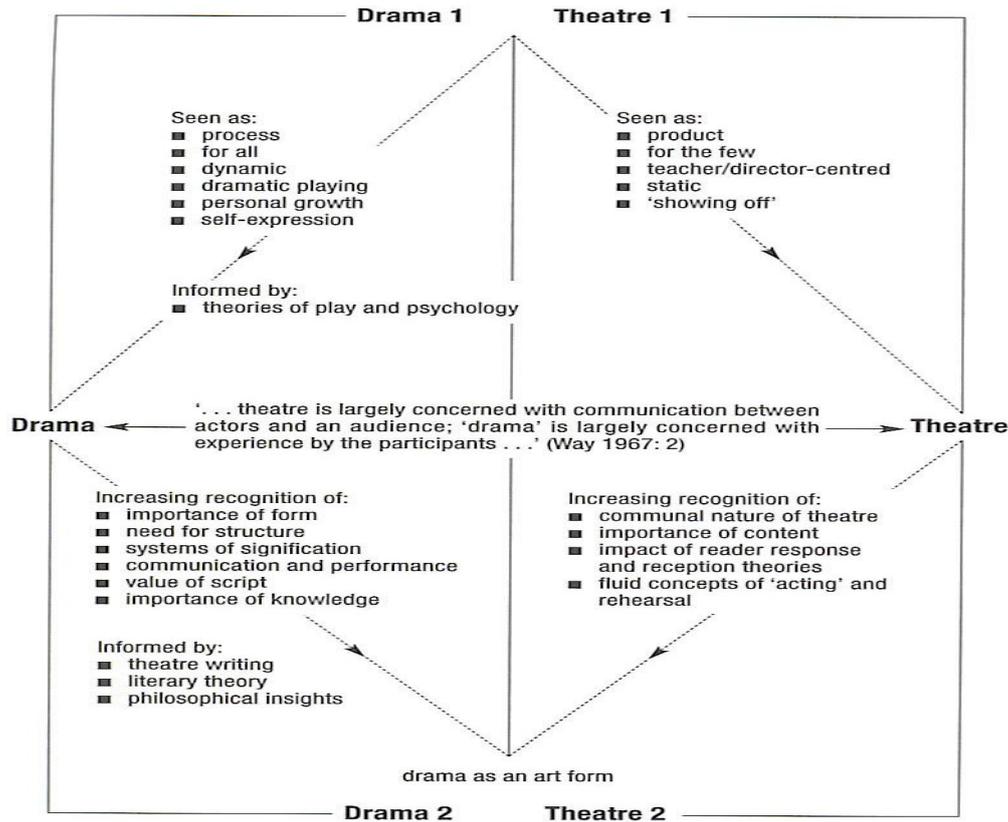


Figure 1: The history of drama and theatre (Fleming, 2003)

In this research paper we understand drama from an educational perspective, and we will focus on drama as a methodology to teach a foreign language more than an art of doing or living.

2.2 Drama in schools as a way to teach

The use of drama in schools to teach is not a new concept. It has been around since ancient times and in many different countries it has been introduced in everyday classrooms. First of all, we have to clarify that by using drama in the classroom the goal is not to teach acting and performance skills, but it is presented as a methodology that can be adapted and integrated to different subject areas.

As we have seen in the previous section, drama can be defined with the expression "let's pretend". Taking into account the famous ancient Chinese proverb "I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand", we can understand the positive

effect drama can have in the education as a way to learn through experience and active participation. Various professionals, such as Dewey (1963), define drama in education as “learning by doing”, others, as Bolton (1984), call the way of using drama to teach “dramatic playing”. Bolton (1985) adds that learning in drama is essentially reframing; that is, the knowledge a pupil already has is placed in a new perspective. Moreover, he finds educational intuitions fail in developing natural understanding, which in his view is urgent. In his opinion drama could help pupils learn to cope with the complexities of relationships in a modern society.

Maley and Duff (2005, p.2) set out a list with various points defending, in general, the use of drama in schools and its benefits:

1. It integrates language skills in a natural way, careful listening and spontaneous verbal expression.
2. It integrates verbal and non verbal aspects of communication (physical and intellectual aspects of learning)
3. It integrates both cognitive and affective domains (importance of feeling as well as thinking).
4. It brings the classroom interaction to life through an intensive focus on meaning.
5. It offers unequalled opportunities for catering to learner differences.
6. It fosters self-awareness, awareness of others, self-esteem and confidence.
7. It provides motivation through the variety of expectancy generated by the activities.
8. It offers transfer of responsibility for learning from teacher to learners.
9. It encourages an open, exploratory style of learning, where creativity and the imagination are given scope to develop. Risk-taking is an essential element in effective language learning
10. It has a positive effect on classroom dynamics and atmosphere.
11. It is an enjoyable experience.

12. It is low-resource. All you need is a roomful of human beings.

Other authors discuss Maley and Duff's ideas and focus on particular points. Fleming (2006) and Munther (2013) coincide on the eighth point believing that by introducing drama in the classroom the learning method becomes learner-centered, which only operates through active cooperation of the pupils while the teacher becomes just a facilitator. Wilhelm (1995) adds that through drama, students become part of the learning process rather than mere observers. Different authors have also underlined the sixth and tenth point of Maley and Duff, arguing that drama in education has the characteristic of involving the whole person and the whole class group. Munther (2013) defines drama as an appealing teaching strategy which promotes cooperation, collaboration, self-control, goal-oriented learning as well as emotional intelligence skills. Other researchers add that drama helps the pupils learn academically, socially and developmentally (Neelands, 1992).

In sum, drama is a teaching methodology that offers many advantages. It can be integrated to all the subjects and is suitable for all the pupils.

