Language Bodies

A Material -Based Approch for Connection through and with a Second Language

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to my loved ones, peers,
and those who made this research posssible.

INTRODUCTION

This research is based around language acquisition and the physical experience of communicating across and through language gaps and barriers. It is a reflection on how lived experience can be drawn on in a language learning context, specifically between teacher and student, and the effect that this has on the student's confidence and comfortability communicating in a second language. In this project, I try to get a sense of the role that artistic strategies can play in making space for lived experience and embodied understanding. Participating students are native Dutch speakers, ranging from five and eight years old, who I meet with after school on a weekly basis for English lessons. I have been working in this context for the last two years now, and have encountered several instances whilst teaching this age group that have prompted this specific research interest.

One good example occurred last year whilst teaching three siblings at their after-school club. They had moved back to the Netherlands as a family several months prior, after spending the previous three years living abroad and attending American International School. The eldest, who had begun learning English previous to the move, retained his Dutch-accented English, in contrast to the middle child, who spoke in a smooth drawl that was tricky to attribute to any specific region within the states. They both read aloud with an ease, confidence, and expression that is unmistakably American, punctuated occasionally with a tinge of Dutch pragmatism. The youngest was a year away from starting basisschool and, although clearly accustomed to English expression and communication, was not as well equipped to respond with the fluency of her older siblings. The intention of the classes, in the case of the two older siblings, was to maintain the level of English conversational skills they had developed during their time abroad, and to work on topics that challenged them academically. For the youngest, this class was a chance to continue the exposure that she had experienced living in an English-speaking community.

It initially took some time to organise these lessons, due to the paperwork that needed completing in order to work from the after-school centre. After several failed attempts at getting in touch over the phone, we realsied a different approach was necessary. Handling the final steps in person proved a success, and two weeks later I began classes with the siblings. The daycare allocated a small meeting room to be used

for the lessons, with a large circular table positioned next to two large windows facing the football fields. I would take each sibling individ-ually, and we would sit next to each other whilst we worked together on various kinds of worksheets and reading materials.

The two older siblings often bickered over who would have go first, especially on sunny days when the rest of the children would go outside in groups to play football, or across the road to the playground. They never did this in front of me, but it was clear from the tone of defeat or reference to what they had bartered for last week, that these time slots were a contentious topic. The youngest, however, was never implicated, as she preferred to stay indoors playing and making things with her friends. I would take her last for her lesson, interrupting her games and craft projects to bring her with me to the meeting room. She was assertive in these moments, asking for a minute or two to finish what she was doing, or taking a moment to explain to the others that she would return. Sometimes, she chose to bring parts of these projects with her, to show at the beginning of the lesson. Not yet at the stage of learning to read or write, her classes were mainly focused on building speaking confidence and vocabulary.

During the first class together, as we were settling into the first exercise, a drawing prompt, we were interrupted by the shrill ring of the landline phone sitting on the window ledge. Both startled by the outburst, she glanced up at me, expectantly. I responded with a confused expression, mouthing the words, 'Miss. Aoife doesn't speak Dutch', and as if on queue, the phone went silent, picked up in another room. This sent her into fits of laughter.

This moment seemed to bring about a shift in tone as the drawings that we had started beforehand. These drawings, responses to prompts such as likes, dislikes, personal information, and appearance, started to drift from true-to-life depictions into more fantastical interpreta-tions. A dog, her favourite storybook and TV character, which she had rendered in specific proportions, two pairs of legs, a round body, with a neat, rounded tail and droopy ears, was recreated this time with an elongated body, multiple sets of legs sprouting along its underbelly, and curling tail far outscaling its other limbs. In her self portrait, she added strands of bright red hair, skirting across the crown of her
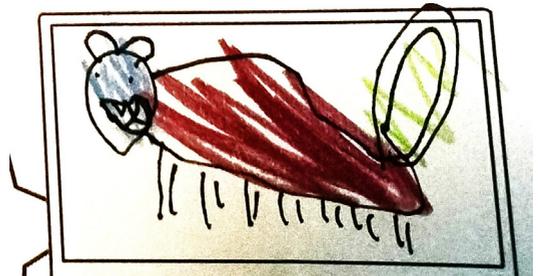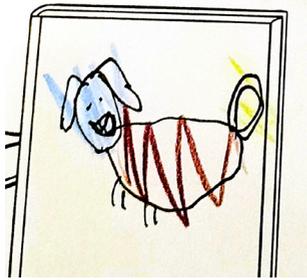
Image 1.1: Dog drawing before interruption.
Image 1.2: Dog drawing after interruption.

head, amassing above her right ear, with increasingly bold and deliberate strokes of her pencil. The energy pooling in these drawings was present in our interactions too, as I engaged with her drawings and ideas verbally, she responded, mainly single-worded answers, which were punctuated with squeals and laughter, coupled with new marks on her drawings.

I am always glad to see possibilities to express silliness and fun emerging, especially initially when still getting accustomed to the class scenario. The potential of these drawing prompts in this setting stood out too, what was unraveled through this process of exaggerating and following these exaggerations into imagined realities. Her comprehension skills were strong and clearly evident in this first class, and it was apparent that her awareness of vocabulary and sentence structures was well-developed, based on her ability to engage with and push the limits of the drawing prompts. The sticking point for me was, how this could move into verbal expression, in particular speaking.

My intention for upcoming lessons was to bring objects, visuals, and tasks that would invite verbal response- a reaction, correction, explanation, investigation, observation, (dis)agreement, association. Conversation starters, or more so conversation centres. These included short animations, collections of objects, simple origami projects,

drawing prompts, comics, circuit exercises, and various kinds of games involving memorising, matching, gathering, and mimicking. In each case, either the conversation centre or the planned activity around the conversation centre would involve exchange between participants- in this case, teacher and student. This could involve taking turns, dividing and swapping objects or visuals for closer examination, competing against each other, working together to complete a task which calls for more than one actor, etc. In constructing moments of exchange deliberately, I hoped this would create moments in which speaking would come to the fore.
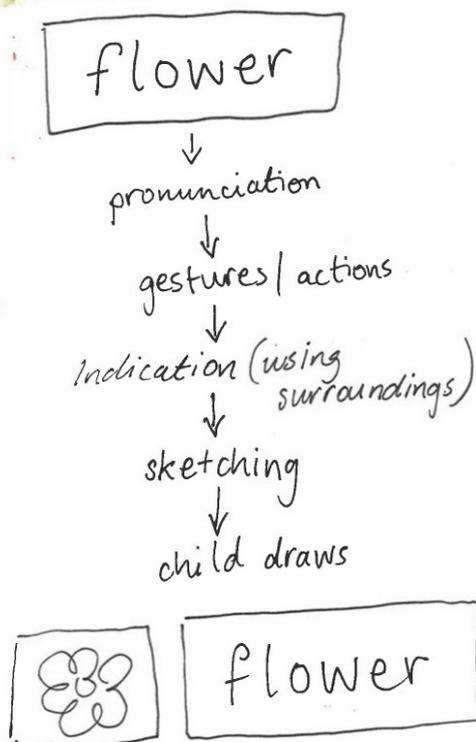

Image 2 : An early attempt to expand on vocabulary exercises.

Image 3. Further expansion attempt- drawing prompts turned into a matching game.

For the most part, these activities were embraced, and the hands-on element of games and tasks were attractive enough to engage with and break down a specific topic over the course of the 30 minute-long class. However, my experiments to encourage further spoken exchange did not play out in the way I had hoped. She was very much aware of my interest in communication and exchange, and she made it clear that this communication would be on her own terms. She made efficient use of her vocabulary despite, and often in response to my continued attempts to create prompts which encouraged the expression of prior knowledge and association. Clearly, she enjoyed finding ways to upturn these instances that I created, bending rules and systems set up within exercises, so that an extended spoken reply or exchange was not necessary. After several iterations of a similar situation, it became apparent that I had constructed these prompting experiments based on the assumption that participants in the task possessed an intrinsic or self-motivated desire to engage in these conversational setups.

The moments which came the closest to a spoken exchange often were linked to the belongings and creations that she brought to the

classes, sometimes these were drawings and crafts that she had made with the after-school group, other times this was jewelery and trinkets that she brought from home. We would chat about these at the beginning of class, talking about colour combinations, small details added and the process involved in making them. If there was a link between these belongings and the activities of the day, it usually made for a smooth transition into the day's topic. In one of our final classes, she brought along a carefully folded paper object. She began to demonstrate at once, as we sat down at the table. On one side, she had drawn a screen dotted with apps and smiling faces, which faced upwards, as she tapped lightly on the surface with her finger. Understanding what it was, I started to imitate the shrill ring of the after-school's landline, holding my own phone to my ear. She followed suit swiftly, and we began to chat. She invited me to go to the beach, and we discussed the weather, packing our bags, deciding on what to do once we arrived there, where exactly to meet. She replied and posed questions with ease, her sentence structure wasn't perfect but it disclosed a good deal more of the prior language and knowledge she possessed. Her tone changed too, shifting to carry the weight of someone who has the authority to plan and organise trips to the beach. We stayed on the call for quite a while, maintaining each others' attention by giving further suggestions and building on each others' imagined scenarios. We hung up with a couple of minutes remaining of class, finishing up with a short drawing exercise relating to holiday clothes packing.

