

# Teachers' expanding roles and tasks: Integrating embodied and arts-based language pedagogies in physical education for cultural and linguistic awareness

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*Developing linguistically and culturally aware pedagogies is essential in increasingly diverse countries, such as Finland, thus needing more attention in teachers' preservice education. This article focuses on physical education (PE) students' views on their future profession and how these views may expand toward cultural and linguistic awareness. In addition, it explores how Finnish as a second language (F2L) teachers view their roles and tasks and how they apply embodied and arts-based pedagogies in their language classes. The notion of expanding professionalism is a central concept in this study. It entails attending to teachers' social responsibilities. In addition, the theoretical framework includes a discussion of embodied pedagogy and language as a multimodal phenomenon. The context is a mandatory equality course in a PE teacher program at a Finnish university. The course included fieldwork where the PE students practiced embodied and arts-based language pedagogies. Drawing mainly from approaches to performative writing, the authors approach the research material and present their findings in narrative form. Based on the study, both PE students and F2L teachers appear to be aware of the need to expand their professional competences and consider embodied and arts-based approaches to be important in teaching language. However, future teachers need courage and skill in embodied and multimodal pedagogies. Moreover, they expressed an awareness of teachers' social responsibilities within the increasingly complex societal situation. The authors conclude that embodied and arts-based approaches are key to developing culturally and linguistically aware PE. Such approaches have great potential for educating all future teachers.*

*Keywords: physical education, language learning, social justice, expanding professionalism, Finnish as a second language, embodied pedagogy*

## 1 Introduction

Developing linguistically and culturally aware pedagogies is essential in increasingly diverse countries such as Finland. Cultural and linguistic awareness is thus an important element of teachers' professional competence and preservice education. Also, the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education of Finland (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2014) emphasizes that all adults in a

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eISSN: 1457-9863

Publisher: University of Jyväskylä, Language Campus

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<https://apples.journal.fi>

<https://doi.org/10.47862/apples.142971>

school community are considered linguistic models and teachers of the language of the subject they teach.

Physical education (PE) and dance involve social and embodied interaction and may have great potential to foster social justice in linguistically and culturally diverse contexts. Social justice refers to, for example, equal access to educational activities, regardless of the learner's cultural or religious background, language proficiency, and physical abilities (Harrison & Clark, 2016). In linguistically and culturally aware PE, language learning may occur alongside movement activities as embodied learning. In embodied learning, the learners become engaged as a whole and connected with their social and material surroundings. (Anttila, 2018; Anttila & Svendler Nielsen, 2019)

In the present article, we focus on PE students' views on their future profession and how their views may expand toward cultural and linguistic awareness and social justice. To broaden and complement this perspective, we will also explore how Finnish as a second language teachers view their roles and tasks, especially how they apply embodied and arts-based pedagogies in their language classes. This study is part of the ELLA research project coordinated by the University of Arts Helsinki. The four-year project (2021–2024) aims to broaden the conceptions of language and learning; it investigates how embodied language learning through the arts may contribute to renewing pedagogical practices in various educational settings. The project also aims to ignite a critical discussion about how educational structures could be more responsive to societal changes.

According to the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education of Finland (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2014), the main goal of Finnish PE is to support pupils in adopting a physically active lifestyle, to enhance their overall well-being, and to promote equality, communality, and cultural diversity. The PE curriculum also emphasizes positive body image, bodily expression, and dance. Because the national curriculum does not include dance as an independent subject, dance is integrated into other subjects, most often in PE and music. Throughout the study, PE refers not only to sports and games, but also to creative movement, bodily expression, and dance.

## 2 Theoretical framework

Expanding professionalism is one of our study's key concepts, and we will discuss it shortly. We then shift to embodied pedagogy, a notion closely connected to embodied learning. Embodied pedagogy refers to a wide array of practices that holistically engage both the teacher and learners (Anttila & Svendler Nielsen, 2019; Dixon & Senior, 2011; Engelsrud & Markula, 2022). The third element in our theoretical framework is the conception of language as affective, embodied, relational, and collaborative (e.g., Kuby et al., 2019; Toohey, 2019), to which the multidisciplinary ELLA team and ELLA project are connected. Moreover, our perspective on language learning is influenced by the notion of (trans)linguaging (García, 2009; Li, 2018).