3. Justification for using drama to teach English

3.1 Advantages of using drama

Nowadays there are countless methods and techniques to teach English as a foreign language, and according to various researchers, one of the most effective one is drama. In this section I discuss the main features of drama as a teaching technique, why it is effective and its advantages.

Athimoolam (2004) argues that the success of teaching English as a foreign language depends on the methodological approach, which the teacher adopts in the execution of his lessons. As he states, the problem is now and has been for many years that teachers are used to focus on the grammar approach class, as they believe it's the best way to teach. Against these ideas, Athimoolam states this approach is flawed as students don't have the opportunity to learn the language in authentic situations as their interactions with the foreign language are limited. Munther (2013) compares a conventional English class with a class which uses drama techniques and affirms that the conventional English class hardly gives the students an opportunity to use language with confidence and develop fluency in it. He sees as an alternative teaching English through drama as it gives a context for listening and for meaningful language productions, leading the students or forcing them to use their own language resources. To sum up, by using drama techniques to teach English, pupils get the opportunity to use the language meaningfully and appropriately, while the monotony of a conventional English class is broken and the syllabus transformed.

Related to the distinction between ordinary English classes and the use of drama techniques to teach it, Wessels (1987) emphasizes communication skills. As he states, "genuine communication" is the one that takes into account the background, the emotions, the relationships, the status, the body languages and other paralinguistic features. Although in much classrooms practice or in coursebook presentations this genuine communication is overlooked, many students fail or take a long time to achieve the ability to communicate effectively outside the classroom. Using drama would involve a consideration of most of the aspects of genuine communication.

After these distinctions I will focus on the advantages drama can provide in learning a foreign language. Six advantages are generally mentioned in previous research:

1. Inclusivity in the classroom. One of the most important features is that drama, as Aldavero (2008) explains, not only helps pupils with a good background of English but include those with limited vocabulary. It's suitable both for students who have a good knowledge of the language and for those who are having the first contact with it. As the same activity can be adapted to the different levels, they can do it at the same time. While dramatizing, students use all the channels (sight, hearing, and physical bodies) and the language will "enter" through the most appropriate channel for each pupil (Desiatova, 2009).

2. Motivator and encouraging. Philips (2003) affirms that drama activities can promote interesting ways of motivating language learners and teachers. As mentioned in the previous section, drama is a part of everyone's life, and it's a way to make language learning active, as with drama we can play, move, act and learn at the same time.

3. Stimulator of learners' thinking and imagination. Drama makes constant demands on a person's imagination, and it develops the learner's ability to think more effectively, (Desialova,2009). It encourages children's creativity and develops their imagination while gives them the opportunity to use a language that is outside their daily needs. Katz (2000) affirms that when pupils are involved with drama they develop a higher order thinking skills such as: inventing, generating, speculating, deducing, analyzing, selecting, refining and judging.

4. Development of oral communication. As previously mentioned, it is helpful to acquire a "genuine communication" (Wessels, 1987), as it works on many different aspects. Melville (1980) affirms drama stimulate natural spontaneous spoken English and helps student use language that is both grammatically correct and appropriate, as defined by place or mood. Goodwin (2001) adds that it is a particularly effective tool for pronunciation teaching because various components of communicative competence can be practiced in an integrated way.

5. Effective to acquire vocabulary and structure. Maley and Duff (2001) mention drama can also be used to teach structure and vocabulary, and present drama as an effective technique for revision and reinforcement.

6. Emotional and personal concepts. According to Maley and Duff (2001), drama techniques put back some of the forgotten emotional content into language. This technique develops all aspects of the personality; it helps learners gain the confidence and self-esteem needed to use the language spontaneously. By getting a special role, pupils are encouraged to be that character and abandon their shyness. As they often need to work in groups and discuss, make decisions, negotiate, listen to each other and value each other's suggestions, they develop the ability to empathize with others and thus become better communicators (Desiatova, 2009).

In conclusion, drama techniques have many advantages as a method to teach a foreign language. However, there are also important aspects to take into account when using it like having good training, the main disadvantage this technique presents, as it's not adequate to use this methodology without previous knowledge on the topic. Another disadvantage it presents is that most of the activities can cause embarrassment, it is very important that all the students feel comfortable doing the lesson and for that reason, the teacher has to consider how every pupil is and give an appropriate role to each one.

3.2 Drama in infant education

Now that we know what drama is, the advantage of using it as an educational methodology and the approach of drama as a way of learning English, we'll focus on infant education. If we review the advantages that drama offers, mentioned previously, it's not difficult to understand the value this technique can provide to an infant who is in the most important period of its development.

One of the most influential researchers on drama techniques, Peter Slade (1995), developed a study by observing thousands of very young children's creative play. This study brought him to the conclusion that play contributes to the holistic development of the child and it's a source of happiness and meaningful action in a children's life. After this study he saw and recognized children and what children did (play) as the linchpin to what good education meant. He embraced his philosophy in the book *Child Drama*, where he differentiates two distinct types of play: projected play and personal play. Projected play is characterized by using objects where the dramatic situations and the imagination are projected onto it. As the author defines, this type of play develops

concentration. Personal play involves more physical activities as it involves the whole body. This type of play develops confidence and mastery. He noticed that both types were essential for children development and he emphasized that child drama includes both types. Other researchers or psychologists, such as Vygotsky (1976), support the use of drama in the classrooms defending that it provides a sound foundation for the development.

Obadiegwu (2012) argued that teaching using drama brings emotion and learning together. He stresses the use of drama to teach in kindergarten and primary classrooms where, as he explains, it gets students involved and gives them the power to have a key role in their education. Obadiegwu adds dramatic play is innate in children and it helps them to prepare for life and cope with growing up so that it should be carried on onto the nursery and primary classrooms.

