

Process Drama in Teaching Multilingualism and Multiculturalism

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Chapter Objectives

- Exploring how process drama, as an innovative educational approach, fosters plurilingual and intercultural competencies in children through active participation in imaginary situations, enhancing their understanding of linguistic and cultural diversity
- Identifying key elements of process drama that enable the integration of linguistic and cultural skills into the educational process
- Examining how process drama encourages empathy and critical thinking through the simulation of real and imagined multicultural situations
- Analysing concrete examples of process drama activities used for teaching multilingualism and multiculturalism in various educational contexts

Introduction

Process drama is as an innovative educational method which allows children to actively participate in complex, simulated situations, encouraging them to explore different perspectives and develop intercultural competencies. In the context of developing plurilingualism and multicultural awareness, process drama becomes a powerful tool for understanding the diversity of languages, cultures, and identities. Through this method, children not only learn about cultural and linguistic differences but also experience them first-hand, fostering empathy, tolerance, and collaboration skills in a globalised world. This chapter explores the application of process drama in creating dynamic and inclusive educational environments that promote multilingualism and intercultural sensitivity. Specifically, this chapter investigates the use of process drama in the context from early and preschool to primary education level. Process drama can be conducted in either the participants' first language or an additional language. In the latter case, learners may require

more targeted linguistic support to participate effectively and meaningfully.

In educational settings, process drama can be used to develop linguistic and cultural competencies in children of various age groups. In primary schools, methods such as role-playing and imaginary journeys enable pupils to explore languages and cultures through play. In secondary schools and adult education programmes, activities such as simulated conferences or historical re-enactments provide opportunities for deeper exploration of complex linguistic and cultural topics.

Process Drama: An Overview

Process drama is an experiential and participatory educational approach that employs drama games and theatrical techniques to foster creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. It enables participants to construct meaning through simulated experiences in a safe and supportive environment (Bowell & Heap, 2017). Unlike traditional theatre, which emphasises performance for an audience, process drama is focused on the process of creation and exploration through interactive play. This allows participants, by taking on roles within an imagined dramatic world, to explore complex themes such as co-operation, human rights, or cultural diversity (Kao & O'Neill, 1998).

The approach emerged in the mid-20th century through the work of pioneers such as Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton, who integrated artistic, pedagogical, and social dimensions into a dynamic approach to learning (Bolton & Heathcote, 1999). Heathcote's 'teacher-in-role' technique enables educators to participate alongside children in dramatic scenarios, thereby reducing the traditional, authoritative approach to teaching (Taylor & Warner, 2006). Bolton's concept of 'dramatic tension' challenges participants to confront issues within the dramatic context, thus deepening their understanding of the themes.

In practice, participants actively engage in imagined scenarios that reflect real-world problems. For instance, children might collaboratively create a story about a fictional community resolving a conflict over resources, which allows them to explore themes such as equity, express emotions, and exchange diverse perspectives. Such activities concurrently develop empathy, communication skills, and teamwork. Reflection is a key part of the process, wherein participants analyse their experiences and connect them to real-life situations (Galazka & Baldwin, 2021).

Process drama shares fundamental elements with role-play, as both methods involve taking on roles and acting within imaginary scenarios. However, process drama extends role-play into a more complex and collaborative

framework (Kao & O'Neill, 1998). Whereas role-play is often structured and focused on specific skills – such as practising a foreign language in a simulated shop conversation – process drama allows participants to co-create a narrative without predefined outcomes. An example of this would be a scenario of an international conference on climate change, where participants' decisions shape the storyline (Bowell & Heap, 2017).

Within the broader system of process drama, role-play serves as a starting point or a foundational element. It provides a simpler form of dramatic engagement that is then expanded through collective creation, reflection, and the exploration of complex themes. It is this holistic combination of education and creativity that makes process drama a powerful tool for developing linguistic, cultural, historical, and social competencies, and it is effective in promoting intercultural and plurilingual skills (Galazka & Baldwin, 2021).

