

# Theatre for All: Implementing ESL Pedagogy for Ontario's Drama Classrooms

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## ABSTRACT

At the crossroads of ESL education and drama there lies a relatively unexplored issue facing schools. Little research exists proposing and examining the efficacy of pedagogy designed to serve students without an English-as-a-first-language background. Through the lens of Ontario's education system wherein students of all language backgrounds are expected to learn together in subject classrooms, the impacts of existing ESL focused pedagogy were tested in this mixed environment. Using existing linguistic analysis techniques focused around rhythm and pause, the development of students' performance of dramatic text who followed this pedagogy was measured against a control group in an attempt to ascertain whether this pedagogy has merit in the classroom, and what still needs to be done to create more inclusive and effective drama classrooms in the province of Ontario.

## Introduction

School demographics in Ontario reveal that, as of 2020, 25% of students do not speak English as their first language (Government of Ontario, 2020). These students, scattered across schools in the province, are classified by the Ministry of Education (MoE) as *English Language Learners* (ELLs). Found in 63% of the province's elementary schools and 58% of secondary schools, ELLs are broken into two major sub classifications: (1) *English Second Language* students (ESLs) who have grade-appropriate language proficiency in their first language, and (2) *English Literacy Development* students who do not (People for Education, 2017; Government of Ontario Ministry of Education [GOME], 2007a). While the MoE does provide a curriculum for the development of language skills, an emphasis is placed on cross-curricular learning in an effort to teach practical applications of the English language (GOME, 2005a). Consequently, ELLs across the province are thrust into subject classes, expected to thrive in classroom environments with *English as a First Language* students (EFLs) as their peers. While some pedagogical strategies are woven into the MoE's publications on ESLs<sup>1</sup>, some subject-specific skills remain unaddressed (GOME, 2007a). This curriculum reveals a marked lack of learning strategies to develop speaking skills as well as skills relating to the dramatic arts. Dramatic arts teachers therefore are necessitated to go elsewhere to learn how to create an inclusive and effective learning environment for all of their students.

## Literature Review

Understanding why drama teachers lack essential knowledge to meet the needs of ESLs in their classrooms and how to address this issue requires an understanding of design principles for subject classes inclusive of all language

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<sup>1</sup> The key strategies identified by the MoE were focused around leveraging visuals, guided reading techniques, strategies for introducing novel vocabulary, frameworks for writing, ways to decipher difficult texts (GOME, 2007a).

backgrounds, knowledge of research on ESL-focused drama pedagogy, and techniques by which the efficacy of these existing approaches could be measured. This understanding was developed through a review of relevant literature in the fields of education, drama pedagogy and linguistic analysis.

## Ontario Reports

Because Ontario's education system mixes students of varied academic backgrounds into the same classes, the MoE has released reports on the effective use of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and other educational classroom methods. While these reports focus broadly on students with special education needs, they acknowledge that ELLs also require additional classroom support. The Ministry's first report on the subject, *Education for All* (2005), offered resources to help K-6 teachers adapt novel educational strategies in their classrooms, but its scope was narrow, covering only literacy and arithmetic (GOME, 2005b).

In 2012, the Council of Ontario Directors of Education commissioned a report from Boston College on the efficacy and application of *Education for All*. Coexisting in the study are quantitatively driven data regarding the achievement gap<sup>2</sup>, impacting students with learning challenges, and qualitative data regarding the implementation of modern learning techniques. A willingness to adapt one's teaching style to reflect new pedagogical approaches and the ability to personalize learning to the unique needs of the class are cited as important milestones that the province's teachers must achieve to create systemic change (Council of Ontario Directors of Education, 2012).

With a message of personalized learning and adaptiveness, this report informs the Ministry's most recent publication *Learning for All* (2013), covering K-12 education. It breaks UDL down into five key components, each meant to identify the core tenets of a curriculum that is universally accessible: "universality and equity", "flexibility and inclusiveness", "appropriately designed spaces", "simplicity", and "physical and emotional safety" (GOME, 2012, pp. 14-15). These principles contribute to "inquiry-based learning," which is a best-practice learning model meant to put students at the forefront of their own learning (GOME, 2012).

## ESLs and Drama

### *ESL Drama Pedagogy*

Drama pedagogy is well-documented as an effective means to aid in educating ESLs. These techniques are most often applied to students in younger grades, wherein the efficacy of performing arts learning interventions and widespread use of performing arts across ESL classrooms have been analyzed. A study by Greenfader, Brouillante, and Farkas (2015) found that interventional performing arts learning significantly aids in developing oral communication skills. In a separate study, Greenfader and Brouillette (2013), examine the qualitative impacts of this programming, revealing both long-term vocabulary retention and comfort with classroom participation as the positive impacts of this model. These findings are echoed by Gao and Dowdy (2014), who reaffirm the benefits of drama pedagogy for student engagement, the development of holistic language skills, and the ability to provide ESL students with skill-appropriate challenges.