After this brief explanation, the importance of using drama in infant education in order to get a meaningful learning and a successful development should be clear. Moreover, using this technique to teach English to infants represents a great opportunity for them to explore a new language and start acquiring it while focusing on all the important skills.

4. Previous research

The presented study aims to identify teacher's perceptions in Catalonia on the use of educational drama to teach English in Infant education. To conduct this study a questionnaire was designed and sent to different teachers of Catalonia. In order to carry out the proposed study, I felt necessary to do a search on previous studies similar to the one presented which include questionnaires as a research method.

I found many questionnaires for students asking for the characteristics of English drama classes when they were students and asking for their English level. However, I found fewer questionnaires about the use of drama through the point of view of the teacher. The following section reviews previous studies which I've divided based on whether they are for students or for teachers.

4.1 Questionnaires focusing on students

Previous research include a long list of studies focusing on students, where I could see many designs to examine how drama can improve some general aspects of the language, such as speaking, some skills and proficiency, motivation, attitudes and long life skills. Furthermore, I could also see how many studies are designed for university students, for primary as well as for secondary school and to a less extent, for kindergarten and nursery students.

Many experimental studies tried to prove the existence of a relationship between drama in education and academic variables over the past decades. Anna et al. (2011) evaluated the effects of drama in an education project on both students and teachers. A total of 58 kindergarten and primary teachers took part in a 24-hour teacher training program on drama in education and 10 hours of on-site coach supervision by a drama educator in designing a lesson through drama-enhanced learning to the classes they were teaching. Students were randomly selected from these classes, in total there was an experimental group of 83 kindergarten students and a control group formed by 20 students from the same school, who were not taught by these trained teachers. After the training and before the incorporation of drama into the lessons, teachers and students of both groups filled out some questionnaires. Moreover, some students also

participated in a story-telling test. After some time, both groups did a post-test questionnaire in order to establish the findings. The study demonstrated significant differences in the teacher-perceived dramatic characteristics in the experimental group of students. Among other improvements, in the story-telling test, they could see an improvement in their verbal expression from the pupils who took part of the experimental group rather than those who didn't. Other positive effects were seen in the teaching techniques of teachers involved in the training. They were more encouraging towards their students inspiring them to become independent, cooperative learners and giving importance to accept their own ideas.

Neal (2012) wanted to test the hypothesis that using drama to increase motivation and attention in ESL classes would result in an increased learning as the positive correlation between motivation and learning is established. The sample to answer the question "Would students be more motivated and would their self-confidence in English improve if drama is brought into their EFL classroom?" was formed by two classes of 14-16 years old students from a school in Reykjavik. The researcher designed previous and post questionnaires which assessed the enjoyment of the English class and how they felt about their abilities in English. Moreover, by observing other teachers and asking them and the students involved in the project he obtained additional information. The findings showed the relation between motivation, self-confidence and learning, and it was demonstrated that when one value increases, the other almost always increases as well. During his observations and after the results of the study he saw how drama can benefit EFL lessons, and he stated that drama works with diversity, and that it increases pupils self-confidence.

4.2 Questionnaires focusing on teachers

Hoetker et al. (1967) designed a questionnaire to assess the teacher's attitudes towards a variety of objectives for teaching drama. It was divided into eight categories (non-cognitive, personal development, ethical growth, literary knowledge, improvement of taste and behavior, curricular utility, theater-specific knowledge, transfer of skills, enjoyment, and art appreciation). To cover the range of objectives for drama, this questionnaire contains 32 items. In the study there were four study groups (Secondary school English teachers, actors, administrators and drama teachers).

Once the questionnaire was done to several people of each study group they were able to set some findings. On one hand they realized that the differences in objectives and values between the four groups were basic and important as they influenced preferences, decisions and behaviors. They noticed they had to take into account those differences for the cooperation educational programs between these groups. On the other hand they found that all groups agreed in the importance of some objectives for drama. This gave hope for a good collaboration between the schools and the theatre if the differences were treated with honesty and communication.

Ronke (2005) intended to explore the use of drama and theater as an alternative approach method for foreign language learning. He focused on German language at the university level in the USA. He created and sent out a questionnaire (1990) to 300 German department chairs in the US and Canada regarding the use of theater as a teaching methodology in their classes. He modified and sent out again (2001) the questionnaire. His main objective was to research whether, how and to what extent other German programs in the US and Canada had produced theater projects in their university and college classes between 1996 and 2001. Furthermore, he wanted to find out whether those who had undertaken such projects were satisfied with the results with regard to language learning.

In his study he first concluded that the drama method hadn't been used in many German programs around the United States and Canada, as few questionnaires were returned. He could also see that 85% of responses rated theatre projects to be worthwhile for language learners as it offers many benefits for language and personal learning, there was a positive evaluation from the teachers of the theatre approach. Another conclusion he extracted was that only the teachers who were involved on theater projects provided detailed and elaborated responses. To conclude, this study showed that drama projects can be valued as an effective way of integrating the theater arts into foreign language instruction; however, he also emphasized that more research and case studies, as well as teacher workshops, are needed in order to acquaint a larger number of teachers with this teaching tool.

Related to the previous study, Sulaiman (2013) examined the perceptions of teacher's use of educational drama in teaching English in Palestine. The researcher used a questionnaire with 107 teachers, chosen randomly, from Gaza in order to collect data about the use of educational drama in the classes.