Reflecting on this moment now, I recall the feeling of things rising to the surface, the ability to get a clear idea of what was present. The exchange felt light and buoyant, taking shape in the space allowed by the improvisation and sharing of its direction. The term immersion also comes to mind. However, I am hesitant to use it here as it holds a very specific meaning when it comes to language learning, of the student being exposed to a foreign language through everyday experiences and surroundings, without specific preparations. The is the 'immergee' as such, being immersed into the world or experience of the language being learnt, requiring the student to give over or fully embrace the environment in which they find themselves within. It is very much a process of assimilation.

When I think about the phone call scenario, I see immersion here as

both participants, teacher and student, entering into a fabricated environment which triggers an adjustment of perceived roles, outcomes, and expectations. The exercise or scenario itself brought about a shift in given and accepted patterns of interaction and participation within this class setting. Student and teacher found a particular method or form of expression to engage together with eachother, the student staying connected to their own preferences and norms of communication. It seemed to have something to do with finding a common ground, amongst these norms of communication and expression, comfort zones of prior, practiced knowledge and more unfamiliar language structures, of perspectives shaped by respective native languages of both teacher and student. The learning environment shifted to and allow in environmental and relational factors, making space for the wealth of experience that is tied to the language that we speak and the way that we use it to connect with what lies outside of ourselves, that which we come in contact with on a daily basis.

It is at this point of uncertainty that this research begins, an attempt to better understand the capacity of these scenarios within language learning that offer students a chance to approach the language learning process from a personal vantage point. What I wish to investigate further, is this instance of the tangible object or activity and its role in the experience and connection between participants in this scenario. Can fostering a learning environment that makes space for these kinds of scenarios allow students to progress and acquire language in alignment with their own vitality and instinct to connect?
To summarise:

'How can artistic strategies and material-based tasks encourage confidence and connection through and with a Second Language?'

I see my role in these classes to scaffold and maintain this channel between teacher and student, attending to the needs of the student in that moment to first find their grip and, with some time, understand where these new words and structures can fit within their sense of themselves and their surroundings. My aim is not to 'train' students to use language in the way that I do, but to reveal the ways that English as a language is a tool that I use to relate to others, express opinions, to process the things that I experience and come up against in my everyday experiences. It's a medium that is intertwined with my physicality, my reflexes, my memories and my understanding of the world around me, just as it is for them with their own native tongue. In planning and setting up these classes I want to create opportunities for students to experiment with this medium, making connections across their own experience with their native language as medium, and engaging with resources and material situations which brush up against interests and reflexes of all involved.

INFLUENCES

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE
THEORETICAL INSIGHTS

For the most part, my own experience of language learning has taken place within formal education. I began to learn Irish, my second language, when I started primary school, and I began studying French in secondary school. The kind of immersion that occurred in the case of French classes, seemed part of a larger immersion into the world of exam strategy and performance, which proliferated all subjects that we studied in secondary school. Study skills, understanding the framing of questions, the weighting of marks, and the specific formatting of answers all shaped the way in which we were guided through this learning process.

Those of us who managed to travel to France were taken aback at the struggle of applying what we had learned in class in a French-speaking setting, especially when it came to speaking and conversation. Having briefly been exposed to French as a child, by a neighbour who would host children's classes from her kitchen, the phonics of the language and a handful of basic words were vaguely familiar once I began studying again in school. However, once we moved passed these initial few months, this effect wore off and the rhythm of revision and assessments took hold.

Irish, on the other hand, held a closer resemblance to my world outside of school. When the Irish language was first introduced into the national education system in the 1920's during the Gaelic revival and formation of the Republic, immersion was suggested as a teaching method for younger students and Irish-medium education in subjects such as Geography, Music, Physical Education and Irish was promoted by the state. In the 1960's, permission was granted for teachers to decide to teach the language as and they believed best benefitted their students, either comtinuing with Irish-medium classes, or instead teaching these various subjects through English, whilst keeping a focus on oral Irish competency within the subject itself. (O' Ceallaigh, Ni Dhonnabhain, p.183) As a result, Irish-medium teaching dropped drastically, but in order to remain prepared for each eventuality, primary school teacher training has maintained its focus on Irish language competency and development to this day.

My own experience resembled the latter, Irish was taught within the bounds of the subject itself, with Irish medium instruction incorporated in primary school Irish lessons, and less so in secondary school, as we moved from language acquisition-based classes to literature and functional writing. Since the area in which I lived had virtually no native Irish-speaking population, the language exposure that we received, besides the language input during Irish lessons, was limited to conversations we overheard our teachers having amongst themselves, as they called into classes to have quick conversations or chatting in the playground whilst on yard duty.

Teachers could be sure that if the language used was above the level being taught, their speech would remain intelligible. Of course, with teachers specialising in specific subjects in secondary school, there wasn't such an opportunity as there was amongst primary school teachers. For many of us, Irish was the language of our teachers, the conversations and details which they wanted to keep hidden from us. Even after eight years of study, it was rare that students would reach a level of competency that would allow overhearing or accurate interpretation of these exchanges. Irish seemed to be very much their realm, with the tasks and exercises we completed in class acting as small insights and depictions of a much larger, complex, and guarded world, accessible, it seemed, to those who were born into it and those who became teachers- adults only, naturally. Akin to the habit that parents adopt of spelling words aloud to avoid young children understanding their conversation, we viewed Irish in this way, with teachers stepping into these familiar parental roles.

Recent experiences teaching English have afforded me the opportunity to experience the textbook definition of language immersion, in particular the time I spent with an English language school in Italy, directly before coming to the Netherlands. The school offered after-school classes, language exams, and summer camp programmes, all of which were English medium environments. In contrast to my current Dutch context, where English proficiency amongst the general population is high, and English language messaging is commonplace in mainstream media, it is more of a rarity for Italian children to be exposed to English outside of the educational system, unless it is specifically sought out by parents or children themselves. For many of the children attending the

language school, this was their first exposure to English as a medium of communication.

Working here gave me insight into the reality of a traditional immersive approach to language learning, and the practicalities that are required. Whilst teaching, I realised quickly that in this context, language separated or abstracted from action or demonstration would fall flat. Introducing, explaining, instructing with spoken language, even with emphasis and repetition incorporated, couldn't operate alone. Demonstration led these interactions, and spoken language would assume a narrative role. Words or expressions used had to be rooted firmly in the situation, grouping into neat repetitive bundles that could be repurposed and reshaped depending on the task at hand. Words formed into a chant, or a song of sorts, inviting others to mimic and join in. Speaking became less of a means of direct communication, instead it acted alongside a whole host of other elements, coming together to guide interactions onwards. There were specific instances that these spoken narratives adhered to with ease, such as a 'let's go' chant in the mornings, moving from the entrance gate to our play area, or the reply 'A lot! A lot! A lot!' that was favoured by the kids during lunch-time, when adding cheese to their meal. These phrases formed a narrative structure of daily activities, and a certain kind of ownership was associated with each, whether it be a phrase introduced by teachers and repeated by the kids, or if it was a phrase used exclusively by the kids as a response, a provocation or exclaimation of desires or excitement.

The activities and exercises we carried out with students were mainly active and creative in nature, incorporating game-play and exercises that required students to follow a set of steps or instructions to reach a specific goal or endpoint. These activities resembled what is known as 'Task- Based Language Teaching Method', which is considered one of the major developments of the communicative period in second language teaching, and a popular method used in immersion and second language medium context. Essentially, Task Based Teaching centres on a task engaging multiple students, with their objective being to use the second language to as a means to complete the task, rather than focusing on the accurate language production. Introduced practically to this conecpt in these Summer camp settings, I researched further into the developents associated with this method as a means to futher ground these research interests.

THEORETICAL INSIGHT: COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

The Communication Period in second language teaching came about in the late 1970's and was the first instance in which meaning making and personal expression was taken seriously, specifically in English as a Second Language teaching contexts. This shift in teaching methodology was triggered by a dissatisfaction with the kind of preparation provided to the student through prevailing methods (Audiolingual, Situational, Direct Method) in two specific areas:

- The ability to communicate appropriately, in alignment with the cultural expectations and norms of the language being studied.
- The capacity for personal expression that aligns with the student's own sense of self. (Howatt & Smith, 2014, p.88)

In previous years, breakthroughs in behavioral science and linguistics triggered a shift from an academic, text, and translation-centric approach to language learning (borrowing heavily from classical language studies) to an approach which centred the lexical unit as the basis of study. This involved heavy drilling of prescribed grammatical structures and patterns, with the intention of exploiting the brain's specific capacity to store and retain information. This was a method primarily focused on accuracy and efficiency of acquisition. The Communicative approach, in contrast views the learning context as a place that students build confidence in expression and use of language towards purpose and outcomes outside of the bounds of the learning context.