While performing arts is a mechanism allowing English language to be effectively taught to ESL students, performance-related skills for ESL students are seldom the focus of existing designs. This is emphasized by Wahl (2015) who, in her qualitative review of dramatic pedagogy, acknowledges that "there has been little written about the practice of teaching specific theatrical skills to new language learners" (p. 38). One of the few pieces of literature

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<sup>2</sup> Achievement gaps are instances where a group of students with some relevant identifying trait underperform compared to their peers. The study commissioned by the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (2012) focused on the achievement gap impacting students with learning challenges compared with similar students who did not.

specifically addressing this issue is Hardison and Sonchaeng's (2005) review of methods for the development of ESL students' oral skills through voice training. Though language learning is an element of the design, their 8 modules for drama education focus specifically on performance skills. With its adaptable design, it acknowledges itself to be suitable for a variety of academic schedules and course structures.

### *Shakespeare in the Classroom*

Shakespeare's works offer unique benefits for ESL students in dramatic and linguistic contexts. Cushman's (2011) year-long study of Shakespearean drama-focused literacy pedagogy in ESL classrooms saw students more effectively engaging with linguistic and non-linguistic meanings in the text, gaining an increased willingness to take academic risks, and mastering knowledge application. Germane to that, Straughan's (1996) use of Shakespeare in their classroom aided in the creation of safe academic environments where an increase in the independence and self-esteem of the students was noted.

Concomitantly, Shakespeare's work is found both directly and indirectly in the curriculum of English and drama courses across Canada. While some provinces require Shakespeare's work to be taught in English classrooms, Ontario does not specify texts in their curriculum, but rather suggests Shakespearean texts to address specific themes within the curriculum (Colarusso, 2017). Similarly, the curriculum for Ontario's 10th, 11th, and 12th-grade drama courses recommend Shakespearean texts to cover seven distinct themes across these three courses (GOME, 2010a; GOME, 2010b). Clearly, students will, with good reason, continue to encounter the dramatic works of Shakespeare in secondary school classrooms in Ontario.

### *Prosody in Performance*

In the field of linguistics, prosody comprises the elements of suprasegmental speech which is frequently broken down into categories such as intonation, rhythm, stress, tempo, and pause. Prosody is used as a means to find emergent trends in performance, analyze divergence in spoken language not associated with word choice, and ultimately, assess spoken performance.

The work of Miller and Carter-Ényì (2018) analyzes Shakespearean performance on a larger diachronic scope. Their analysis ultimately points to the changing nature of performances of Shakespearean monologues over time, implementing standard measurements for tempo and timing, while a unique analysis technique for rhythm was used (Miller & Carter-Ényì, 2018). A Normalized Pairwise Variability Index (nPVI) was drawn from elsewhere in the field of linguistics to capture the idiosyncratic nature of rhythm that is otherwise difficult to capture. A similar measurement of rhythm is found in Bunta and Ingram's (2007) research on vocalic patterns in Bilingual speakers in the Southern United States. While not oriented to the dramatic arts in the same manner, it demonstrated the viability of a Pairwise Variability Index with those whose primary language is not English.

Similar research by Schmidt and Post (2015) employed the use of PRAAT software to quantify durational markings, as well as the length and stress related to each syllable. Benjamin & Schwanenflugel (2010) use similar software in oral reading contexts, measuring the change of fundamental frequency at the end of phrases, linguistic contours, and pausing, the former of which fall into the realm of intonation. Schwanenflugel's other research, with Kuhn and Meisinger (2010), sum up the usage of prosody in the field, defining it as "the rise and falls of pitch, rhythm and stress — the pausing, lengthening, and elision surrounding certain words and phrases that is found in the pull of linguistic communication" (p. 234). They recognize prosody as an ideal and emerging tool in contexts such as the classroom that offers a precise mode of comparison as it relates to the distinct features of speaking patterns. Though not all directly applicable, this form of analysis encapsulates a wide range of tools from which to draw.

### *The Gap*

In Ontario, educational theory is preached while specific pedagogy is lacking. While techniques exist for the effective instruction of ELL students, they focus primarily on aiding teachers in non-performance disciplines. While the field does provide specific drama pedagogy, it provides a curriculum focused on classes composed solely of ELL students.