The results of the study showed that there was a significant difference about the teachers' perception of the use of drama techniques depending on their gender, the teachers' experience, institution to which they belonged and on the qualifications. Based on the study results, the researcher explained that it is not an easy task to implement innovative and alternative approaches for teaching English drama, as teachers are usually apprehensive about making changes. However, he suggests that teachers should reflect their role in the English drama area and expand their notions of drama. He states that the use of educational drama in English classes is an essential strategy for teaching the foreign language, so he highly recommends to teachers to make a good use of it.

In conclusion, we can affirm that many different studies have investigated drama as a methodology to teach a foreign language. Although most of the studies are not closely linked to my study, all of them have provided me with important information, which has been useful in order to develop my study and specially to design the questionnaire of the current study.

5. Study

5.1 Research questions

After having briefly defined the concepts of drama and theater, having introduced the benefits of using it in education, with a special focus as a methodology to teach English as a foreign language and specifically focusing it to infant education, this section focuses on my study and research questions.

With regard to the studies reviewed previously, I found a close similarity between my study and Hoetker's (1967) questionnaire titled "place of drama", whose aim was assessing teacher's attitude toward teaching drama. I can see the similarity as both studies are designed for teachers and to perceive their view of the drama as a teaching methodology.

In order to carry out my study, I wanted to identify teachers' perceptions in Catalonia on the use of educational drama to teach a foreign language in infant education. Thus, my research questions were:

1. Do teachers in Catalonia use drama techniques as a methodology to teach English in infant education?
2. What is the perception of English teachers of infant education in Catalonia about the use of drama techniques?
3. What are the reasons for not adopting drama as an English teaching technique?

5.2 Methodology

5.2.1 Participants

The participants were selected randomly. The profile sought was teachers who are currently teaching or have ever taught English in Infant education. An e-mail was sent explaining the study and asking if the teachers that fulfilled those requirements could answer it. I firstly sent it to all the people I knew who were teachers or who knew any teachers asking if they could send it to the person responsible for the English classes at their school. I also sent the email to all my classmates who are also doing their

internship in different schools and finally I randomly selected some schools of different parts of Catalonia and I sent the questionnaire via email as well.

Finally 129 teachers took part in the study, 15 of them men and the rest women, all born between 1991 and 1958. 37% of the total studied at the Universitat de Barcelona, 22% at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 12% at Universitat de Vic, 9% at Universitat de Girona and the rest in other universities (figure 2). 67% of the teachers have Catalan as their native language, 30% Spanish, 1% English and the rest have another language (figure 3). From the total, 52% consider they have an advanced level, 31% a high-intermediate level and the rest between intermediate and beginner level (figure 4).

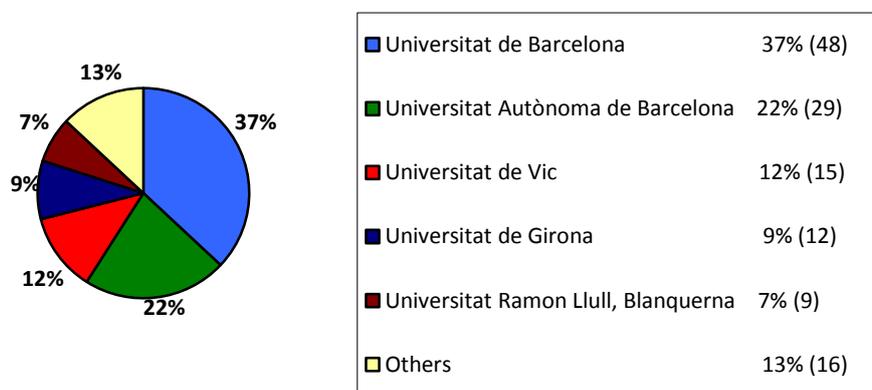


Figure 2: Universities where the participants had studied

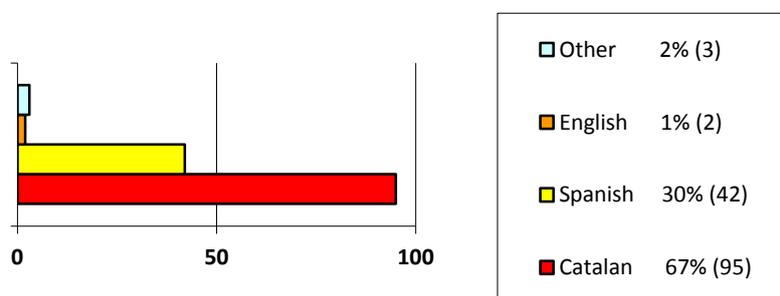


Figure 3: Native language of the respondents

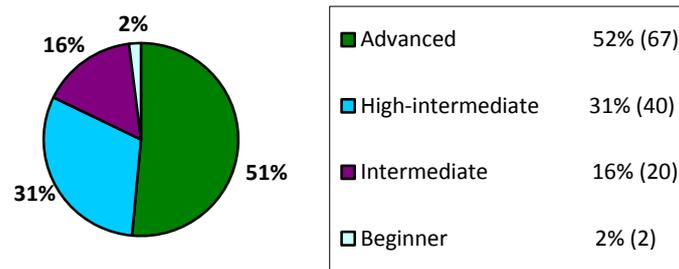


Figure 4: English level of participants

5.2.2 Instrument

The tool used to carry out this study was a questionnaire. A questionnaire (Gould, 2011) is an instrument used to collect data, which is formed by a set of questions aimed to gather information from individuals or a group of people. Questionnaires can be delivered by mail, telephone, using face-to-face interviews, as handouts or electronically. Questionnaires, (Department of Health and Human Services, 2008) should be used when our sources are limited and we need more data from many people; they can also be used for gathering of information about knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of the respondents.