The Role of the Facilitator

The facilitator plays a key role in the successful implementation of process drama (Bowell & Heap, 2017). As the creator and guide of the imaginary dramatic world, the facilitator shapes the flow of activities, encourages participants to engage in creative expression and collaboration, and ensures the achievement of activity objectives (Galazka & Baldwin, 2021). This role requires specific skills and abilities that enable the facilitator to lead process drama in a dynamic, inclusive, and participant-centred manner (Kao & O'Neill, 1998). Ideally, the facilitator should possess the following skills:

1. *Creativity and flexibility.* The facilitator of process drama must be creative in designing activities and the imaginary world in which participants operate. The ability to improvise and adapt the course of activities based on participants' reactions and interests is crucial for maintaining their motivation. The facilitator should be prepared to respond to unpredictable situations and adjust the storyline to sustain engagement and dynamism.
2. *Communication skills.* Clear and effective communication is fundamental to the successful facilitation of process drama. The facilitator should clearly explain roles, rules, and objectives of the activities, using language that is appropriate for the participants' age and skill level. Additionally, active listening and understanding help the facilitator create a safe and supportive environment where participants feel free to express their ideas.
3. *Pedagogical competence.* The facilitator must understand the pedagog-

ical principles underlying process drama and know how to apply them in various educational contexts. This includes planning activities tailored to the age, interests, and needs of the participants and clearly defining learning objectives. Pedagogical sensitivity enables the facilitator to recognise potential challenges and provide support to participants throughout their learning process.

4. *Leadership and encouragement skills.* In process drama, the facilitator does not assume the role of a traditional instructor but acts as a guide who supports participants in creating and exploring the imaginary world. This requires the ability to direct activities without imposing solutions, leaving space for participants to engage in creative expression and decision-making. The facilitator should encourage collaboration, decision-making, and the exchange of ideas among participants.
5. *Empathy.* Process drama involves working with participants who may have varying levels of confidence, creativity, and experience. The facilitator must be empathetic and sensitive to participants' needs, creating a safe environment where everyone feels included and respected. Understanding participants' emotional reactions and providing support in challenging situations are essential for effective facilitation.
6. *Organisational skills.* The successful implementation of process drama requires thorough planning and organisation. The facilitator should design the structure of activities in advance, define roles, and prepare the necessary materials. Good organisation ensures a smooth flow of activities and allows the facilitator to focus on interaction with participants.
7. *Reflective skills.* After each activity, the facilitator should assess what worked well and what could be improved. Reflection on their approach and participants' reactions allows the facilitator to continuously enhance their ability to lead process drama. Additionally, reflecting with participants can provide valuable insights into their progress and experiences.

The facilitator of process drama plays a central role in ensuring the success of activities and achieving educational goals. A combination of creativity, communication, pedagogical skills, empathy, and organisational abilities enables the facilitator to create a safe, supportive, and inspiring environment for participants. Through careful guidance and encouragement, the facilitator helps participants develop linguistic, social, and cultural competencies and engage in a meaningful and dynamic learning process.

Application of Process Drama in Education

Process drama has found broad applications in educational contexts, ranging from primary education to adult learning. Its flexibility allows adaptation to various subjects and objectives. For instance, in language teaching, process drama helps children practise communication through simulations of real-life situations, such as shopping at a market, negotiating, or office conversations where learners can take on various roles and delve deeper into character without necessarily staying true to themselves. In history and social sciences, the method enables children to explore historical events or social issues through reconstructions and discussions in an imaginary context.

In early childhood and preschool education, process drama serves as a powerful tool to foster creativity, communication skills, and emotional development in children. Through structured role-playing games and interactive scenarios, children have the opportunity to explore imaginary worlds, develop imagination, and learn spontaneously about linguistic and cultural diversity.

In primary school, process drama is often used to encourage creativity and the development of social skills. Through activities, such as taking on the roles of characters from stories or creating imagined worlds, children learn to collaborate, listen to one another, and make collective decisions. In secondary schools and adult education programmes, process drama is frequently employed to develop specific competencies, such as teamwork, critical thinking, and intercultural awareness.