In fitting with the principles of UDL, these pedagogical approaches should be effective for all but have yet to be tested in mixed environments resembling Ontario's classrooms. As such, a quantitative analysis of the impact of these strategies in classrooms with students of mixed language backgrounds would uncover their effectiveness in Ontario's drama classrooms. Consequently, this study will analyze the extent to which theatre pedagogy designed for ELLs impacts the development of ESL and EFL students' performance of text within Ontario's first-year drama classrooms.

## Methods

Understanding that a method considering both prior language background and a pedagogical treatment option was necessary, a combined experimental and Ex Post Facto design was applied. This design finds the "extent to which specific independent variables", of which there are multiple, "possibly affect the dependent variable", that being the treatment options (Leedy, Ormrod & Johnson, 2019, p. 133). It allowed ESL or EFL status — being pre-existing variables — to coexist with pedagogy-based treatments. Using secondary school students at an Ontario boarding and day independent high school, existing ESL-focused pedagogy was utilized as the development of students' dramatic performance was monitored over a three-week period.

### Considering Drama Pedagogy

Hardison and Sonchaeng's 2005 study on voice training and the development of dramatic performance for ESLs offered a basis on which this study's teaching schedule is designed. Ideally, a complete recreation of their modules up to 2.7, "Dramatic Monologues", would have been implemented; however, due to the limitations presented by COVID-19, only activities that could be facilitated in an online learning environment could be used (Hardison & Sonchaeng, 2005). Thus, modules 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.6.1, and 2.6.2 were removed as they all required the use of physical space or gestural acting (Hardison & Sonchaeng, 2005). Further, modules 2.4 and 2.5 were removed as singing was prohibited for students living on campus. Utilizing the remainder of modules, a schedule was designed to best mimic the descriptions of Hardison and Sonchaeng (2005). The approach of this study does not represent a complete departure from Hardison and Sonchaeng's (2005) ELL-focused vision, though, as they acknowledge these techniques to be useful in drama courses and that "they are adaptable for different environments, and different learners at various levels of proficiency" (p. 594). Hardison and Sonchaeng's work is unique in its unified view of a complete curriculum, so it was considered as the sole focus when evaluating the impact of drama pedagogy.

### Theoretical Design

As these techniques would be best applied to students entering ninth-grade drama programs with limited experience, participants were selected from the ninth and tenth grades<sup>3</sup>. Participants were recruited directly from ENG1D and ENG2D<sup>4</sup> classes, as these classes are compulsory subjects. This allowed a message from the researcher to be shared in a more direct environment in hopes to prompt more participation. Due to the low number of ESL students in regular-

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<sup>3</sup> At the school in which the research took place, students were required to complete two fine arts courses over their high school career. As such, a reasonable contingent of 10th grade students registered for 9th grade fine arts courses such as drama after deciding not to pursue the arts discipline they chose the year prior.

<sup>4</sup> Students in Ontario must take an English course corresponding to each grade level in high school. While in the province, students may elect to take their English course at an academic or applied level, at the school where the study was carried out, the only options for grade 9 and 10 students were academic level courses whose course codes, respectively, are ENG1D and ENG2D (Government of Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007b).

stream English classrooms, students also were recruited in a similar fashion within the ESL-only classes. All teachers who taught the specified classes were contacted (Appendix A) and asked to show a video from the researcher explaining the project and its requirements (Appendix B). Interested students filled out a demographics form forwarded to them by their teachers (Appendix C). Participants who had taken a 10th-grade dramatic arts course, had participated in three or more dramatic productions outside of the classroom, or had studied or read three or more Shakespearean plays (an excerpt from which would be used in the experiment) were rejected<sup>5</sup>. The eligible volunteers in the two existing groups — ESLs and non-ESLs — were each randomly assigned to the pedagogy group (p-group) or the non-pedagogy group (c-group) so that each group would have close to an equal number of participants. Throughout the research process they were to follow two divergent schedules as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

Pedagogy Schedule Over Four Sessions

Session Number	Time Commitment: Pedagogy (Experimental)	Time Allocation: Pedagogy (Experimental)	Time Commitment: Non-Pedagogy (Control)	Time Allocation: Non-Pedagogy (Control)
1	25 minutes	10 mins: Zoom Orientation session where the nature and commitment of the project is explained. Time given to record monologue 15 mins: Zoom class — a group-focused lesson on skill building for dramatic monologue based on Hardison and Sonchaeng’s (2005) work. This lesson covers modules 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.2.1, and 2.2.2. The lesson plan for this session is found in Appendix D.	10 minutes	10 mins: Zoom Orientation session where the nature and commitment of the project is explained. Time given to record monologue.
Requested 1 Hour of Practicing Monologue				
2	~35 minutes	10 mins: Recording monologue ~25 mins: Zoom class — a group-focused lesson on skill building for dramatic monologue based on Hardison and Sonchaeng’s (2005) work. This lesson covers modules 2.2.3, 2.3.3. The lesson plan for this session is found in Appendix E and the participant worksheets are found in Appendix F.	5 minutes	5 mins: Recording at any convenient time of the day.