There are different types of questionnaire formats, with open or closed questions. The first ones give the possibility to answer with their own words, non-predetermined answers are offered and the respondent is free to answer whatever he feels right. The second group (closed format) presents multiple choice questions and the respondents are restricted to choose among any of the given answers.

Questions can be further classified into 7 types:

1. Leading questions, where the predetermined answer can range from fair to superb, and the respondents are forced to give a particular type of answer.
2. Importance questions, where respondents are asked to rate the importance of a particular issue on a rating scale.
3. Likert questions, where you can see how strongly the respondents agree to a particular statement.
4. Dichotomous questions, where the respondents have to answer with a yes or no.

5. Bipolar questions, where two extreme answers are presented written at the opposite ends of the scale.
6. Rating scale questions, where the respondents are asked to rate a particular issue on a scale that ranges between good to poor
7. Buying propensity questions, where the aim is to assess the customers future intentions and to determine the respondent's buying intention, and the answers range from definitely to definitely not.

The questionnaire designed to carry out this study (appendix) is a set of questions for individuals, delivered by e-mail and to be answered online. Doing it online was a good way to maintain participants' privacy, to have access to a larger amount of possible respondents and to specially focus on the information I wanted to recollect. I designed the questionnaire with Google Drive and I sent the access link to the teachers. It consisted of 12 questions and was set with some general questions at the top, which would help me classify the participants, followed by some questions focusing on their training and finally questions about their use of drama.

The types of questions were varied: three of them were open format questions such as: *"Have you had experiences related with the drama or theatre and English teaching?"* The rest were closed format with multiple choices, some of which allow only one possible answer: *"How many years of experience do you have in English teacher in Infant education?"* while in others several answers were allowed: *"Which grades do you usually teach?"*. In this group of questions there was a dichotomous one, where the respondents had to answer with yes or no: *"Have you ever used drama as a language reaching technique?"*

5.3 Results

From the approximately 250 questionnaire delivered, around 120 people did not answer the questionnaire. In addition, an important number of schools responded to the email explaining that they did not teach English in infant education. Finally, the total amount of questionnaires answered was 129. We can see that the participants experience as an English teacher in Infant education is varied: 24% of them had from 0 to 2 years of experience, 20% from 3 to 5 years, 30% from 6 to 10 years, and the remaining 26% had more than 10 years of experience (figure 5).

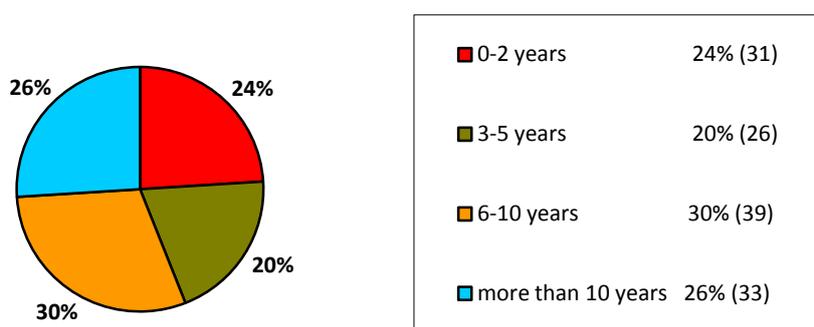


Figure 5: Years of experience of the respondents as English teachers

The results of the questionnaire show that the methodologies used by the respondents in their English classes are varied. Storytelling (21%), songs (21%), games (19%) and TPR (14%) are the more used. Dramatic techniques are below the average, with a total of 8% and finally CLIL (6%), following the book (6%) and projects (5%) (figure 6).

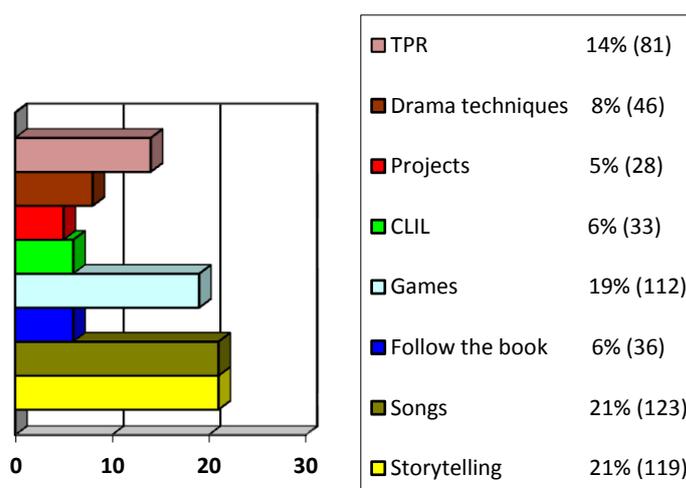


Figure 6: Methodologies used by the respondents

From the questionnaires, it can be seen that 48% of the respondents have never used drama as a language teaching technique in infant education whereas 52% affirm that they have used it (figure 7). However, after analyzing the justification about which ones they have used and which results they obtained, we can see that many of them have misunderstood the concept of drama confusing it with the theatre concept. Some of the answers received from question 12 of the questionnaire (appendix 7.1) “Have you ever used drama as a language teaching technique? If you answered yes to the previous question, which ones have you used and what results did you get?”, show explanations such as “we usually work on a story and we play it as in a theatre” or “we sometimes act out the stories and songs included in our class books”, where we can see that they justified their use of dramatic techniques explaining that they do theatre plays. We can also see other answers such as “I use facial expressions, gestures and lot of movements. It helps the children to remember the new vocabulary and to have fun during the English lessons”, where we can see that they don’t exactly know what drama techniques means.