This shift coincided with the Council of Europe project to create a generally applicable language assessment and level grading system for European language competency. This materialised as the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR levels A1 to C2). Since it was established, it has been used widely in language learning contexts, from national public education systems, to private language schools and training courses. The main challenge of establishing a coherent leveling of language competence across languages was the variance of grammatical structural complexity, and as a result, this grading was carried out on the basis of semantics rather than syntax. The levels refer to the competency of the individual to communicate and convey meaning in the language which they are studying. This project emphasised a need

to expand and relate language learning outside of one specific context, or beyond direct translation, to a process of translation across various different cultural contexts and language traditions. As a movement towards communicative-focused methodologies was already beginning, this framework grew out of this evolution of pedagogical approach, and played a large part in the momentum of the movement. Along with Task-Based Learning, the Natural Approach and Cooperative Language learning grew out of this focus on communicative learning, and relate to the aims of communicative movement as follows:

The Natural Approach

- Informed by Krashen's theory of second language acquisition.
- Learning and teaching activities are based on comprehensible input, ie. these activities focus on language that is slightly ahead of the learner's current knowledge.
- Prompts include objects and visual resources within the classroom setting.
- Learners are not required to respond or contribute until they feel ready to do so. (p.185, Richards)
- Teacher as main source of language input, responsible for guiding and shaping classroom interactions.

Cooperative Language Learning

- Promotes exchange and use of language amongst peers
- Encourages students' accountability for their own progress and learning,
- Reduced reliance and dependence on the teacher figure
- Short group activities as part of a lesson
- Long term projects that are carried out in pairs or larger groups.
- Combats the tendency for competition amongst students that is commonly found in traditional, teacher fronted contexts. (p.192, Richards and Rodgers).

Task Based Language Teaching- Origins

- Coined by N.S Prabhu in 'Second Lanaguage Pedagogy' (1987)
- Developed over the course of a five year project, known as the Bangalore Project which engaged a handful of primary and secondary school English as a Second Language classes.
- Aimed to decentre direct instruction within the learning environment and to prioritise meaning making over form
- Hypothesis: Sustained engagement and language practice and use builds grammatical competence.
- Task prepared by the teacher and provides opportunities for students to apply and practice new language being studied, either independently or in groups.
- Resembles an everyday situation, challenge or process that lends a specific context and necessity

With a shared focus on autonomy and spoken language, the emphasis shifts from teacher-student interaction, to peer relations, and finally to learner-exercise interaction. I connected with the idea of task-based teaching method, primarily for its proximity to my questions regarding the role of the exercise within language learning context, but also for its prioritising of expression and authentic communication.

TASK-BASED TEACHING METHOD

A task is introduced into the classroom, usually this resembles an activity or challenge that students may be familiar with from another context, whether it be in day to day life, or a situation within the school setting. The point is that this task must remove them from their current role, positioning and identity as 'English language student', the objective being that completion of the task at hand is placed above language accuracy and grammatical soundness. This task is placed between two stages within the lesson. Before, key vocabulary is predicted and elicited by the teacher, allowing students to warm up to the topic. After the task, students and teacher reflect on what felt possible for students during the task and what language they felt the were in need of during the process. With younger age groups, the teacher observes and identifies these needs and gaps in knowledge as the activity progresses, bringing these points into the reflection. Prabhu provides a definition of what constitutes a task within this methodology by defining three specific categories: Information gap, reasoning-gap, and opinion gap activities. (Prabhu, 1982, p. 46)

Information-gap refers to an activity refers to an activity which contains all of the information necessary to attempt the task, and engagement requires transferring or interpreting information or language from one form to another, such as constructing an image based on textual information, or following a set of instructions in order to create something. Reasoning-gap activities involve making decisions or judgements based on the information or scenario provided, often incorporating comprehension and relation skills involved in information-gap activities, with the added challenge of relating a decision or judgement based on information provided, rather than relating the information itself. Opinion-gap activities are similar to reasoning-gap activities in that the information or scenario presented must be digested by students, however this kind of activity calls for an expression of preference, attitude or point of view. It requires a more personal kind of engagement.

These tasks are designed by the teacher in accordance with a current topic or relevant target language. Target language is treated as a tool or resource that students can use as and how they feel it necessary in order to reach an outcome. As a result, Task Based Language Teaching

is often paired with more formal exercises to bridge the gap between the student's current knowledge and target language applicable to the demands of the task.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE: ARTISTIC MEANING MAKING

What becomes apparent for me, as I situate my own teaching practice within communicative methods, is the importance of active, engaged learning scenarios that invite participants lived experience and personal nature into the exploration of new aspects of the second language. Meaning making should hold a central role in this process. This approach rejects the use of language as pre-formed, prepared, inert, complete units of meaning to be deployed as deemed appropriate. Instead, language use invites active, changeable patterns and combinations that can be interpreted and appropriated by the individual. Meaning comes alive in the interaction between context, intention, personal experience, and association. This holds a special potential for young learners who are still in the process of acquiring the new language, it has not yet sedimented into personal habits and tendencies. There remains, in these cases, gaps of experience that this new language has not yet come in contact with, and the learning process acts as the means by which this contact takes place. In this way, classes that are set up as learning situations should bring personal experience, preferences, and associations to the fore, in an active, embodied manner that gives this new language space and context to adhere to.

PERSONAL PRACTICE

My own relation to meaning-making stems from my artistic practice, taking time to deepen my understanding of working and being with materials, in my case, textiles and fibre-based materials. Working with these kinds of materials involves a very physically sensitive approach, as interaction between the hand and the material is often form- altering.

Processes that are typically associated with this work; stitching, cutting, folding, (de)constructing, dyeing, etc. physically rupture and structurally change the material. Along with this, comes the will of the material itself, and to what degree it resists or goes along with these kinds of interactions, how it behaves under different circumstances, such as heat exposure, soaking, applied tension or pressure, etc. Growing an awareness and understanding of these tendencies involves close engagement and attention to sensorial inputs- the hand and by extension, the body, must remain receptive.

In order to design and structure the activities and scenarios within this research project, I have looked to the theory that has shaped my own artistic practice, theory that has helped me think through material engagement and the active and ongoing nature of everyday material/body/environment relations. This area of theory is known as New Materialism, and spans a range of disciplines within both humanities and social sciences. In 'Matters of Practice', Curt Porter provides a succinct synopsis of New Materialist study, which has stood out to me as one of the most digestible definitions I encountered throughout this period of research.

> *Over the past two decades, scholars have given increased attention to the role of the material world in the production of human thoughts, languages, cultures, and societies. An emphasis on the dynamic and productive force of matter has inspired enthusiasm for complexity, openness, and local contingencies...New materialist work, then, can be understood as a theoretical response to this need to explore psychological, sociological, and ecological life in more integrated ways. (Porter, 2021, p.4)*

My personal entry point to New materialist writing was a recommendation of Astrida Neimanis' 'Hydrofeminism- On Becoming a Body of Water' which I received in relation to a project I was working on at the time. This project involved testing how fabric dye and stitching techniques interacted with paper. I was interested in the paper's sensitivity to soaking, compared to fabric which I was more accustomed to working with, and it's capacity to retain the forms that it acquired during this process once dry. Reading this text during this period of research, I was initially drawn in by the text's fluid material analogies and rhythmic

swell, which linked directly to the nature of my dye experiments at the time. On further reading, and re-reading, the treatment and perspective new materialist thinking provides on material interactions opened up my thinking around this making process and my role within it, particularly in the way that the agency of material components is portrayed within scenarios of interaction. I used these ideas as inspiration for a means of reflection on these physical actions; from my point of view, noting the sensations and points of tension that arose from interacting with a material, along with reflections on the physicality of the material throughout the course of these different kinds of interactions. I would complete these reflections in iterations, using writing and photography as means of recording responses. As these recordings built up, I made a point of keeping them visible, alongside these material experiments, allowing the notes and images meld with the material process unfolding.

Image 4. Dye and stitiching paper sample, photographed as part of reflection process.

This way of working, opening up and attending to the layers of activity and tension brought about through material interaction, not only let me build a relationship with the material and process in question, but drew my attention to nature of my engagement; physical actions and reactions, interpretations and associations formed, and the process of following and joining with the specificities of the material process. The recordings that I described above are essentially my own translations of process, translations that instead of moving across or away from the medium of the process, move alongside and are reconstituted back into the making process. Although these iterative translations are specific to my own practice, I believe there is a pedagogical potential in using this iterative process as a blueprint to develop exercises that privilege physical (re)activity, association, interpretation and sensory attunement.

There are two specific concepts within New Materialist theory that I will borrow from to form a theoretical basis:

- Karen Barad's 'Relationality'
- Tim Ingold's 'Going Along'

RELATIONALITY
The concept of relationality, or more specifically, relational ontology can be found across various accounts of new materialist theory and research. Summarised by Barad as 'things are what they are in terms of how they are' with other things (Barad, 2007, p.389), this viewpoint calls for an understanding of things by acknowledging and exploring their dynamics and tendencies within their broader context. Relation to surroundings, other objects, and beings shape not only understanding and perception of the thing in question, but the way in which they exist and show up in their environment. The term 'entanglement' is often used to describe this situation. The power that this conceptualisation holds, according to Barad, is the possibility to consider both social and natural aspects simultaneously, "to read our best understandings of social and natural phenomena through one another." (2007, p.25)

This conceptualisation appeals to me in its consideration of how our understanding of individual(s)- individual beings, concepts, scenarios- is brought about and informed by a variety of perceptual and experiential factors. Since this kind of understanding is a process linked to the physicality of both the perceived and the perceiver, building this kind of understanding expands past an individual point/concept/being and pushes the perceiver to consider themselves and their own ties to what they perceive. Then, there is the emphasis on context and surroundings, in that the more we get to know the individual's way of being within and among its environment, the more we can deepen our understanding of it as a being, concept, scenario itself. This way of getting to know and getting to understand invites expansive and interactive engagement with things, from a personal, situated experience. Considering how to work with this conceptual process within a language learning context feels like an exciting proposition, a chance to work with and expand on the myriad of communicative actions, utterances and associations,

both imagined and rooted in experience. Indeed, this could also hold the possibility of creating space for autonomy and creativity in communication, in that the individual interprets and understands for themselves 'how' things are.