<sup>5</sup> These considerations were chosen specifically to avoid overexposure to the text that would be used as well as overexposure to acting techniques similar to those in the pedagogy schedule, ensuring an approximately even starting point for each student.

Requested 1 Hour of Practicing Monologue				
3	10-15 minutes	10 mins: Recording monologue 15 mins: Zoom class — a group-focused lesson on dramatic monologue based on Hardison and Sonchaeng’s (2005) work. This lesson covers module 2.7 that focuses directly on monologue. The lesson plan for this session is found in Appendix G and the participant worksheets are found in Appendix H.	5 minutes	5 mins: Recording at any convenient time of the day.
Requested 1 Hour of Practicing Monologue				
4	5 minutes	5 mins: Recording at any convenient time of the day. Participants were not required to join an online session.	5 minutes	5 mins: Recording at any convenient time of the day.

## Implementation

After rejecting ineligible respondents, the remainder were contacted to confirm their interest in the project. The resultant test group was four, split evenly between ESL and EFL students. Participants were assigned numbers to be used henceforth in the research: participant 1 was an EFL student in the p-group, participant 2 was an ESL student in the p-group, participant 3 was an EFL student in the c-group, and participant 4 was an ESL student in the c-group. Each participant was given a consent form<sup>6</sup> (Appendix I) to sign. Through the school’s information technology office, students were given access to Adobe Audition and were asked to download it.

Utilizing the Zoom platform, all participants were gathered and were oriented on the use of the recording software. Subsequently, all participants were given a fifteen-minute period in which to record a baseline performance of a monologue from Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, (Appendix J) chosen with consideration for Ontario’s drama curriculum and in collaboration with the head of the school’s drama department. Participants emailed their recordings directly to the researcher, after which both groups were reminded to spend an hour rehearsing between sessions, and the c-group was allowed to leave. The p-group then engaged in their first pedagogy session with the researcher, focusing on enunciation, pronunciation, breathing, and relaxation.

Seven days after, all participants were asked to submit another recording of the same monologue, after which p-group participants engaged in their second pedagogy session. The seven day gap reflected the need for participants to have time to rehearse independently between recordings and accommodated the participants’ availability over the research period. Sessions henceforth were spaced in the same manner. This lesson focused on pausing, employing the “to be or not to be” speech from *Hamlet* as a tool for education wherein students were to indicate on a written copy of the monologue (Appendix G) where the actor in a professional production of the play chose to pause. This monologue was suggested for use in Hardison and Sonchaeng’s (2005) report.

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<sup>6</sup> Initial drafts of the consent form were rejected by the IRB due to language complexity. In response, the consent form was edited in collaboration with the school’s ELL instructor to ensure it was written at an appropriate reading level.

An additional seven days elapsed until the final pedagogy session was administered, focusing on an overall view of performing and work with the provided text. Before the session occurred, students in both groups were once again asked to record their performance of the piece and send it to the researcher. The role of this session was to apply Hardison and Sonchaeng's curriculum in a manner that would make a meaningful and direct link to their performances of the given text.

Five days afterward, all participants were asked to perform a final time and submit recordings. Following that, they were given compensation in the form of gift cards. All recordings were transferred from the researcher's email to their Google Drive.

## Analysis and Results

To quantify dramatic performances for relevant comparison, measures of prosody were drawn from previous research in an attempt to synthesize various methods of analysis into a synergistic design that gives consideration to both phonated and non-phonated elements of performance. While most statistical models are not able to be constructed with the available data, trends among the group could be analyzed to ascertain some findings that may be relevant and could serve as a preliminary understanding of what ultimately may be possible. Rhythm and pause were used as the two key measurable elements as, from all available measures of prosody, they were the easiest to quantify while ensuring that variation of speech patterns within each performance and between performances would be represented.