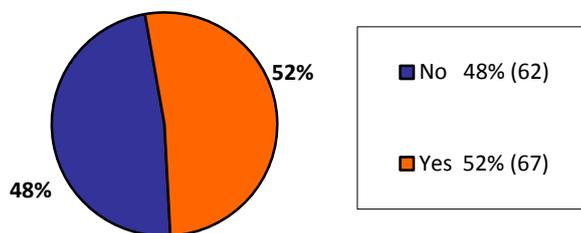


Figure 7: Use of drama of the respondents

After having analyzed the responses and focusing on the concepts previously explained in the theoretical framework, I did a second classification. Out of the respondents, 52% affirmed that they used drama as a language teaching technique, from this total 33% didn’t have an appropriate concept of drama, 12% had used drama but only in primary levels, 17% didn’t give enough information and it is not possible to be classified, whereas 38% really had understood the drama concept and had conducted their lessons through this technique (figure 8).

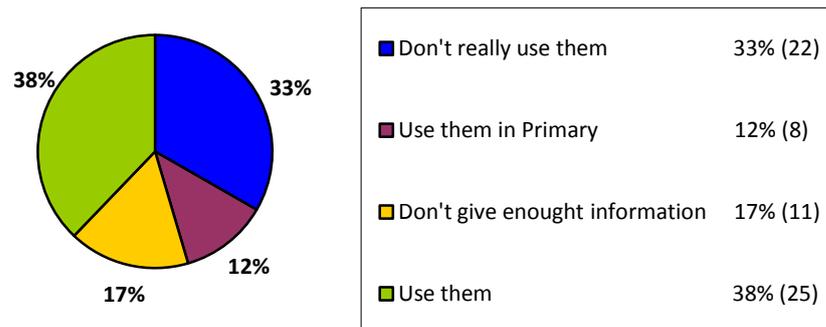


Figure 8: Second classification on the use of drama by participants

To sum up, from the total of 129 answers received and after having analyzed their responses, the amount of teachers who use or have ever used drama techniques during their English lessons is 25, which represents 19.4% of the total (figure 9).

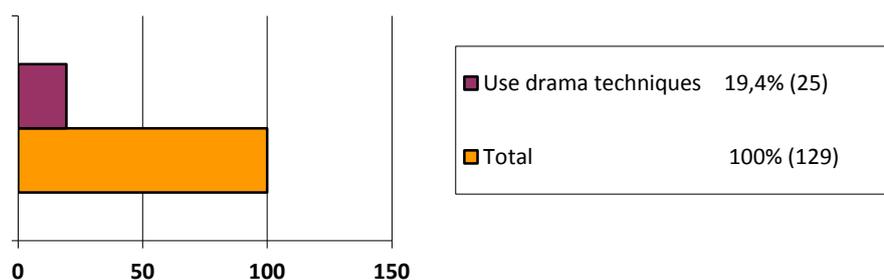


Figure 9: Use of drama of the respondents after having analyzed their responses

In the responses of the teachers who use drama techniques when they were asked about the results obtained, we can see different reflections. All give positive feedback on the drama activities. We can also see that they use those techniques in different situations, such as a teacher who explains “I use most of them in order to improve oral skills” or another who states “we're doing it in the reading time as a comprehension technique”. We can also see other ways of using it in a more general way, such as a teacher who states that “we use drama for simple situations, someone at the market shopping fruit, for example, they ask for some fruit...saying please and thank you... we don't need a long play”. About the results obtained with the drama techniques, we can find responses such as “Drama, songs and playing games is the best way to acquire the foreign language having fun. Drama is the only way to develop in class a real context where the students notice the language's utility. It's always a positive

experience and we always get good results”. However there are also others reflections, such as “my experience is if they don’t have previous notions of drama techniques it will be more difficult and we will need more time to have good results”.

The study shows that the majority of these 25 respondents who use drama techniques to teach English have more than 6 years of experience (figure 10). The English levels of those particular teachers are between high-intermediate and advanced with a percentage of 68% for the advanced level, 28% for the high-intermediate level and one teacher (4%) with an intermediate level (figure 11).

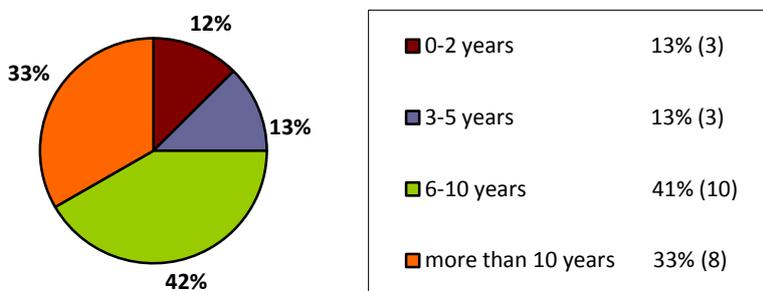


Figure 10: Level of English of the respondents who use drama techniques

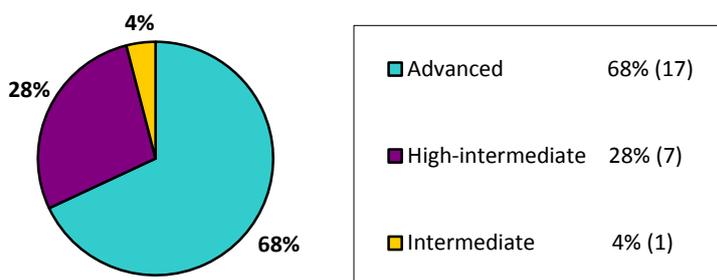


Figure 11: Years of experience of the respondents who use drama techniques

Of all respondents, 52% have participated in an innovation project whereas 48% have not (figure 12). The projects where the respondents have been involved are varied, however, almost all of them are related with the English language. It can also be seen that out of the 25 respondents who have really used drama in their English lessons, 13 have never had any training on teaching English through drama and 11 have done it. Of those who affirm they have done it, 3 have done drama courses abroad, like a teacher who mentions “I went to Northern Ireland because there is a school where they train teachers to use Drama in the class as a useful tool”, 3 others had done a subject about general drama during their degree or post-degree: “I was in a Postgrau in Universitat Autònoma and there was a subject about drama in general, not how to teach drama through English”, and the rest have done short courses or don’t give enough information about it (figure 13).