GOING ALONG

The concept of 'going along', is often explained by Ingold through the metaphor of the craftsman and their material. He defines act of making as a process of correspondence between the craftsperson, tools and materials, all active and energetic participants. Engaging in this process, the craftsperson is 'drawing out and bringing forth of potentials'. (Ingold 2011, p.6) This interaction is based in the present moment, and requires the craftsperson to attune their body and senses to the materials present and react according to the information received, to 'go along'. They follow the nature and specificities of the material, which are picked up and in turn articulated through the tool. In this view, the idea of craftsperson having mastery over a material, tool, technique, is forgone for the ability to become acquainted with, whilst staying present and perceptive of the physicality of materials and tools.

'Going Along' involves attuning to the vital nature of meeting points between beings- both human and non-human- and environment to facilitate transformation and creation. It centres sensory awareness and input, which acts as the guiding force of the interaction. Applying this to a language learning context invites the potential for students to rely on their instincts and associations. Since emphasis is placed on openness and perceptiveness rather than prior knowledge, incorporating these principles into exercises can offer students opportunities to engage and contribute without feeling the restraint of knowledge gaps. The student is given opportunities to share what they notice, with the view of situating and expanding on this knowledge further.

RESEARCH PROJECT

STRUCTURE
CONTEXT
REFLECTION METHOD

I will carry this research out over a series of three workshops, spread across a term of weekly language classes. Each workshop will focus on a specific relation that can be experienced between human and non-human beings, incorporating a relevant vocabulary and grammar topic which links with the human/non-human relation conceptually.

 - The first workshop is based on the experience of relating to one's own body, touching on physical motion, capability, constraints and possibilities. Students are encouraged to engage with topics of body parts and monsters (more-than-human) through movement and physically-led expression.

 - The second workshop considers body-to-body relations, meeting points between human/animal bodies and other solid bodies; human/animal ones, organic ones, objects, materials, etc. These exercises engage tactility and physical perception, incorporating visuals and objects as prompts.

 - The third workshop focuses on environmental surroundings, and how we relate to our surroundings through and from a bodily perspective. Students isolate and tune into specific sensory inputs to build up an impression of specific environmental conditions.

CONTEXT

There are three student participants in this research: Student A (individual lesson), and Student B and Student C (lesson between two siblings). These lessons happen on a weekly basis, and these workshop sessions were incorporated over the course of a twelve week term, interspersed amongst regular lessons, linking with themes that are typically covered at CEFR level A1/A2. Student A's lessons take place at his home, and I meet Students B and Z at the local library once they have finished school for their lesson. I chose both of these scenarios

as a possible and fertile research settings, as these three students all favour a hands-on, physical approach to learning and to engaging with new material. In both cases, there is a student who is familiar with their native language in spoken form, but not yet in written form. They are only beginning to learn phonics and to recognise letters, which means that their use of language is tied more to their personal relationships, play, storytelling, imagined scenarios and digital media. There is a certain physical, 'in the moment' relation with language, an aliveness that, for me, speaks to new materialist thinking. Looking back on my own foreign language education, within an Irish context alongside specific occasions when I have attended language classes in institutions and private language academies, this is something that the idea of a 'language' loses when it is introduced in the context of the school or institution as part of a larger educational system or qualification scheme. It becomes a subject, a closed object that does not change or is not changed by students and teachers engaging with it. It is something to be defined, improved, retained, tested, improved.

As a native English speaker, I try to be aware of my own lived experience with the English language, my life experiences, norms, and biases that are tied up in my own relationship with the language. The fact that I am not a Dutch speaker, the native language of the majority of my students, means that much of the contextual understanding and associations that the student brings to a topic or exercise is channeled through the means of communication that overlap between us; through actions, visuals, indications, linked vocabulary and structures introduced on previous occasions and instances of shared syntax and cognates.

REFLECTION METHOD

The practical decision to audio record and document these specific trial lessons, as part of the peer assessment assignment, was hugely beneficial for my own analysis and reflection on the lesson exercises and interactions between teacher, student(s), resources, and environment. I listened back to the first recording I made several times, first to experience the class (through this audio format) as an 'outsider',

without actively participating. After that, I listened specifically to the interactions themselves, their length, their form- whether they followed a specific pattern/logic each time the different inputs and how much space each claims within the interaction itself, the affective nature of various inputs and utterances, and which responses, interjections, reactions guide and nudge the course of the interaction.

This class was focused on the body; bodily sensations, bodily movements and bodily depictions or transference of the sensation and movement into depictions. There were four distinct parts to this class; physical warm-up, relational game, experimental pairings, and a free drawing exercise.

Physical Warm up
This first exercise began the process of eliciting relevant vocabulary and relating this vocabulary to the students' own physicality. It's heavily guided by the teacher, with opportunities within each prompt for the student to add their own physical emphasis and articulation. Prompts are carried out by student and teacher in unison, with the student's additions incorporated into shared movements as the exercise progressed.

Relational Game
Next, the action-based game, 'Simon Says', which incorporated more specific prompts involving more than one body part at a time, and established specific roles of leader and follower- which are reversible once the rules of the game have been understood and practiced. The initial staging and first rounds of this game were again heavily guided by the teacher and conveyed through demonstration and reproduction. The initial prompts are simple and repetitive in nature, in order to clearly demonstrate the game's progression, slowly incorporating small variations before role reversal, to allow the student to grasp the possibility and range of the prompts. Once the roles are reversed, the student has the freedom to combine and engage with whatever variety of body-part combinations and actions they choose.

Free Drawing Exercise
The final exercise grants the most autonomy and freedom of interpretation to the student. Primed by the outcomes previous exercise, they are encouraged to incorporate their own previous associations and interpretation of a monster, letting the initial discussion of 'How is a monster' shape their depictions and decisions within the drawing process. Further prompts and moments of discussion are incorporated during the activity that arise from decisions made by the student, acting as moments of translation between imagined, voiced and depicted response.

Beginning with the warmup exercise, I give and repeat the physical prompts, demonstrating the movements simultaneously. These prompts include an action which corresponds to a specific body part. The repetition is often focused on the action, and I add a short question prompt and the end of the action to check the student's understanding, relating to the body part. The prompts beginning at the head and moving downwards through the body. Student A often adds vocal emphasis to his movements, with a rising in pitch matching his pace of movement. At this point, he is largely taking in and responding physically, with occasional spoken responses when specifically invite him to do so. Although the kinds of movements that I demonstrate are for the most part isolated to a specific part of the body, he often combines these specific movements with others, for example, circling arms is combined with jumping on the spot. The student can still identify the body part we are focusing on, it remains at the forefront. The other movements follow the nature of the movement prompt, ie. if the movement associated with arms is large, such as elevating the arms through a circling motion from the shoulders, this student builds on the elevated movement by jumping.

Audio: 1. Student A: Warm Up

Circle your arms!
    (Student A and I add breathy)
    (sound effects to the motion,)
    (Student A starts audibly jump-)
    (ing along with this motion and)
    (effect.   )

Forwards...and then, stop!

    (Student A audibly plants his feet)
    (and drops his arms to the side)
    (simultaneously.   )

And, backwards!
    (We resume our actions and)
    (sound effects   )

Once the student is following and comprehending with ease, I add in a directional prompt to complicate the movement slightly. The student is able to connect the intonation and pace of pronunciation to the scale of movement, instead of merely mirroring the teacher's pace and intonation as is common in traditional repetitive drilling exercises, especially in the case of group class settings. Considering this setting is 1:1, the effect of mirroring of intonation and pace is not as consuming. In these group settings, it is easy for the individual voice to merge and harmonise with the collective, which means when it is time for the individual to attempt pronunciation independently, they notice a change in momentum, similar in a way to switching from collective to solo singing. In fact, this exercise of collective drilling is often referred to as 'choral drilling' given the close parallels present. Combining this voicing with a movement in a way provides some momentum and context for pronunciation and allows for momentum to come from the student's own physicality.

As we move through the prompts, they become more focused and sustained rather than energetic, as the next exercise is seated and involves longer periods of attention from the student. These prompts focus on balance and breathing, encouraging the student to slow their pace of movement. Initially the student interprets these prompts with the same high energy as before. With further encouragement to slow and extend movements and breaths, Student A follows this slowing of pace.

Audio: 2. Student A - Breath

We're going to take a deep breath in
through our nose...
                        (Student begins to audible, rapid   )
                        (breaths in and out.   )

Oh! In...and out through our...what is
this?   Mouth!