According to Gaunt and Westerland (2021), professionalism comprises a complex spectrum of interacting elements that separate professions from other occupations. Professionalism often involves the expertise acquired through higher education, work considered as service to society, high degrees of autonomy, and a sense of community between practitioners, including a well-developed code of ethics. Thus, professionalism refers to practitioners' conduct,

aims, values, and responsibilities, as well as their ongoing development, embracing both competencies and working practices. Discussing professionalism, especially in the field of music and acknowledging that similar demands concern other fields, Gaunt and Westerlund (2021) argue that “[...] contemporary societal contexts are bringing rapid changes, shaking established institutions, transforming cultures [...]” (p. xv) and that these conditions require that higher music education reconstructs its societal relationships. Moreover, Gaunt and Westerlund (2021) emphasize the increasing need to address professionals’ societal responsibility, values, ethics, and purposes. Thus, professionalism embraces “[...] stronger angles of social responsibility and moral purpose than before [...]” (Gaunt & Westerlund, 2021, p. xxiii).

In education, expanding professionalism encompasses new roles, tasks, identities, and contexts as well as curricular changes and reconsideration of pedagogical approaches. In practical fields, such as music, movement, and dance, the holistic, embodied, and personal nature of learning may require special attention to embodiment, emotions, and collaboration.

Sutela et al. (2021) argue that embodied pedagogical interaction is key to expanding professionalism in music and dance education; they emphasize the ability to interact responsively and spontaneously in new kinds of pedagogical situations and with diverse groups of learners. Our previous studies concur with this view (Siljamäki & Anttila, 2020, 2021). The importance of approaching pedagogical situations and each pupil individually instead of members of, for example, a religious or ethnic group is one of the main conclusions of our earlier research, where we focused on developing PE teacher students’ intercultural competence (Siljamäki & Anttila, 2021; see also Friedman & Berthoin Antal, 2005; Nastasi, 2017). As Sutela et al. (2021) claim, this ability requires heightened situational awareness, presence, and genuine interest to act in a way that promotes the good of the other (see also van Manen, 2015; Varela, 1999). Thus, teachers’ sensitivity to their embodied experiences and developing of their bodily awareness are important.

Although embodied learning emphasizes the learning process from the learners’ perspective, embodied pedagogy focuses on the interaction between the teacher and learners and among learners. In discussing embodied pedagogy, Dixon and Senior (2011) focus on the space around and between bodies, referring to this space as one of the locations of a pedagogic relationship. According to Dixon and Senior (2011), “[...] the pedagogic relationship is ‘matter-energy’ that joins teacher and learner” (p. 477). Our experience within dance and PE concurs. In such in-between spaces, energies, forces, affects, and emotions connect human bodies with material surroundings. The meanings created within such spaces are multimodal and prelinguistic; however, they may generate a sense of shared experience and intersubjective understanding and recognition (see also Anttila, 2018; Sutela et al., 2021). Embodied pedagogy involves closeness, even physical touch, and “[...] meetings between bodies that give rise to different feelings, sensations, and actions” that “[...] are anchored in sensuous, felt, and perceiving bodies” (Engelsrud & Markula, 2022, para 2). Thus, emotions and affects are integral to embodied pedagogy. When practicing embodied pedagogy, teachers – more or less consciously but actively – engage their bodies and encourage learners to become actively and holistically engaged. Embodied pedagogical interaction can also be defined through gestures, facial expressions, embodied expressivity, and a variety of physical activities, that is, movement. Thus, such interactions rely less on verbal instructions and communication. In embodied pedagogical

interaction, teachers use linguistic and communicative resources beyond verbal language (Anttila, 2015; Sutela et al., 2021). In our understanding, embodied pedagogies involve a wide conception of language and, within it, communicative tools and meaning-making practices that can be understood as (trans)languaging.

In the ELLA research project, language is broadly understood to consist of a wide array of semiotic resources or form–meaning constructions. These include linguistic, prosodic (relating to the rhythm and intonation of speech), interactional, nonverbal, graphic, pictorial, auditory, and artifactual resources (Douglas Fir Group, 2016). In addition to more widely acknowledged elements of language—morphemes, words, sentences, and discourses—semiotic resources include turn-taking patterns, nonverbal signs, gestures, facial expressions, body positioning, and action. The meaning potentials of all semiotic resources are connected to local contexts and values (Douglas Fir Group, 2016). For us, coming from movement and dance backgrounds, this broad conception of language resonates with both our own embodied experiences and our experiences as teacher educators and researchers; this aligns well with our aim to develop embodied pedagogies in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts. From these perspectives, PE and, within it, dance and various forms of bodily expression are fruitful contexts for further developing embodied language pedagogy.