Reflection Point

1. How can process drama help develop social and communication skills among participants?
2. What are the advantages and challenges of the facilitator's role in process drama?
3. How does the element of imagination in process drama influence participants' creativity and engagement?
4. How can process drama be applied in various educational contexts, such as language learning or exploring historical events?

Process Drama and Role-Play in Learning for Multilingualism and Multiculturalism

Process drama and role-play are powerful pedagogical tools for fostering multilingualism and multiculturalism in education, enabling participants to actively engage with different languages and cultures through immersive,

experiential learning (Kao & O'Neill, 1998; Galazka & Baldwin, 2021). Unlike traditional language instruction, which often relies on rote memorisation and isolated skill practice, process drama uses role-play as a foundational element to create imagined scenarios. In these, children take on the roles of characters from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, thereby practising the use of multiple languages in authentic contexts (Bowell & Heap, 2017).

This approach is aligned with the concept of multicompetence, according to which plurilingual individuals draw on their entire linguistic repertoire to navigate complex interactions (Franceschini, 2011). Role-play encourages the flexible use of language to express ideas, negotiate meaning, and resolve conflicts within the dramatic framework, which is key to developing plurilingual competence as outlined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001).

In practice, participants can play the roles of delegates at a multicultural summit where, using multiple languages, they discuss global topics like climate change or migration. Such activities enable children to practise code-switching and explore cultural nuances, for instance, by simulating an international trade conference where they are faced with cultural differences in business practices (Galazka & Baldwin, 2021). The approach can also be adapted for younger learners. For example, children can take on the roles of toy makers and buyers at an international market. A child from Italy might use gestures and sounds to show how their spinning top works, while another from Germany might use a few familiar English words to trade it for their own toy. By combining simple words from different languages, gestures, and sounds, children naturally use their entire linguistic repertoire to communicate.

In addition to linguistic skills, process drama also develops intercultural competence, allowing children to move beyond surface-level knowledge of cultural diversity and develop empathy through embodied experiences. By simulating real-world multicultural encounters – for example, by playing members of a fictional community resolving a conflict between migrants and the local population – participants confront stereotypes and build an understanding of diverse worldviews (Drandić & Lazarić, 2020). Pioneers like Heathcote and Bolton emphasised the role of dramatic tension in such activities, which deepens cultural awareness by challenging participants to respond authentically to intercultural dilemmas (Bolton & Heathcote, 1999).

Through this integrated approach, children not only acquire linguistic skills but also cultivate a plurilingual identity, recognising how languages and cul-

tures intersect in personal and social contexts (Kramsch, 2009). Reflection, as an integral part of the process, further deepens learning as children analyse their experiences and connect them to real-life situations. Ultimately, this approach enables the development of global competencies such as adaptability and intercultural communication, preparing children for life and work in a globalised world where these skills are of key importance (Galazka & Baldwin, 2021).

Reflection Point

1. How can pedagogical approaches like process drama and role-play enrich the cognitive development and professional skills that multilingualism offers in a globalised society?
2. What are the advantages and challenges of using immersive scenarios for the genuine acquisition (and not just theoretical learning) of multicultural values in education?
3. In what way does the dramatic context in process drama serve as a platform where multilingualism and multiculturalism merge to build authentic intercultural sensitivity in children?
4. How can educational systems encourage the application of methods like process drama so that the preservation of linguistic and cultural diversity is transformed from a passive goal into an active, embodied experience for children?

Process Drama and the Development of Linguistic and Cultural Competencies

Integrating process drama into teaching allows educators to create dynamic and engaging environments where children learn language and explore cultural dimensions spontaneously. This method is not only effective but also motivating for children, as it gives them a sense of accomplishment and connection to what they are learning.