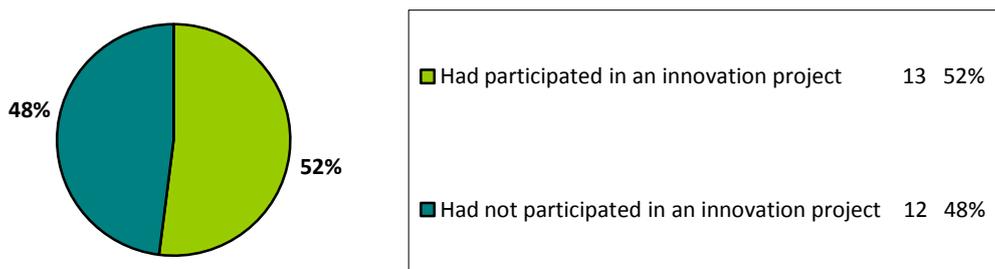


Figure 12: Participation of the respondents in innovation projects

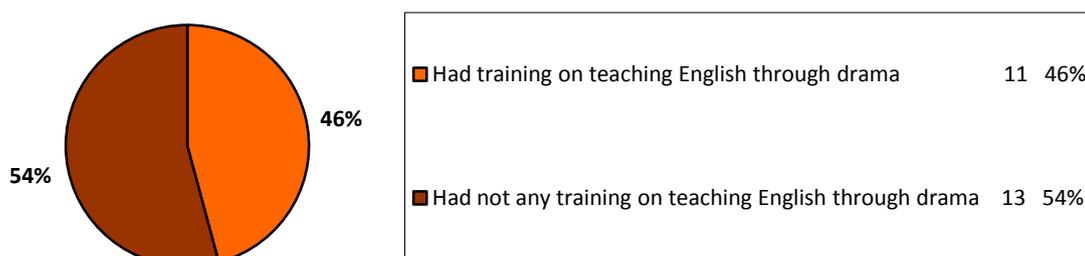


Figure 13: Participation in any training on teaching English through drama

Regarding the question 12 of the questionnaire (appendix 7.1) “Have you ever used drama as a language teaching technique? If you answered no to the previous question, why don’t you use drama techniques?”, there have been different justifications. However, most of them coincide on some responses (figure 12). The respondents were asked to mark a maximum of 3 or 4 responses and the results show that most of them,

23%, justified that time is too short to be able to conduct dramatic activities, 20% mentioned that they have lack of knowledge of the technique and 19% that they have too many pupils in their classes and that they don't have enough extra support. Other justifications were: prefer other techniques (8%), huge previous preparation (7%), never considered this possibility (6%), there are different levels in their class (5%).

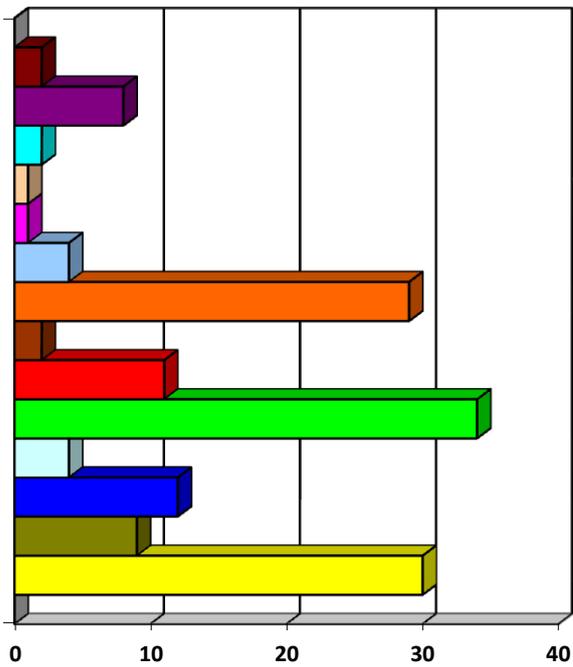


Figure 12: Justifications of the respondents who don't use drama techniques

Others	2	1%
There are different levels in my class	8	5%
I think pupils will revert to mother tongue	2	1%
I think it won't work with my group	1	1%
I think it won't work with "difficult children"	1	1%
It needs too much material	4	3%
I have too many pupils in my class and I don't have extra support	29	19%
In my school there isn't enough space	2	1%
It needs a huge previous preparation	11	7%
Time is too short	34	23%
My school doesn't give me this possibility	4	3%
I prefer other techniques	12	8%
I've never considered this possibility	9	6%
Lack of knowledge of the technique	30	20%

6. Conclusion

The use of drama techniques has a long tradition as a method to learn and teach foreign languages. The present study was designed to determine the perception of English teachers of Infant education in Catalonia about the use of drama techniques. The aim of this paper was to assess the use of these techniques and to determine the reasons why some teachers do not use them.