### Rhythm

Rhythm approaches speech in a manner that considers both individual phonetic segments and the relationship between adjacent phonetic segments, yielding measurements commenting on the performance of each word and the text as a whole. Based on Miller and Carter-Ényì's (2018) work with Shakespearean monologues, an nPVI was applied alongside a mean and standard deviation, isolating syllables within each individual performance of the texts. Melodyne software<sup>7</sup> has increasingly been used in various applications in linguistics and was leveraged here to segment the performances by syllable (Miller & Carter-Ényì, 2018).

Once the participant recordings were added into the software (Appendix K), it was apparent that the segmentation generated by Melodyne encountered three key challenges:

1. General Inaccuracy — While for some performances, the segmentation was generated nearly perfectly, the software often lacked the ability to separate syllables spoken in rapid succession.
2. Melded Pronunciation — In some cases, contractions were used by performers in inappropriate scenarios or words were fused together to form colloquial pronunciations.
3. Display Errors — While all recordings from EFL performers displayed as they should based on the work of Miller and Carter-Ényì, both ESL participants had one or more recording display in a different way<sup>8</sup>.

While Miller and Carter-Ényì (2018) make reference to MATLAB software, capable of translating files exported from Melodyne to usable data values, the inaccuracies encountered with Melodyne software<sup>9</sup> made MATLAB ultimately

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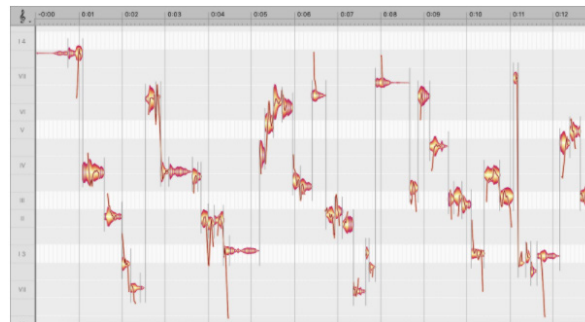
<sup>7</sup> Melodyne software is a music editing and pitch correction software that has, more recently, been implemented by a variety of researchers in multiple aspects of spoken-voice analysis (Miller and Carter-Ényì, 2018).

<sup>8</sup> The display error appeared to have been a result of the software misinterpreting the recordings as music. The same display error occurred across three of participant 2's recordings and one of participant 4's recordings.

<sup>9</sup> The aforementioned challenges with Melodyne represented a particular problem as a segment that spanned more than one syllable would produce large outlying values that would be influential in the data set.

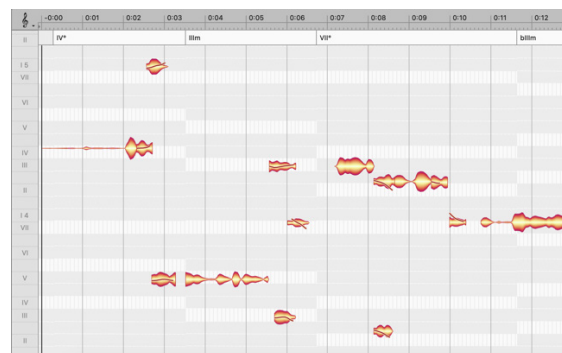
unviable as an analysis solution. While some degree of inaccuracy would be present due to human error as a result of manual analysis, it was decided that this method would likely yield better data.

Data were generated in two stages, first recording the duration of each syllable in deciseconds<sup>10</sup>, then continuing with pairwise comparisons of adjacent syllable durations. Melodyne's auto segmentation feature was still useful for manual data entry, and throughout the analysis process, it was used as a measure of syllable boundaries in the absence of clear issues. The duration of syllables were recorded to the half-decisecond as visual analysis was unable to be more precise. Figure 2 shows a segment of participant 1's first recording in Melodyne — an example of proper segmentation.



**Figure 2.** Melodyne Waveform Analysis for Participant 1's First Recording

Similar strategies were used in all but three recordings (Appendix L) that displayed in a different manner for unidentifiable reasons. In these cases, the recording was reverted to the raw waveform in Melodyne and syllables were approximated using auditory analysis. The three recordings in question displayed in a similar manner to Figure 3 and were ultimately changed to display in their original form resembling Figure 4.



**Figure 3.** Example of Improper Audio Display in Melodyne

*Note.* Dissimilarities with properly displayed recordings include a lack of auto-segmentation and the presence of automatic pitch correction

<sup>10</sup> A decisecond is a unit of measurement representing  $10^{-1}$  seconds. It was chosen as the most appropriate form of measurement as Melodyne visually divides seconds into 10 parts, or deciseconds.