Even slower, ready? 3,2,1...

                    (Student alters his breathing,   )
                    (slowing its pace.   )

I encourage Student A to sit for the last prompt, slow deep breaths, which leads us into the next exercise. We quickly review the different body parts, indicating through pointing and touch. These indicative actions lead into the next exercise, 'Simon Says', which I explain briefly as Student A is unfamiliar with the rules. We practice with instructional and responsive movements, building up possible combinations of movements and body parts. Student A reacts with enthusiasm and surprise when I stipulate the object of the game. We play the first round, teacher as leader and student as responder, and once we cycle through the second round, I suggest to Student A that we switch roles of leader and responder. He embraces this shift almost instantaneously, proclaiming 'Simon Says...' as a direct response to my suggestion. His first prompt, 'Simon says..on you...', indicates a focus on the motion rather than the body parts involved, he physically demonstrates this missing information.

Audio:3 Student A: Your Turn

Your turn!

Put your hands...on here

Under my legs?

Yes...*here!*

Ah, I've got it...under my knees?

Yes!

Okay, tell me, 'Under your knees!'

Under your knees!

Nice, I have it.

I encourage him to flesh out his prompt, adding 'put your hands', which he adds, completing the prompt independently: 'Put your hands on here!'. He follows the structure of my previous prompts loosely, starting with his hands, introducing a new aspect- placing a body part underneath another, rather than 'on' another as I had demonstrated previously. I followed his demonstration, checking if I was mirroring correctly by naming the second body part as 'legs'. Student A provided

a visual correction, knees rather than legs, emphasising this difference and repeating the prompt 'here'. I amend my physical response, and we practice this new piece of vocabulary together, maintaining our position. When I encourage him to propose a second prompt, he simply states a location, omitting the 'Simon Says...' prompt. When I refrain from responding and confirm the rule that applied to the situation, he suggests, 'Now your turn', disrupting the need for a loss to invoke a role reversal. Since assuming the role of leader, he took the opportunity to act autonomously in both forming a prompt and calling the end of a round.

Moving to the next exercise, I introduced the concept of a monster, to which he responded with disbelief, repeating back the term 'monster' for confirmation. Noticing his comfort in repeating the term and the tone of his response, I replied with a question: "Do you know what a monster is?", wishing to gain further understanding into his reaction. Once confronted, he restrained himself a little, telling me 'I don't know anymore'. In an attempt to get back to his initial enthusiasm, I rephrased my question, "Can you show me what a monster looks like?" Student A started to growl and roar, scrunching up his face, raising his arms and tensing his fingers to make clawing motions. I followed suit, making my own attempt at monstrous noises. We established these characteristics verbally together through further prompts, determining its tendency to be large and angry. I asked some further questions relating to physicality, quantity of limbs, heads and eyes, etc. Student A was happy to begin drawing his interpretation, beginning with small, frenzied marks extending across the surface of the page, which, he informed me, were monsters- lots and lots of monsters.

Audio: 4. Student A - What is a Monster?

This drawing is going to be a monster   Huh? Monster?

Yes, do you know what a monster is?   Eh, yes

What is a monster?   I don't know again.

Can you show me what a monster looks
like?

> (Student A starts growling and)
> (mimicing claws, I follow suit.)

Ah yes, is it big or small?   Big!

Big, right?

> (Student A and I model this scale)
> (together.   )

How is it? What emotion does it have?

This …

> (Student A points to visual   )
> (resource.   )

What is it?

Angry

Angry, yes...and something else?

Eh, this

Mostly this?

Yes.

I inquired about their heads, at which point he began to draw in large circular movements, encompassing and cutting through several of his monsters at a time. Once finished with this motion, he returned back to the point where he began drawing to count these heads. It seemed that these heads began as a circular movement, and were delineated retrospectively. We continued by considering the other body parts that had come up through previous exercises, some of which were dismissed, and others incorporated with the same energetic multiplicity as before. Feet were added in this fashion, with each mark Student A repeated the term, 'Feet...feet...feet...', occasionally exclaiming his ambition, '100 feet!', before returning to his previous chant. As for legs, he began by counting each mark individually, speeding up his drawing pace, until it overtook his ability to count, at which point he began with sound-like utterances mimicking the speed of his markmaking.

Image 5. Student A's monsters.

After making our way through the majority of body parts, I began to recap what he had already completed. Student A took over this listing out of terms, until he reached one that wasn't yet depicted in his drawing. He exclaimed this term with great energetic force, which he translated into expansive looping lines across the page. I marvelled at their length and asked if this monster could reach far, at which point, Student A stood up, arms outstretched, and ran from one side of the room, 'Here!', to the other, 'To here!'. This demonstration lifted his monster off the page, as each edition from this point on- mouth, its speed, and its strength, were detailed with physical demonstrations and references to the room and our surroundings. Student A would occasionally return back again to his drawing to further illustrate his points. These instances also prompted the Student to incorporate Dutch terms in their explanation alongside English phrasing and terminology, indicating they were actively relating these English terms to personal associations, experience and imaginings.

Audio: 5. Student A - Drawing Implying Physicality

How about...this?

No, they don't have hair

They don't have hair?

Feet! Feet! Feet!

Feet?

100 feet!

100 feet?

Yes

Do you remember what this part is called? This is the...

Leg!
100,000!

Perfect, how many feet then?

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13...100! 100 feet!

Is this monster fast or slow?

Fast! 100 feet!

It has so many feet that it goes very fast? And how about these?

Eyes!
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13...

Wow, how many is this?

100,000,000!

One hunderd, thousand, million?

Yes, million.

This next class built on bodily references, and opened into body relations, or more specifically human-animal bodily relations. As an introduction to this theme, I felt the need to incorporate presentation of new vocabulary in two parts. Firstly, animal body parts, ie. claws, paws, wings, tails, etc., and secondly adjectives and comparatives relating to scale and physicality. I have placed these introductions in advance and in the middle of the lesson, each followed by a task. These tasks are the central aspect, with these introductions bridging knowledge necessary to facilitate task participation. The task themselves require the student to draw on previous knowledge in relation to new vocabulary, along with speculative and imaginative reasoning skills.

RUNNING ORDER

Vocabulary Introduction
Each term relating to basic animal anatomy- wing, tail, claws, legs, etc is represented by several visual flashcard examples, and this first task involved students grouping like-images together. Once this step was complete, we practiced pronouncing each corresponding English term, giving a chance for the conceptual reasoning behind each grouping to latch onto the term. After each pronunciation drill, we brainstormed the animals which aligned with each term; winged, clawed, tailed and multi-legged.

Animal Footprints
This exercise invites students to physically trial and test these new terms, and consider how their own physicality overlaps with that of various different animals. Students engage with visual prompts depicting various animal prints to scale, and are encouraged to speculate as to what kind of creature could have created this print. In the first part of this exercise, Students are given prints one at a time, and are encouraged to brainstorm the physical features and species that come to mind aloud and through physical demonstration. Next, they are given a set of visual references of the animal themselves, and tasked with reflecting on their previous associations, linking the visual representation to their physical interpretation.

Adjective Prompts
Adjectives of scale and physical attributes, along with their comparative

form are central to the final exercise. They have been played with in the previous exercise, one of the important language elements within the guessing process, however , to ensure that students are comfortable engaging with all of these these terms, I incorporated a short exercise for students to create their own prompts for each adjective. Each adjective was paired with its opposite; big paired with small, quiet paired with noisy, and so on, with a dotted horizontal line linking each pair. Under each pair is some space for a drawing or annotation. To complete the exercises, each term is repeated verbally, demonstrated physically and linked to a specific animal which exhibits this specific trait. Adjectives that were more difficult to physically demonstrate, linked more closely to specific textures or capacities, were further illustrated through a selection of small objects introduced during the activity, bringing in physical surroundings where relevant. I encouraged comparisons to be drawn between the nature of these objects, physical surroundings and animal associations to create a fleshed-out sense of the term.

Web of Relations
The final exercise asks students to define an animal species by comparing physical characteristics across different species of the same habitat. One animal is closen and placed in the centre of the web, out from which radiates a variety of empty spaces, each labelled with a comparative characteristic, Eg. 'noisier than', 'smaller than', 'faster than', etc. This exercises is played as a game, students much collect other species to place in relation to their central species considering how they relate to eachother.

I gave Student B and Z an introduction to animal body parts terminology prior to beginning the workshop, using the final 10 minutes of lesson to carry out the first exercise. In our warm up the following week, I inquired if the student's remembered what we had talked about the previous week. After some though, Student B recalled tiger- one of the examples that he had given of a clawed animal. We practiced our impression of a tiger, baring teeth and nails, growling. Emphasising the clawing motions, Student Z recalled the term 'claws', which prompted both students to begin recalling other key terms, first in Dutch, and then remembering in English- for the most part.

Both Student A and Students Z and B interpreted the first footprint in human terms, comparing size, number of fingers and width of the print to their own hands. All three students entertained the idea that this mark could have been made by a human, although we did not reach a consensus. Student A pushed the idea of human mark-making further, and in an attempt to understand the discrepancies of width and lack of a thumb, he suggested that this mark could have been made deliberately, with the back of a hand rather than the front to create this uncanny shape.