Development of Linguistic Competencies

Process drama provides children, including children of early and preschool age, with opportunities to use language in authentic, context-rich situations, fostering the development of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discursive competencies that enable the creation of meaning in real communication contexts (Kao & O'Neill, 1998). Through dramatic activities, children explore language as a tool for communication and collaboration, transcending traditional language learning focused on rules and memorisation (Galazka & Baldwin, 2021). For example, in a process drama scenario, children can act as ani-

mals in the forest organising a joint picnic, using simple phrases in different languages (Cro. *hvala*, Eng. *thank you*, or It. *grazie*) to express gratitude for sharing food, thereby practising basic vocabulary and language structures in a context that mimics real interactions. In another example, children can participate in a simulation of a *magic toy shop*, where they act as sellers and customers, using expressions like *Ovo je lopta* (Eng. *This is a ball*) in multiple languages (e.g., *ball* in English, *palla* in Italian) to describe the toys, developing sociolinguistic skills such as using polite phrases in different languages. Yet another example involves children acting as passengers on a *magic train* that travels through different countries, where they learn greetings like *Ciao* in Italian or *Tschüss* in German as they visit stations, getting acquainted with linguistic and cultural diversity through play. These activities enable children to become multicompetent speakers, capable of using their linguistic repertoire flexibly and appropriately according to the context, while simultaneously developing basic intercultural competencies (Council of Europe, 2001).

One of the key advantages of process drama is that children learn language as a means of communication and collaboration, spontaneously acquiring language structures and vocabulary through interactive dialogues and playful scenarios (Kao & O'Neill, 1998). For example, in a scenario where children act as friends building a *world park* together, they use words like *drvo* (Eng. *tree*) or *cvijet* (Eng. *flower*) in multiple languages while planning the park, naturally integrating linguistic diversity and learning about cultural symbols, such as the meaning of different plants in various cultures (Galazka & Baldwin, 2021). This unobtrusive approach to language learning through play reduces the fear of making mistakes, as children are preoccupied with the joy of storytelling and collaboration, which increases their confidence in linguistic production. Process drama, along with role-play, also encourages the understanding of cultural nuances, as children, through these activities – for example, by acting as inhabitants of a fictional village sharing stories about different holidays, such as Christmas or Eid – develop empathy and awareness of cultural diversity (Kramsch, 2009). Techniques like Heathcote's collaborative role-taking enable children to reflect on their experiences, for instance, by discussing how they felt while sharing 'their' toys at a marketplace, deepening their ability to connect language and culture (Bolton & Heathcote, 1999). Through this integrated approach, process drama and role-play make multilingualism and multiculturalism dynamic bridges that connect linguistic diversity with cultural understanding, preparing young learners for life in diverse, globalised communities (Galazka & Baldwin, 2021).

Development of Cultural Competencies

Process drama enables children of early and preschool age to explore and understand the cultural aspects of language, creating a safe environment in which they can get to know the norms, values, and customs of different cultures through playful, immersive activities that integrate language and culture as inseparable elements of communication (Kramsch, 2009). Unlike traditional methods that often separate language from culture, process drama uses role-play for children to embody different cultural perspectives, fostering empathy and intercultural sensitivity through active participation in imaginary worlds (Kao & O'Neill, 1998). For example, children can participate in a scenario where they act as members of an *international kindergarten* organising a joint birthday party, learning about different birthday celebration traditions – such as singing Cro. *Sretan rođendan*, Eng. *Happy birthday*, It. *Tanti auguri* or Ger. *Zum Geburtstag viel Glück* – while sharing stories about customs, such as blowing out candles or giving flowers in different cultures (Galazka & Baldwin, 2021).

In another example, children can play roles in a *magic village* where each family brings a traditional game from their culture, such as a Chinese dragon or a Mexican piñata, using simple phrases in multiple languages (e.g., Cro. *igra*, Eng. *game*, It. *gioco*) to describe the rules, thereby getting acquainted with the cultural values associated with play and community. A third example involves children acting as inhabitants of a *world zoo*, where each animal represents a different culture and shares a story about its home, such as a Japanese panda garden with bamboo or an African lion's savanna, learning words like *home* or *friend* in different languages and understanding cultural differences in the relationship with nature. A fourth example involves children participating in a *global puppet theatre*, where each puppet represents a character from another culture and tells a story about its favourite holiday, such as Diwali or Christmas, using simple expressions in multiple languages, through which children get to know cultural traditions through storytelling (Galazka & Baldwin, 2021).