**Figure 4** Example of Improper Audio Display Reformatted to Original Form

From the raw data (Appendix M), the mean and standard deviation of syllables within each individual performance of the text were calculated. In accordance with Miller and Carter-Ényì's study (2005), the nPVI score was found by “(1) calculat[ing] [the] difference between each pair of successive measurements, (2) tak[ing] the absolute value of the difference and (3) divid[ing] it by the mean of the pair” then multiplying “the mean of all pairwise comparisons [...] by 100” (Miller & Carter-Ényì, 2018, p. 62). To streamline the process, the result of the most frequent pairwise comparisons within the data range were consolidated into a matrix (Appendix N)

The mean, standard deviation, and nPVI scores for each participant’s recordings are laid out in Table 1. Figure 5 shows the change in nPVI scores for each participant by session.

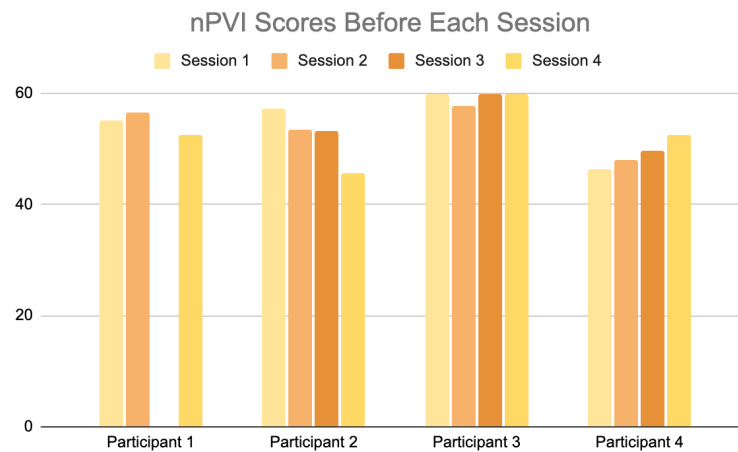
**Table 1.** Rhythm-Related Values for All Recordings

Participant	$\sigma$	$\mu$	nPVI
Session 1			
1	2.1963	2.711207	55.03
2	1.1031	2.39916	57.31
3	1.364	2.63333	59.78
4	0.9345	2.346491	46.29
Session 2			
1	1.3335	2.570796	56.52
2	1.1704	2.723214	53.4
3	1.459	2.50892	57.6
4	0.9384	2.328828	48.09
Session 3			
1 <sup>a</sup>			
2	1.0432	2.380342	53.16
3	1.353	2.401786	59.74
4	0.8949	2.385964	49.65
Session 4			
1	1.2149	2.565789	52.53
2	0.9063	2.445946	45.54

3	1.3791	2.395652	59.85
4	1	2.226087	52.38

Note. Standard deviation and mean are measured in deciseconds. nPVI does not have an associated unit of measurement.

<sup>a</sup>No data values exist for this row because the participant submitted an incomplete recording



**Figure 5.** Change in nPVI Score by Participant

The data overall do not point toward one cohesive trend associated with language status or involvement in the p-group. Mean scores tended to stay in a relatively compact range for all participants with the exception of participant 4 for whom the data across sessions is consistently lower than their peers. However, as illustrated in Figure 5, participant 2 and participant 4, both of whom were ESLs, seem to have nPVI scores that change in a significant way in opposite directions. Conversely, participant 1's values declined marginally in the direction of participant 2's values, both of whom were in the p-group, while participant 3 has scores that seem to have changed insignificantly.

## Pause

Pause is a specific skill taught in Hardison and Sonchaeng's (2005) pedagogy design intended both to give ESL students context on English speaking conventions and to align student performance with prescribed pausing and meter in dramatic texts. In professional performance, the assumption can be made that instances of pause are intentional. The same cannot be said of all student performances, as pause can either be a result of a conscious choice or difficulty with the text. As such, pause has been divided into two categories intended to capture both of these elements: *performance pause*, which will capture all pause within a performance, and *ungrammatical pause*, which will capture those instances where pause is associated with performance mistakes or uncertainty.

Measurements of performance pause aligned with Miller and Carter-Ényì's (2018) methods, utilizing the segmentation generated through the measurement of rhythm. Acknowledging that the same limitations present in the auto segmentation for rhythm would be present in this application of segmentation, the manual segmentation was used. Performance pause was measured as the percentage of the performance duration not occupied by phonation of the text; instances not occupied by phonation of the text included attempts at words or syllables that are later corrected as they do not represent the intended performance of the text.