Audio: 6. Student A - Backwards

It's a smaller hand!

It's a smaller hand, right?

Yes, and then there is four!

There's only four...what are these called?

Five!

Yes, there are five, but what is the name for these in English?

Fingers!

Fingers...do you think these are fingers? Only four fingers, is it possible that this is a human?

Mar this is four...yes, I...maybe

And is it wide or narro-

Oh, I know!

That this...did this!

(makes a gesture related to the print)

Oh, someone did this?

Yes!

And then they went...

(sound effect of a print)

Yes, then this is this!

At the back?

Yes!

Image 6. Corresponding to Audio: 6. Student A- Backwards.

For the next series of footprints, Students Z and B suggested possible animals, with Student Z, the older of the two often making the first suggestion. Student B would take a reactionary role, expressing agreement or disagreement with his sister's guesses. Initially, I would check with him to understand whether he agreed or disagreed with his sister's propositions, and as the activity progressed, he was took more initiative to express his opinion. He maintained an oppositional role, expanding further on his ideas, offering alternative animal guesses and references to scale and physical attributes. In the initial rounds,

all of the students paid attention to the scale of these prints and made their guesses in accordance with these observations, however as the activity continued, scale held less significance, as guesses began to stray from realism, with 'crocodile' and 'chicken' both being offered as suggestions for the same print.

Audio: 7. Student B and Z. Deliberations.

<div align="right">

Crocodile!
Crocodile!
</div>

This could be a crocodile?
Oh, it's the size of Zana.

<div align="right">

Its me hand!
</div>

It's the same as your hand

<div align="right">

Crocodile.
</div>

It's the same size as Zana's. It's a little bit bigger than yours. Just a little bit.

<div align="right">

Crocodile!
</div>

Crocodile? How many? Does it have claws?

<div align="right">

No.
(In Dutch) A crocodile doesn't have claws?
</div>

A crocodile has claws, right? So it must be something else.

<div align="right">

(In Dutch) Chicken!
</div>

A chicken?

<div align="right">

Yes. A chicken.
Really big chicken!
Yes!
</div>

Does the chicken have claws?

<div align="right">

Yes.
</div>

How is a chicken's foot?

<div align="right">

So?
</div>

How many?

<div align="right">

It's like this, huh?
Yeah!
</div>

A chicken's foot...how many? One, two...

<div align="right">

Three!
Yes, yes, yes.
</div>

When footprints appeared more obscure, both Student Z and Student A proposed a combination of animals. Student Zs proposed two animals came together to create this marking, either in collaboration or contributing at a later stage. Student A proposed a sort of hybrid state, an animal between species, or a depiction of a hybrid animal by another creature/person.

Student A approached answering these tasks by providing physical demonstrations of how these marks are made from his own perspective, tracing his fingers and placing his own hand over the prints, adjusting his own physicality to mirror that which he imagines necessary in order to produce such markings. He describes and demonstrates both movements and physical positions, along with making direct comparison between the scale and nature of other footprints. He too considers hybridity and animal-like creatures in the case of specific prints.

Audio: 8 Student A: Two Heads.

This is our next mystery...
What is this...?

> I think this is a snake mar that...two heads!

A two-headed snake?

> Yes!

Wow...and these are the two heads?

> Yes, and, and,,,

And this?

> I see one tail and I see two this one- different!

Ah, these are different?

Audio: 9 Student A: Wiggly

> This is a circle.

Right, it's a circle. Is it a perfect circle?

> No.

Ah, how is it?

> It's like...this

It's a bit like...what does it look like?

Like that?

Like this...yes!

What didi you say this looked like before?
A bit...wi-?

Wiggle

Wiggly, right.

Yes, and this is like this.

A wiggly line

Yes, like this!

Image 7. Corresponding to Audio: 9. Student A- Wiggly.

Next, I place the animal visuals face down on the table, as if they were a pack of playing cards and we sorted through theses one by one, as we had done with the footprints. Student B took the responsibility of picking one and placing each image alongside its corresponding footprint. For this activity, I gave the students an A4 sheet of paper with a grid, the first column containing the footprints, the second and third left blank for note-taking. Student Z took on this task, as she is more accustomed to writing, and noted down the name of each animal as we progressed along through the reference photos. The third column was reserved for physical attributes, which Student Z decided would be used to record the length of each print. She proposed using a fingertip as a unit of measurement, as it was close to a centimetre. She demonstrated this process, beginning by counting in Dutch, then switching to English. Once he had the chance to observe, Student B took over this process, enjoying the repetition of listing numbers. Student Z would often check

his answers by quickly measuring it in Dutch under her breath, and announcing her results aloud in English. Once he had the chance to observe, Student B took over this process, enjoying the repetition of listing numbers. Student Z would often check his answers by quickly measuring it in Dutch under her breath, and announcing her results aloud in English.

Student Z was already familiar with the majority of the animals in English, on occasion she mixed up some pronunciations that closely resemble the Dutch terms. Student B wasn't as familiar, but took the opportunity to echo and repeat his sister's answers to emphasise agreement. For Student A, the reference photos were interesting in themselves, as they would prompt a reaction based on a personal association. The cheetah reference photo, for example, prompted Student A to exclaim it's power and speed, followed by a physical demonstration, before returning back to the prints and the task at hand. For the animals which Student A was not so familiar with in English, he was able to divert first to its physical attributions and reputation, before returning back to its name.

Image 8. Small objects used to elicit physical qualities.

To create their adjective prompts, Student Z chose to spell out her associations, whilst Student B opted to draw his. Student Z moved quickly through this activity as a result, and preferred to check the unfamiliar adjectives at her own speed, rather than waiting for her brother to catch up. These various interpretations available within this exercise led to

both siblings adapting an independent approach. The moments in which the small objects and physical surroundings became relevant brought about a temporary collectivity, as these objects were passed around, considered and compared with elements of the physical surrounding, the concepts were physically grounded between us.
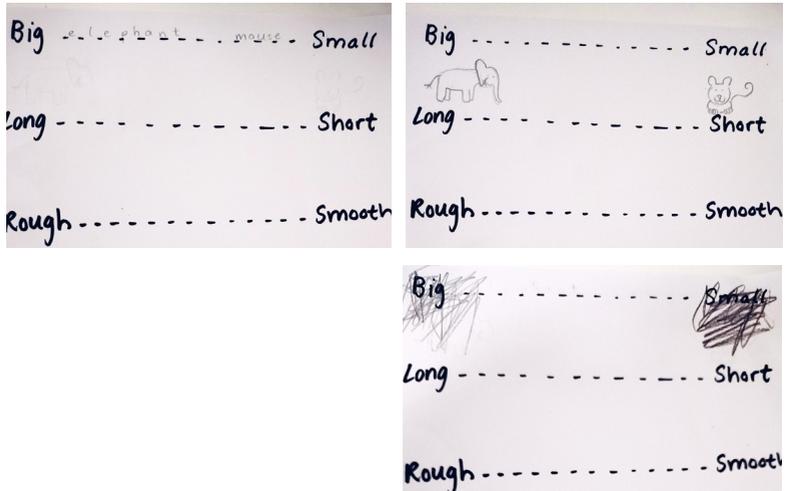

Image 9. Interpretations of physical qualities worksheet.

Running out of time to complete both activities in the same lesson with Student A, we spend the final moments of this lesson going through the texture of the small objects. I encouraged him to feel each object at a time and describe these textures. As we took specific objects from the bag, Student A reacted by sharing his experience interacting with it, or, for less familiar objects, he would mention another object or substance of which this texture reminded him. For each object, we focused on one characteristic feature- size, texture, physical nature, which is reinforced by the rest of the objects. Some concepts were easily understood when related or compared to their opposite, or further similar examples. For the most part, Student A was familiar with these adjectives. Concepts which shared a similarity, such as 'soft' and 'smooth' were trickier to differentiate between.

We began the next lesson in a similar fashion, with these small objects. Since we had already covered the key terms, this was a chance to

compare these objects on the basis of their physical capacities, rather than focusing on a single characteristic trait. We discussed the degree to which objects related to descriptive adjectives such as 'soft', 'hard', 'noisy', 'quiet'. These ideas were developed further by drawing comparisons between other objects, and understanding how interactive with these objects would bring specific traits to the fore. Objects like a bike bell, which Student A immediately identified as 'too noisy' understanding that this physical trait was part of its functionality, although we soon realised did not live up to this association once we tried interacting with it. A few minutes later, he picked a pair of keys, explaining his understanding of their function. Whilst he made his explanation, and we continued to identify physical traits relating to the list of key adjectives, Student A maintained a firm grip on them, reinforcing what he stated regarding their functionality. When we arrived at the adjectives 'noisy' and 'quiet', he changed his grip, now led by the motivation to test their noise potential. He made use of the table top to maximise the noise level, and adding shaking hand and wrist motions.

The final exercise built on physical comparison, in order for the student to construct a web of relations, they had to adjust the adjectives to their comparative form-' big' becomes 'bigger than', 'quiet' becomes 'quieter than', etc, etc. Student Z can grasp the game through a short explanation and demonstration, after which she helps me clarify the concept of comparison for Student B, echoing my physical demonstrations, and cross-checking concepts. Student B grasps the comparative structure when used reflexively quickly, however the concept of comparison across individual entities proved more difficult.