Through these activities, process drama enables children to develop cultural competencies by embodying different perspectives, which deepens their ability to understand and respect different values and customs, key for life in a globalised world where intercultural communication is an everyday reality. For example, in a scenario where children act as friends creating a *world mosaic* together from symbols of different cultures, such as the heart for love in Western cultures or the lotus flower in Eastern traditions, they

learn how to express feelings in multiple languages, such as Cro. *volim* or Eng. *I love*, fostering empathy and awareness of cultural differences (Kramsch, 2009).

Reflection further enriches learning as children discuss their experiences, for example, by reflecting on how they felt while sharing stories about holidays in the global puppet theatre, thereby connecting cultural values with their own experiences (Galazka & Baldwin, 2021). This integrated approach makes process drama a powerful tool that not only develops cultural competencies but also prepares young learners for diverse, globalised communities, promoting adaptability, empathy, and a deep understanding of cultural diversity as a key element of contemporary education (Council of Europe, 2001).

Reflection Point

1. How can process drama encourage spontaneous language learning by contextualised situations and play?
2. In what ways does exploring cultural aspects through process drama contribute to the development of intercultural sensitivity among participants?
3. How does the integration of linguistic and cultural competencies in process drama impact children and their understanding of global perspectives?
4. What are practical ways to apply process drama in education to promote linguistic and cultural diversity?

Methodology and Pedagogical Strategies

Planning process drama activities requires careful design to ensure participants have a rich, interactive, and meaningful experience. This method involves several steps, from selecting an appropriate topic to defining objectives and preparing children for active participation. Well-planned activities maximise participant engagement and fulfil educational goals.

Steps in Planning Process Drama Activities

The following steps are focused on planning process drama activities that foster plurilingualism and multiculturalism, adapted to the developmental needs, interests, and curriculum of early and preschool age (3–6/7 years) and pupils in primary education (6/7–11/12 years).

The first step involves selecting a theme that is engaging and age-appropriate for the learners, focused on exploring linguistic and cultural diversity. For children of early and preschool age, themes should be simple and connected to their everyday experiences or imaginative worlds, such



as friendship, animals, or family celebrations, while for primary education pupils, themes can be linked to the curriculum, such as social issues, historical events, or literary works, encouraging more complex linguistic and cultural understanding. Themes should encourage the use of multiple languages and an introduction to cultural practices in a way that is understandable and appealing, such as through stories or joint projects that reflect diversity.

The second step is defining goals, which differ by age: for younger children, goals include developing basic language skills, such as learning greetings or the names of objects in multiple languages, and getting acquainted with simple cultural customs, while for primary education children, goals encompass more advanced language skills, such as communication strategies and more complex expressions, and a deeper understanding of cultural norms and critical thinking through problem-solving. These goals ensure that the activities are focused on linguistic, cultural, and social outcomes adapted to the developmental abilities of each age group.

The third step, creating the dramatic context, involves designing an imaginary world that integrates multilingual and multicultural elements, adapted to the participants' age. For younger children, the context should be simple and playful, with clear and familiar frameworks that encourage natural linguistic and cultural exchange, while for primary education pupils, the context can be more complex, linked to the curriculum, and focused on collaborative interactions that require decision-making and the exploration of cultural differences. The context should be appealing and flexible, allowing for the inclusion of multiple languages and cultures.

The fourth step involves designing roles that are age-appropriate and encourage the exploration of linguistic and cultural perspectives. For younger children, the roles are simple, such as characters from fairy tales or animals, while for older children, the roles can be more complex, such as characters from different social or cultural contexts, encouraging the use of more complex phrases and a deeper understanding of cultural norms.

The fifth step, structuring the activities, requires a balanced flow that in-

cludes an introduction to the dramatic world, plot development, and reflection, adapted to the learners' age. For younger children, the introduction can include a story, a song, or visual aids like pictures, while for primary education pupils, the introduction can involve a group discussion or a short video. Plot development includes short, playful episodes for younger children that encourage linguistic interaction and collaboration, and more complex episodes for older children that involve decision-making and problem-solving. Reflection is key for both groups: for younger children, it is conducted through simple discussions or creative tasks like drawing, while for older children, it includes structured discussions, written assignments, or creative activities like making posters, where learners connect their experience with linguistic and cultural learning.