The study has shown that drama techniques are not widely used by Catalan teachers. Although the current study is based on a small sample of participants, the findings suggest that generally Catalan teachers do not have a relevant background of these techniques as a large amount of respondents stated they have a lack of knowledge of this methodology. These particular findings could be clearly seen in the teachers' confusion when talking about the drama concept. The most popular justifications for not using those techniques are "time is too short" and "I have too many pupils in my class and I don't have extra support", which confirm the lack of knowledge of the technique. On the one hand, it is true that some activities as extended role-plays can take a long time, however, there are many other dramatic activities which are not time consuming. On the other hand, drama techniques are learner-centered, the teacher becomes just a facilitator and the activities are carried out through active cooperation of the classmates. This fact makes the activities easy to conduct and no extra support is needed. Other justifications given by teachers who don't use this technique are that it needs timely previous preparation and that there are different levels in their class. These reflections are also not warranted, because as it has been exposed previously, many authors defined the inclusivity this methodology offers in the classroom as one of the main advantages it presents, as pupils can use the language to the best of their abilities in every activity. Regarding the amount of previous preparation that some respondents alluded to, we think that compared to other methodologies where you have to search an adequate story, song or prepare the grammar you want to teach, it doesn't demand a harder task, as in most of the drama activities the teacher only has to present a situation where language can be developed spontaneously.

In addition to the conclusions responding the previous questions, the study has disclosed other findings. The research has shown that as we could see in the answers of a large amount of schools in Catalonia, English is not taught in Infant Education due to a lack of resources. We could also see that some teachers think of drama activities

as a learning method to be used in primary more than in infant education. Another important conclusion can be extracted when reviewing the years of experience of teachers who really use drama techniques. Most of them (74%) have more than 6 years of experience, which suggest that the less experience teachers have, the less confident they feel using dramatic techniques.

Finally, a number of important limitations need to be considered. First, even though the response rate has been superior to our expectations, the number of respondents is still relatively small. Second, although the methodology used has been very useful to reach a large amount of participants, it limited some aspects as most of the respondents haven't extended in their justifications and it has been difficult in some cases to interpret the real information.

This work wasn't intended to analyze the success drama techniques, but the aim was to analyze the application of this methodologies by English teachers of Infant education in Catalonia. However, further research regarding the role of those techniques in Catalonia would be worthwhile. This information can be used in the future to develop more interventions and courses aimed at English teachers in Catalonia in order to get to know this technique, providing a real knowledge of it and being conscious of their different applications and advantages, so they can learn on how to use it in their lessons if they find it interesting.

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8. Appendix: Questionnaire

Benvolguts,

Em dic Carla Ulldemolins, i estic cursant l'últim any del Grau de Mestre d'Educació Infantil a la Universitat de Vic. Durant el meu darrer any d'estudis, estic realitzant el Treball Final de Grau, que se centra en l'aprenentatge de l'anglès a partir de les tècniques dramàtiques.

Us faig arribar aquest correu per demanar-vos si podríeu participar en un qüestionari que em servirà per investigar la metodologia de l'ensenyament de l'anglès a infantil. Per això us agrairia que el féssiu arribar al vostre responsable d'anglès a educació infantil del vostre centre. El qüestionari és totalment anònim i només us ocuparà uns 5 minuts aproximadament.

Moltes gràcies per la vostra col·laboració.

Carla Ulldemolins

This project investigates the use of drama as a technique to teach English in Infant Education. My name is Carla Ulldemolins and I'm doing this study for the paper of my last year at the University of Vic. It is totally anonymous and it will only take you about 5 minutes. If you have any questions, please contact me at carlaulldemolins@gmail.com.

* **Necessari**

1. Gender *

- Male
 Female

2. Year of birth *

3. At what University did you obtain your degree in education? *

- Universitat de Vic
 Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
 Universitat de Barcelona

- Universitat de Girona
- Universitat Ramon Llull, Blanquerna
- Universitat de Lleida
- Universitat Internacional de Catalunya
- Universitat Rovira i Virgili
- Universitat Oberta de Catalunya
- Universitat Abat Oliva
- Universitat de Manresa (FUB)
- Others:

4. Which is your native language? *

- Catalan
- Spanish
- English
- Others:

5. What is your level of English? *

- Beginner
- Low-intermediate
- Intermediate
- High-intermediate
- Advanced

6. What English certificate do you have? *

- B1 (PET)
- B2 (FCE)
- C1 (CAE)
- C2 (CPE)
- University degree in education specialized in English
- Other degrees specialized in English
- I don't have any certificate

7. How many years of experience do you have as an English teacher in Infant education? *

- 0-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- More than 10 years

8. In what grade do you usually teach English? *

- P-3
- P-4
- P-5
- Primary education
- Others:

9. During your career, have you ever participated in an innovation project? *

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes in the previous question, please explain briefly when and what it was about.



10. Have you had any training on teaching English through theatre/drama? * courses, workshops, etc.

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes in the previous question, please explain briefly when, where, for how long and what it was about,



11. Which methodology do you usually use in your English lessons in Infant Education? *

- TPR
- Storytelling
- Songs
- Follow the book
- Games
- CLIL
- Projects
- Drama techniques

12. Have you ever used drama as a language teaching technique? *

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes to the previous question, which ones have you used and what results did you get?



If you answered no in the previous question, why don't you use drama techniques? Mark 3 or 4

- Lack of knowledge of the technique
- I've never considered this possibility
- I prefer other techniques
- My school doesn't give me this possibility
- Time is too short
- It needs a huge previous preparation
- In my school there isn't enough space
- Drama activities are too noisy
- It needs too much material
- I have too many pupils in my class and I don't have extra support
- I think it won't work with "difficult children"
- I think it won't work with my group
- I think pupils will revert to mother tongue
- There are different levels in my class
- Autres:

Thank you for your participation! Please click on the "SUBMIT" button below to send you responses.

Envia