The sum of the duration of all syllables in the manual segmentation of each performance was subtracted from the total duration of those respective performances, dividing that value by the total duration of those respective performances (Miller & Carter-Ényi, 2018). The total duration of each performance was defined as the time between the first recorded syllable and the last recorded syllable. The resultant values were multiplied by 100 and expressed as percentages (Miller & Carter-Ényi, 2018).

Ungrammatical pause was measured in a manner consistent with the research of Benjamin and Schwanenflugel (2010), identifying instances where pausing was inappropriate and comparing it to those instances where it was. Aligning with their work, grammatical pausing encapsulated pauses associated with “major syntactic boundaries, [...] breaks between items in a list, and phrasal boundaries at which the reader might reasonably pause as a result of a minor topic shift or transition”, while ungrammatical pausing encapsulated all other forms of pausing (Benjamin & Schwanenflugel, 2010, p. 394).

Meaningful data values were ascertained by finding the ratio of ungrammatical pauses to total pauses. These ratios were constructed by tallying the instances of each type of pause (Appendix O) rather than their durations, as ungrammatical pauses used to parse out words or sentences could be expected to have longer durations than those which were intentional, ultimately resulting in values that are less useful in illustrating how each participant used pausing. Benjamin and Schwanenflugel’s (2010) research suggests that those participants whose ratio was close to 0 spoke more fluently and with more intentionality in their use of pause compared to those with higher values.

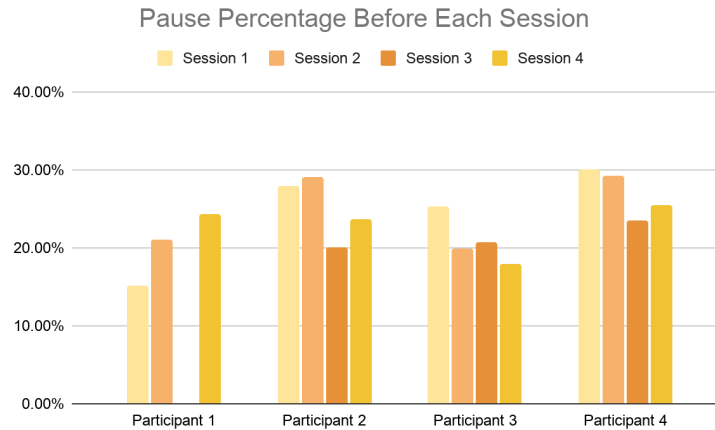
Table 2 shows the data on both performance pause and ungrammatical pause from each participant over the four sessions. Figure 6 shows trends in pause percentage over the four sessions.

**Table 2.** Pause-Related Values for All Recordings

Participant	Pause Percentage	Ungrammatical to Grammatical Ratio
Session 1		
1	2.1963	2.711207
2	1.1031	2.39916
3	1.364	2.63333
4	0.9345	2.346491
Session 2		
1	1.3335	2.570796
2	1.1704	2.723214
3	1.459	2.50892
4	0.9384	2.328828
Session 3		
1 <sup>a</sup>		
2	1.0432	2.380342
3	1.353	2.401786
4	0.8949	2.385964
Session 4		

1	1.2149	2.565789
2	0.9063	2.445946
3	1.3791	2.395652
4	1	2.226087

Note. Ungrammatical to Grammatical Ratio compares instances of pauses of their respective types  
<sup>a</sup>No data values exist for this row because the participant submitted an incomplete recording



**Figure 6.** Change in Pause Percentage by Participant

Participants 2, 3, and 4 show a marked decline in pause percentage by the third recording, suggesting the presence of some lurking variable that impacted this choice among this group; text familiarity may have had an impact. Although the majority of pausing in this group was grammatical, pauses may have been lengthened in earlier recordings as a means to parse out the upcoming unfamiliar text. As this happened across participants in the p-group and c-group it is unlikely this has to do with the pedagogy or the lack thereof.

Participant 1 deviated from the other participants, showing a consistent upward trend in pause percentage. Though the absence of data for the third session due to an incomplete submission on the part of the participant renders it difficult to draw an inference on what may have occurred, this participant showed much higher ungrammatical to grammatical pause ratios than the remaining participants. Outside preparation may have played a role in this, as though participants were instructed to spend an hour between sessions rehearsing, it was impossible to ensure this occurred.

### Overarching Trends

The data from the two metrics used do not bear strong similarities to each other, thereby not suggesting strong associations with each other. While nPVI yielded results that were somewhat differentiated between the p-group and c-group, with mean segmentation scores decreasing constantly across nearly all participants, pause percentage scores lacked this clear division. These results are somewhat counterintuitive, as pause was a skill directly taught to the p-group in pedagogy sessions while rhythm was not a skill directly addressed in the pedagogy.