Practical tools for teachers include picture cards with universal symbols and audio recordings with phrases or songs in multiple languages for younger children, and illustrations, videos, and prepared scripts with more advanced expressions for older children, along with interactive materials like cards with questions that encourage reflection. These steps make process drama a powerful tool for enhancing plurilingualism and multiculturalism, enabling teachers to easily integrate linguistic and cultural diversity into education, preparing children for adaptability and intercultural communication in diverse communities.

Examples of Process Drama Implementation

Example 1: Planning a Process Drama Activity for Children of Early and Preschool Age

Following the steps from the previous section, here is a concrete example of planning a process drama activity for children of early and preschool age (3–6/7 years). This activity, titled *World Friendship Day*, is focused on introducing multilingualism and multiculturalism through a playful exploration of greetings and friendship customs from different cultures. The activity is designed to be simple, engaging, and adapted to the children's developmental level, fostering spontaneous language acquisition and the development of empathy towards cultural diversity (Kao & O'Neill, 1998). The duration of the activity is 30–45 minutes, and it can be conducted in a group of 10–15 children with the help of a teacher or educator.

1. *Selecting a theme.* The theme *World Friendship Day* was chosen because it is close to children's experiences (friendship, play) and allows for the introduction of multiple languages and cultural elements in a playful

manner. The theme can be linked to children's songs or stories about friends, which encourages engagement and facilitates the integration of basic vocabulary in different languages (e.g., informal greetings like Cro. *Bok!*, Eng. *Hello!* or It. *Ciao!*), and getting acquainted with cultural norms of friendship, such as shaking hands or sharing toys. This theme is flexible and does not require a deep knowledge of cultures from the teacher, as it utilises universal motifs of friendship.

2. *Defining goals.* The goals are adapted to the children's age, focusing on developing basic language skills, such as learning simple greetings and phrases in multiple languages (e.g., Croatian, English, Italian), promoting intercultural awareness through getting acquainted with different friendship customs (e.g., sharing or greeting), and fostering social skills like collaboration and empathy through group play. These goals ensure that the activity is focused on the spontaneous acquisition of language and cultural elements, developing multicompetence in a safe environment.
3. *Creating the dramatic context.* The dramatic context is an imaginative *World Friendship Day* – a magic park where children from different 'countries' come to a party. The teacher sets the scene using simple props like paper flags or drawings, defining the time (e.g., a sunny day) and place (e.g., a magic park with 'gates' to enter different cultures). This context is clear and appealing, encouraging children to use language and explore cultural norms through play, with flexibility for adaptation according to the children's reactions.
4. *Designing roles.* The roles are simple and diverse, adapted to the children's age, such as a 'friend from Croatia' who shares toys, a 'friend from England' who teaches English greetings, or a 'friend from Italy' who learns the names of various forms of pasta. The roles are assigned according to the children's interests, with the teacher's support in modelling phrases (e.g., *Bok, prijetelju!*, *Ciao amico/a* or *Hello, friend!*), encouraging diverse interactions and collaboration.
5. *Structuring the activity.* The activity is structured in three phases for a balanced flow:
 - Introduction to the dramatic world (5–10 minutes): The teacher tells a short story about the magic park and assigns roles, using picture cards with illustrations and audio recordings with songs in different languages so that children can get acquainted with basic phrases and cultural elements.
 - Plot development (15–20 minutes): Through short, playful episodes,

children share 'friendship gifts' (e.g., drawings or toys), employing phrases in multiple languages and exploring cultural norms through collaboration, with the teacher's guidance to encourage exchange.

- Reflection (5–10 minutes): Through a group conversation or drawing, children reflect on what they have learned, e.g., how different languages and customs make friendship more interesting, deepening their understanding.

This activity is flexible and requires minimal materials (picture cards, songs, drawings), making it easily accessible for teachers and learners. It can be extended over multiple sessions for deeper acquisition.