Audio: 10. Student B: Big...

Do you understand, B?
So, longer... this is long...
                       (I invite students to gesture a   )
                       (length with their hands   )
Longer...
                       (I demonstrate separating   )
                       (my hands further   )

..longer...

| (| and further again, Student B |) |
| (| replicates this action |) |

longer...longer...right?
Yes... let's say this is big...

(	I invite student to gesture,	)
(	this time rounding both his arms	)
(	and hands	)

What is bigger?

| (| Student expands his gesture |) |

Bigger!...Bigger!...Bigger!

(	Student follows these prompts,	)
(	giggling as his gestures reach	)
(	past the width of our table	)

To play this game students had to identify a comparative characteristic; softer than, noisier than, smaller than, etc, in order to add an animal to their web, which led to each student adapting a personal strategy. Student Z, having the strongest prior knowledge of these characteristics, called out these comparatives almost reflexively, first vocalising, then considering whether this characteristic fit with the comparison at hand, and if not, moving swiftly on to another option. Student B, considering the prompt at hand, gravitated towards responding in Dutch. Gesturing to indicate the nature of his proposal and towards the available animal illustration, he physically launches and attaches his response to the visual representation. Student A, not unlike Student Z, led with vocalisation, and built on his proposal as necessary, freely adding fantastical details and enactments as supports when his comparative proposals lack realistic grounding.

Audio: 11 Student A: Squirrel Sounds

So what is left? Bigger, softer, harder, noisier...

Noisier

Noisier?

Yes

The squirrel, what noise does the squirrel
make?

QUA QUA QUA QUA QUA QUA!

Really? I thought it went...

(I start making nibbling noises   )

No,...QUA!

QUA QUA?
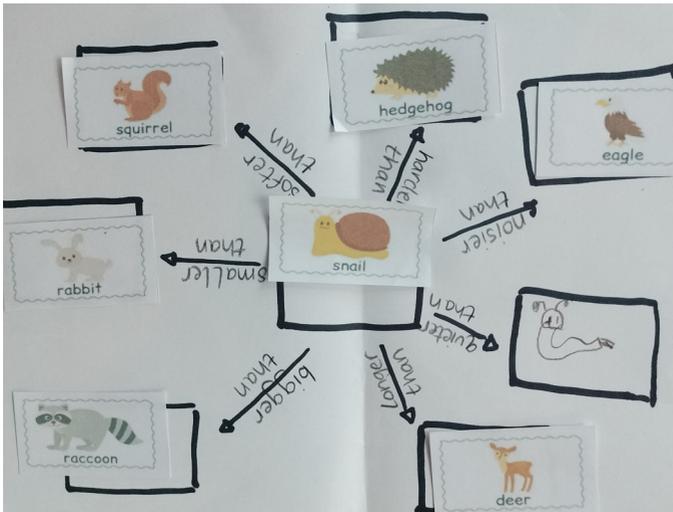
Yes!

Then it goes...here
So, it becomes noisier.

Image 10. Student B's Web of Relations.

WORKSHOP: BODILY SURROUNDINGS

The third session considers bodily relations to surroundings and environment. It is loosely inspired by Neimanis' Weather Writing workshop, which aims to draw on participant's sensory perceptions of surrounding environment and atmosphere, staying with these sensations with the view of relating inner processes with atmospheric and environmental processes.

Sensory Stimuli
First, we review the senses and their associated body parts. Isolating one sense at a time, students are guided to consider what is perceived and highlighted in our immediate surroundings when we do so. I guide the students through the prompts, and encourage students to attune, first to the immediate scenario, moving outwards to consider what we can perceive outside of our 'bubble'.

Isolated Audio
Next, an associative listening exercise which incorporates short video clips of various weather and environmental scenarios. Students are prompted to make verbal associations related to weather conditions, and physical surroundings, drawing on the method explored in the previous exercises (sensory inputs). Once associations are offered, we review the video clips, both audio and visual components, taking note of the translations that occurred whilst focusing on a specific sensory input. This moment acts as a review of the terms that were brought up in the student's previous interpretations, and consider further relevant terms revealed in the visual component.

Environmental Build Up
In the final exercise, students create a character using coloured clay (themselves or a character representing themselves), and interprets one or more atmospheric/environmental situation using this same material. They are encouraged to continue listening to the audio clips, either playing through each loop, or selecting a specific audio clip to focus on.

The first exercise materialised quite naturally between myself and the students. We often spent the initial moments of each lesson acknowledging or commenting on our surroundings in a particular way. The siblings often negotiate our seating arrangement at the start of each class, and spend the first moments of the lesson having a snack as they arrive directly from school. Student A likes to get involved in setting up the space, turning on a specific lamp, drawing my attention to the kind of pen or pencil he has selected ahead of the lesson. With this anchoring in place, we sifted through each sensory category, naming specific objects and elements of our surroundings that we can perceive with each sense.

I gave prompts, beginning with sensory functions that involve direct bodily contact, such as taste and touch, before moving on to those which are facilitated by and through the surrounding environment; sight, smell and hearing. Student B and Z both pointed out and named objects relatively close in proximity to begin with: the food they were snacking on, the furniture they were seated at, etc. They returned back to specific examples on several occasions, especially their snacks, referencing their flavour, texture and temperature. They also took this opportunity to playfully provoke and tease each other, exclaiming that they could smell one another, and reaching out towards each other, over and under the previously-named furniture to make playful contact. The last prompts, sight and hearing provoked more descriptive rather than objective suggestions compared to the previous prompts (although objective suggestions remained at the fore), with references made to the size and nature of the visual and auditory input.

Starting our second audio-based exercise, Students are given a pair of headphones and we take a moment to explore their settings and buttons. With these spongy headsets pressed to their ears, and a length of wire reaching across to my laptop, they sit upright in anticipation. Once played, the audio incites a vocal exclamation, which Student Z and Student A immediately follow up with frenzied interpretations, maintaining their initial reactive energy. Student B also upholds this initial energy, reacting and responding to his sister's suggestions. As we move through subsequent audio clips, Student B begins to initiate his own guesses, drawing from the previous discussions. Student Z wishes to incorporate concepts which are outside of her English vocabulary,

some of which we brainstorm through descriptors, such as inside, outside, city, nature, watery, etc. and referring to Google Translate's speech function when translation proved difficult.

Audio 12. Student B and Z: Veeery Dark

<div style="text-align: right">It's raining</div>

Its raining?

What do you think, B? Is it raining?

<div style="text-align: right">Em...yes it's raining</div>

How else is it? It's raining...do you think it is sunny?

<div style="text-align: right">(In Dutch) It's dark outside. It's dark</div>

It's dark?

<div style="text-align: right">Yes</div>

It's dark. And what kind of place?

<div style="text-align: right">(In Dutch) Outside.
(In Dutch) Outside.</div>

Is it in the city? Is it a river?

<div style="text-align: right">Yes</div>

A river?

<div style="text-align: right">Yes, it's a river</div>

Like the Maas river?
Okay, so it's raining, it's a river, it's dark.

<div style="text-align: right">It's not dark!</div>

It's not dark? You think it's bright?

<div style="text-align: right">Yes</div>

Okay, ready to have a look?

<div style="text-align: right">Is dark 'donker'?</div>

Yes

<div style="text-align: right">I think it's dark.</div>

You think its dark?

<div style="text-align: right">Veeery dark.</div>

The siblings persist in their guessing and interpretation only as long as the clip plays through, the activity of the audio facilitating their verbal engagement. Supplying the students with subsequent prompts during the duration of the clip encourages them to expand on these

interpretations, but doesn't have an impact on extending their engagement past the duration of the audio clip. Student A responded similarly, his verbal engagement sustained throughout the duration of the clips. Student A seems to use the process of listening to resolve his interpretations, often beginning by exclaiming associations based on dominant features of previous clips, and becoming more focused on the nature of the audio as the clip progresses.

Audio 13. Student A: Next One

Ready for the next one? Okay, let's
try it...

                                                               Fire! Fire!

You can hear fire? What else can you
hear?

                             Look how long!
          (Student A pulls at the   )
          (headphone's cable   )
Inside or outside?   Outside.

Outside?

                                                    Yes.

And do you think it's day or night?

                              What do you say?
Day or night?

                                  I think day.

It's day?
There is some sun?

                      Yes. And I think it's the sea.
Oh, you think it's the sea? You can
hear the sea?

Reviewing the visual component of the clip also brings focus to specific audio elements within the clip. Returning back to the isolated audio after taking in the visual draws attention to the physicality of the sound, as the nature of the sound has since been discovered.

Audio 14. Student A: Can you hear it...

What can you see that is happening?

Fire! Big fire!

Can you hear the fire?

No.

Not really. What can you hear?

I can just...

Ah, you can hear the music, right?

Yes.

Let's do it again. So if you listen re-
ally closely, can you hear the fire?

(Audio plays for the second   )
(time   )

Oh! I hear it...

Yes? How is it?
How is the noise of the fire?

(Student A mimics the crackling)
(and spitting of the flames with)
(sharp whistles   )

Like this

And it's a bit quiet, the fire?

Yes.