## Discussion

The data generated for rhythm revealed relative consistency among EFLs while ESLs showed relatively dramatic shifts. What this may suggest is that ESLs are more prone to dramatically changing their performance of text, even if that change is simply for the sake of change. Decreasing nPVI values exclusively between members of the p-group suggests, then, that the pedagogy may have similar impacts on students from different language backgrounds. Conversely, pause offered limited impactful insight. What is perhaps more relevant is whether change occurred along the lines of language background. While rhythm offered hope that this pedagogy has similar impacts for ESL and EFL students, pause yielded one participant with a trend unique among their peers, either suggesting some confounding variable that lead to their unique values or some impact from the pedagogy that was not experienced by the p-group EFL student.

Hardison and Sonchaeng's pedagogy ultimately fits into UDL frameworks imperfectly. The strategies employed are conducive to "flexibility and inclusiveness", "simplicity", and "appropriately designed spaces", giving teachers a great deal of agency over their classrooms, the texts that are used, and a clear curriculum that could meet the most challenged students at their proficiency level; however, "universality and equity" and "physical and emotional safety" may be of concern when the focus on language-acquisition through drama may fail to fully engage EFL students and the performing-first mentality of the design may make ESL students uncomfortable through the process (GOME, 2012, pp. 14-15). While Hardison and Sonchaeng's design in its entirety may not be a perfect fit for Ontario's classrooms, elements of its design closely associated with UDL best-practice could be applied individually.

The findings did not suggest the pedagogy necessarily attained its fundamental goal of improving dramatic performance for ESL students nor its goal in this study to equitably and positively impact all students irregardless of language background; still, the data offers a larger commentary on the reality that Hardison and Sonchaeng's work stands relatively isolated in its field, demonstrating that if it is truly ineffective for Onatrio's classroom model, there is a need for new pedagogy. That being illustrated, the results of this study should be interpreted as being inconclusive more so than the pedagogy being downright ineffective.

## Future Research

An effective solution for the overarching problem encountered by drama classes with students of mixed language backgrounds should be approached in the future from three angles:

1. Comprehensive experimentation on existing literature — Inherently, there are qualitative aspects of drama, so a qualitative approach to similar pedagogy may unveil benefits to existing pedagogy techniques that this study's quantitative approach did not capture.
2. Testing unconventional techniques — The most significant challenge to broaching this area of field is the lack of directly related literature. That being said, relevant pedagogy for this instructional model may exist in more populated areas of the field including EFL focused (standard) drama pedagogy or ESL language-acquisition pedagogy that include elements of drama.
3. Novel design — Applying new techniques designed specifically for this classroom model may offer the best chance of creating a maximally useful curriculum for Ontario's drama classrooms. With the guidance of teaching models in the province, a ground-up design offers a more direct solution for this issue.

## Conclusion

Overall, this study identified both an area in which existing ESL-focused pedagogy prompted parallel development of dramatic performance: rhythm, and an area which it did not: pause. Though limited by its sample size and ability to complete all facets of the pedagogy in the suggested timeframe, the research offers preliminary results as to what the

impacts of this pedagogy may be. Drama proves unique in the particular skill set needed to be successful that may not permeate all types of English-language or subject classrooms. Specific strategies cannot necessarily be recommended to drama teachers instructing classrooms with students from mixed language backgrounds; however, further investigation of novel and existing pedagogical strategies for this particular demographic would be relevant. A broader introspective reflection on behalf of the Ministry of Education, too, would be significant in assessing whether all teachers in the province are provided adequate direction for teaching subject classes where standard ESL pedagogy may not be applicable.

## Limitations

Throughout the process of design and implementation, a variety of factors influenced the project in manners that yielded a weaker result than intended. The COVID-19 pandemic loomed over the project throughout its rollout. The first half of the academic year was in-person; thus, initial designs utilized in-class learning. However, changing regulations and a province-wide lockdown weeks before the project's start date resulted in the use of a contingency plan. From initial design, it was understood that the school where the sample was taken would not yield an ideal number of participants, but due to the inability to gather participants from other organizations together in a physical space, this model represented the best available scenario where an in-person design could be carried out. The chosen design was therefore primarily a reaction to moving to online learning during the provincial lockdown, and while its online nature could have facilitated out-of-organization participants, the study was already well underway. Were this experiment to be recreated, in-person learning, using all available modules with more participants, would be ideal to recreate the foundational research and to draw more meaningful inference from the data. To that effect, a longer time frame would allow for a longer-term application of the pedagogical strategies and would have better captured the original vision

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