Example 2: Planning a Process Drama Activity for Children in Primary Education

To illustrate the planning steps described previously, this section provides a concrete example of a process drama activity designed for children in primary education (6/7–11/12 years). This activity, titled *Global Story Museum*, is focused on introducing multilingualism and multiculturalism through the exploration of storytelling traditions from different cultures. The activity is designed to be engaging, linked to the curriculum (e.g., literature, social sciences), and adapted to the cognitive abilities of primary education pupils, fostering advanced language skills, intercultural awareness, and critical thinking (Kao & O'Neill, 1998). The duration of the activity is 45–60 minutes, and it can be conducted in a group of 15–20 children with the teacher's guidance.

1. *Selecting a theme.* The theme *Global Story Museum* was chosen because it is relevant to primary education, connected to curriculum content such as literature and social sciences, and allows for the exploration of multilingualism and multiculturalism through storytelling, which is appealing to children. The theme encourages learners to use more complex phrases in multiple languages (e.g., Croatian, English, Italian) and to get acquainted with the cultural significance of stories in different communities, such as folk tales or storytelling customs. This theme is flexible and does not require a deep knowledge of cultures from the teacher, as it relies on the universal practice of storytelling.
2. *Defining goals.* The goals are adapted to the childrens' age, focused on developing advanced language skills, such as using communication strategies and more complex expressions in multiple languages (e.g., phrases for describing a story or expressing feelings), promoting inter-

cultural awareness through the understanding of different storytelling traditions (e.g., oral stories or written fairy tales in European traditions), and fostering critical thinking and collaboration through group creation and discussion of stories. These goals ensure that the activity develops multicompetence and intercultural sensitivity in a context relevant to the learners.

3. *Creating the dramatic context.* The dramatic context is the *Global Story Museum* – a fictional museum where participants represent storytellers from different cultures who are sharing their stories at an exhibition. The teacher sets the scene using simple props like paper books, illustrations, or signs with the names of ‘countries,’ defining the time (e.g., the opening day of the exhibition) and place (e.g., a museum hall). This context is appealing and flexible, encouraging children to use multiple languages and explore cultural norms related to storytelling, with adaptations according to the group’s knowledge level.
4. *Designing roles.* The roles are diverse and adapted to the childrens’ age, such as a *storyteller from Croatia* who shares a folk tale, a *storyteller from Italy* who presents a fairy tale in Italian, or a *storyteller from Africa* who uses oral tradition. The roles are assigned according to the childrens’ interests, with the teacher’s support in modelling phrases (e.g., *This is my story ...* in multiple languages), encouraging collaborative interactions and cultural exchange.
5. *Structuring the activity.* The activity is structured in three phases for a balanced flow:
 - Introduction to the dramatic world (10–15 minutes): The teacher introduces the context with a story about the museum exhibition and assigns roles, using visual aids like story illustrations or short videos about storytelling, and prepared scripts with phrases in multiple languages (e.g., Croatian, English, Italian) so that children can get acquainted with key expressions.
 - Plot development (20–30 minutes): Through episodes, children share their ‘stories,’ using phrases in multiple languages and discussing the cultural elements of storytelling (e.g., how stories are passed down in different cultures), with the teacher’s guidance to encourage collaboration and creativity. For example, children can act as storytellers who create a new story together, combining elements from different cultures.
 - Reflection (10–15 minutes): Through a group discussion or a creative task, such as making a poster that displays their joint story, children

reflect on what they have learned about languages and cultures, answering questions like *How were the stories different?* or *What did you learn about another culture?*

This activity is flexible, uses minimal materials (illustrations, scripts, posters), and allows for extension over multiple sessions for deeper acquisition of language and cultural elements. Teachers can adapt the complexity of the language and discussions according to the childrens' level, making the activity accessible and effective.

Reflection Point

1. What strategies can ensure role-play activities build confidence and collaboration across diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds?
2. How can teachers use simple evaluation methods, like observation and reflection, to assess linguistic and cultural progress while providing meaningful feedback?