Student B was most comfortable independently expressing his inter-
pretation, without the need to form his opinion against or through
his sibling's, during moment taken between each audio to review the
visual component of each clip. Having had time to consider and practice
repeating interpretations in the previous part of the exercise, and now
with the reinforcement of the visual component, he could situate these
terms tangibly.

Audio 15. Student B and Z: Visual Review

What can you see?

Eh...sea!

The sea?

And the rock.

The rocks, right.

And...this?

And the trees?
How is it, is it windy?

No.

There's sun, rock, it's windy

It's not raining

It's not raining, right?

Not windy and not raining!

Where is the sun?

There's no sun

There's no sun?

A little bit!

The final exercise, constructing an environment informed by these soundscapes was taken by Student A as an opportunity to imagine how his favourite cartoon character would interpret and exist within the various scenarios staged in these audio clips. First, he modelled his character out of the clay, paying attention to the nature of its limbs and extremities, in which his powers manifested. Each subsequent environmental element that either of us fashioned, was integrated into the 'world' we were creating, rearranged, rejected or absorbed through an energetic exchange with his character. As pieces of clay from both the elements and the character itself become dislodged through this process, he reshapes and reconstitutes them into new forces and elements, sometimes retaining characteristics and associations of previous forms. Student A uses a combination of descriptive and demonstrative narration to convey the logic of these situations, the reality of this logic unfolds through his interaction with the clay itself.

Audio 16. Student A: Water Hair

Look! I'm making a water by the world.
Water for the world?

Yes

Excellent. Wow, there are lots of
pieces of water.

Let's put water!

Then if you are done, then you need to give it back.

You need to give it back?
The water?

You!

Me? What do you mean?

No!

Ah you need to put the water back?

No, catch it ! Catch it! Run away!

You're stealing the water?

Yeah!

Oh, it has watery hair now...

Yes, it's water hair
DO! DO! DO!

(Student A accenting the   )
(movements of his character   )
(with sound effects   )

Wow, and what can he do with his
water hair?

TO! TO! TO!

Wow, lots of water...

That's not water, that's hair!

Student B and Z, deciding to select a specific audio to construct, soon tired of this task, as wearing headphones whilst working with the clay proved cumbersome. They continued for a short while with their chosen audio in mind, swapping pieces of clay to add specific details, drifting between short Dutch exchanges and absorption into the making process. Providing sporadic questions and prompts in an attempt torelate this making process back to the environments contained within the audio clips, both Student B and Z give little away about the nature of their clay environments, preferring to work silently.

CONCLUSIONS

TAKEAWAYS

Did exercise formats based on interpretation, association and speculation contribute towards confidence and connection through and with a Second Language?

Exercises that incorporated association and interpretation left room for the student to build on topics and find personal connections. These exchanges, between teacher and student(s) gave space for the participants to consider different perspectives, trying them on for size. This is noticeable in the animal print exercise, when student B and Z go back and forth between eachother, considering different species. The open-ended nature of these exchanges allowed for students to return back and reconsider previous ideas and interpretations, anchored by the visual representations. This format of exercise allows for the flow of conversation to be influenced by all participants, student and teacher alike, without the need for specific vocabulary or structuring. All participants have the chance to contribute towards an interpretation, whether or not they suggested it in the first place, and have the opportunity to alter or upturn this interpretation based on their own perceptions. These allowances in format help to lessen barriers to confidence such as a limited vocabulary and hesitance to contribute due to fear of being incorrect or inaccurate. Additionally, associative and interpretive exercises allowed space for demonstrative and physically expressed, as in the case with Student A's physically engaged interpretation of the animal prints. Inviting physical engagement as a possible form of interpretation allowed Student A to express a scenario that coupled explanation with demonstration, neither of which operated successfully without the other.

Did the material-based nature of workshop exercises encourage confidence and connection through and with a second language?

Over the course of these workshops, students engaged in three varieties of material-based exercises.

In the first workshop, the body is used as a material tool to interpret physical limitations, capabilities and speculative possibilities, invoking the concept of a monstrous physicality. Once Student A began to engage in movement-based exercises, during the wam up exercise, he instinctually expanded the nature of these movements, adding to their scale and momentum, and finding ways for the movements to spread further through the body. This process altered the nature of the movement further. This movement-based expansion carried through in his vocal expression in the exercises that followed, inspiring rich depictions and explanations of monstrous creatures. The momentum created in this initial exercise was sustained through energetic markmaking and body scanning as a means of building a body-based depiction. The energy generated through movement and body-based tasks was palpable in Student A's communication, trying out and building on directional vocabulary and finding ways to verbalise his movements that pushed past his conventional use of English vocabulary.

In the second workshop, there was a focus on visual and tactile resources, all tied to physical capacity. The pawprints used scale to represent specific kinds of animal physicality, small objects were incorporated to illicit textural qualities and the relational webs served as diagrams mapping out physical relations across different animal species.

Both the animal pawprints and small objects operated as methods of understanding 'how' different species are, within themselves and in relation to others. Being akin to and suited for the hand, all students were drawn to consider them through touch, which provoked a range of reactions; utterances and exclamations of approval, disbelief, appreciation, confusion and contentment. The joy and excitement that was provoked in student through these material interactions resulted in prolonged engagement, consideration and discussion of both objects and prints. The joy and excitement of one student, in the case of the siblings, drew the attention of the other, and created further interest

in the communication around these resources.

In the case of the relational webs, using a gameplay format for this exercise removed the focus on the visuals themselves, with the empty spaces marked out by the web possessing far more gravity. Although the game places emphasis on vocalising physical comparison, the urgency that players face when required to vocalise removes their sense of what this comparison implies. Student A and Z both tended to vocalise the comparison before aligning it with the implied reality, and it was only in the justification of their comparison that they considered this implication. The most interesting exchanges and language use of this activity came about in these moments of justification, and perhaps if these moments are considered part of the process of this exercise, although only tenuously linked to the material nature of this task, they prove engagement with connective and intuitive language expression.

The third workshop's material focus on both sound, video and clay, called for iterative interpretations of the central theme. Both the sound and clay interactions varied greatly across the students. Student B engagement mirrored his sister's verbal guesses, finding the possibility to form his own interpretations once we reviewed the visual component to the video clip. Student A's interpretations often incorporated features of previous clips, taking some time to begin perceiving the nuances of the new soundscape. He too enjoyed piecing together the audio after watching the visual, with new kinds of input he felt more comfortable to point out the details he perceived in the audio. Student A brought this iterative format through to the clay modelling exercise, revisiting various instances depicted in the clips from the perspective of new character, shaping and reshaping the clay to facilitate his own assembled narrative. Students Z and B's attention was, conversely, directed into their making, and the noisier environment that required them to listen to the audio clips through headphones created further communicative barriers when it came to the clay-based activity.

TAKEAWAYS

It is clear to me that throughout the couse of these workshops, there were many instances of personal and interpersonal connection through second language play and use. As an active participant in these instances, I too sensed many meeting points of material and communicative coupling and expansion, both as a witness to the students' depth of engagement and reconstitution of class materials and concepts through their own physical and verbal expression, and as a participant in the expansion of thematics and topics to integrate our own felt sense and experience. These exercises provided opportunities to connect with new terms and expression in a more personal and tangible manner.

However, these workshop benefited greatly from being situated within a larger term of weekly classes, during which students were given the chance to familiarise themselves with grammatical conventions and speech patterns, which are key to facilitate more open-ended communication. Associative and speculative exercises, although proving engaging and vital in occasional workshop settings, can become exasperating and energy draining when prolonged and repeated over extended periods of time, especially in the case of students who are not accustomed to regular communication in their second language.

In Student A's case, who has considerably more encounters with English outside of these classes in comparison to the siblings, these exercises facilitated moments in which he could experiment with the configuration of the language he is exposed to through media, everyday interactions and parental guidance. Equally these formats allowed me to understand the gaps in his knowledge that are not so apparent when completing more prescriptive and rigid language exercises.

For Students B and Z, many of these activities facilitated indepth collective engagement with vocabulary and grammar terminology that we touched on in previous lessons that is often not as possible in weekly class settings due to the level difference between older sister and younger brother. These exercises give both of these students the opportunity to position new language within the scope of their own understanding of themselves and their surroundings. This became most apparent when Student B began to reference the exchanges that occurred in the midst

of these workshops in subsequent weekly lessons. When invited to create a menu filled with food related vocabulary some weeks later, he depicted a chicken- horse hybrid on it's cover that we had discussed in during the animal pawprint exercise, deciding to theme his imaginary restaurant during the animal pawprint exercise, deciding to theme his imaginary restaurant around this creature.

I also felt the principles explored within these exercise leaking into my own teaching approach, borrowing aspects of physical and material interpretation, speculatory reasoning, and sensory attunement and remodelling these for classes of larger numbers, language level, and ability. Rather than keeping the formats that I constructed above, I have taken these as pedagogical principles to apply within externally organised language learning contexts. I have noticed that spending time with these methods; through reading, trialing, reflecting, has made space for these principles on a surface level, and that staging workshop-like 'intensive' lessons dedicated to experimenting through and with interpretive, speculatory and sensorially attuned processes builds my own competency to think and act through these processes themselves.

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