Common Challenges in Implementing Process Drama for Learning Multilingualism and Multiculturalism

The implementation of process drama for enhancing plurilingualism and multiculturalism brings significant advantages in developing language skills and intercultural sensitivity, but it also involves challenges that can affect the success of activities, especially when working with children of early and preschool age (3–6/7 years) and pupils in primary education (6/7–11/12 years) (Kao & O'Neill, 1998). These challenges, such as linguistic and cultural barriers and issues with children engagement, can be overcome with adapted strategies that encourage inclusivity, collaboration, and self-confidence, using accessible tools that do not require deep knowledge of cultural norms from the teacher (Kramsch, 2009). The following section discusses two key challenges – linguistic and cultural barriers, and lack of engagement – along with practical solutions adapted to the developmental needs and abilities of both age groups.

One of the primary challenges in process drama is linguistic and cultural barriers, which can cause insecurity in children, especially if they are unsure of their language abilities or have limited experience with cultural diversity. Younger children may feel insecure when faced with unfamiliar phrases in multiple languages, while older learners may experience anxiety due to more complex linguistic demands or fear of misunderstanding cultural norms, which can limit their participation (Kramsch, 2009). To overcome these barriers, teachers can use simple and clear language adapted to the learners'

level – basic phrases and greetings for younger children and more complex expressions for older children (e.g., dialogues or suggestions). Visual and non-verbal communication, such as picture cards with universal symbols for younger children or illustrations and videos for older children, reduces pressure on language skills and facilitates understanding (Galazka & Baldwin, 2021).

Introductory ice-breaker activities, such as short word-guessing games for younger children or group discussions about familiar cultural practices for older children, help create a safe and encouraging environment (Council of Europe, 2001). Preparing children for cultural differences can be done through simple stories or discussions on universal themes like friendship or sharing, thereby promoting intercultural sensitivity without the need for deep cultural knowledge. For example, a teacher can begin an activity with a game in which children learn greetings in multiple languages with the support of pictures, which reduces linguistic insecurity and introduces cultural diversity in a playful manner.

Another significant challenge is a lack of children's engagement, which can manifest as passive participation or task avoidance, especially among children who feel insecure or unmotivated (Bolton & Heathcote, 1999). Younger children may be shy due to unfamiliar roles, while older pupils may avoid participation due to fear of making mistakes or the complexity of tasks. To overcome this challenge, teachers can start with simple and fun tasks that reduce anxiety – for example, singing or imitation games for younger children and short, structured dialogues for older children (Galazka & Baldwin, 2021). A clear explanation of the activity's goals, emphasising the importance of each role, helps participants understand their contribution, whether it is a simple greeting in multiple languages or creating part of a story. Gradually increasing the complexity of roles and tasks, such as moving from basic phrases to more complex dialogues for older children, allows learners to build self-confidence (Kao & O'Neill, 1998). Creating a positive environment is key, where effort and creativity are rewarded, and mistakes are treated as part of learning. For example, a teacher can praise children's efforts in using new words or sharing ideas, thereby encouraging engagement. Techniques like Heathcote's collaborative role-taking encourage collaboration, while Bolton's approach to dramatic challenges introduces simple but engaging tasks that motivate children, such as creating a story together or solving a small dilemma in a group (Bolton & Heathcote, 1999). These strategies ensure that process drama is inclusive and motivating, allowing participants to feel safe and valued while developing plurilingual and multicultural com-

petencies, preparing them for adaptability in diverse communities (Kramsch, 2009; Franceschini, 2011).

Key Takeaways

- Process drama provides an innovative framework for simultaneously learning languages and developing intercultural sensitivity.
- Through dramatic activities, participants spontaneously acquire language and explore cultural norms, thereby developing empathy, critical thinking, and the ability to adapt to different contexts.
- The facilitator plays a key role in creating a safe and supportive environment, adapting activities to the needs of participants, and encouraging creativity and collaboration.
- Process drama activities, such as simulations of international events or cultural festivals, can be adapted to different age groups.
- Key challenges include language barriers, lack of engagement, and organisational complexity, while solutions focus on simplicity, clear objectives, the use of visual aids, and ensuring reflection after activities.

References and Further Reading

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