In addition, employing the notion of (trans)languaging in PE may be helpful in understanding how embodied activity can support language learning. From a multimodal framework perspective, translanguaging refers to “the whole person acting using linguistic and other embodied forms of meaning-making” (García & Kleifgen, 2019, p. 5). This multimodal perspective on translanguaging “[...] allows us to account for all modes – words, gestures, images, sounds, and so forth – that are used as elements to make meaning” (García & Kleifgen, 2019, p. 5). Li (2018) asserts that translanguaging is an effective pedagogical approach, especially in contexts where the language used in instruction differs from the students’ mother tongue. Moreover, translanguaging emphasizes the linguistics of participation. It embraces embodied pedagogies, as it “[...] reconceptualizes language as a multilingual, multisemiotic, multisensory, and multimodal resource for sense- and meaning-making [...]” (Li, 2018, p. 22). In our view, the theoretical notions presented above form a cohesive framework for our inquiry as embodied pedagogy and translanguaging can be seen as elements in expanding both PE and language teachers’ professional competence and practices.

### **3 The research process**

#### *3.1 The overall aim of the study and research questions*

Our overall research interest is the potential of embodied and arts-based pedagogies in integrating language education and PE, including dance. We aim to understand how embodied and arts-based pedagogies may support teachers’ cultural and linguistic awareness and be an element of teachers’ expanding professionalism. More specifically, we focus on Finnish as a second language teachers’ and PE teachers’ views on embodied and arts-based pedagogies. By including Finnish as a second language (F2L) teachers who were part of the equality course(s), we sought to understand how the study participants, representing different professions and career stages, viewed their professional roles and tasks. To analyze the research material, we formulated the following

research questions: 1) What kinds of conceptions do Finnish as a second language teachers have regarding the significance of embodiment and movement in teaching language? 2) What kinds of conceptions do PE students have regarding their role as language teachers? To connect these conceptions to practice and “real” life, we also outline the pedagogical practices that F2L teachers implement in their work and the activities that PE students employed as part of the equality course. In this way, we have aimed to connect our study to one of the main research questions of the ELLA project: What is embodied language learning through the arts in practice?

When exploring these questions, we are interested in the possible similarities and differences in F2L teachers' and PE students' conceptions and practices, being aware of their highly different professional backgrounds and career stages. In defining *conception*, we lean on phenomenography, which focuses on how people perceive, understand, and experience phenomena and form conceptions of them (see Marton, 1994).

### 3.2 *Context of the study*

The context of this study is the teacher training program for PE teachers in Jyväskylä, Finland. The Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences is Finland's only university-level unit offering PE teacher education. The five-year program includes BA and MA degrees, which are required from all public school teachers in Finland. Within the second year of study, *Basics of Equality and Equity in Physical Education and Sport* (2 cr) and *Equality and Equity in Teaching Physical Education* (2 cr) extend understanding of pedagogy that promotes equality and inclusion, intercultural and multicultural issues, special needs in teaching, and sexual and gender diversity (University of Jyväskylä, 2020–2024a, 2020–2024b). The first author, Mariana, is one of the three teachers in these courses, focusing on interculturality and embodied language learning related to PE and dance. Embodied language learning includes both movement-based (e.g., games) and arts-based (e.g., creative movement and dance) activities. These courses have been designed to respond to Finland's increasingly diverse sociocultural environment. Although cultural and linguistic minorities have been a part of Finland for centuries, cultural and linguistic diversity has increased through immigration in recent decades, reaching a record high in 2022 (Statistics Finland, 2023). Moreover, awareness of other forms of diversity, including gender, sex, and dis/ability, has also grown, increasing the need to develop inclusive and socially just pedagogies.

Equality courses aim to educate PE teachers who are able to acknowledge and nurture various forms of diversity. The courses include lectures, embodied practices, group assignments, and discussions. The discussions focused, for example, on the students' privileged positions and the importance of meeting all pupils respectfully and equally. These discussions aimed to prevent categorizing and othering students, for example, from different cultural and language backgrounds.

*Equality and equity in teaching in PE*, which was implemented over the spring semester, also includes practical elements and fieldwork. Fieldwork allows students to meet culturally and linguistically diverse groups and initiates a learning process that prepares them to work with all cultural and linguistic minorities. The groups did not include cultural and linguistic minorities native to Finland, partly because such groups are not easily found in the Jyväskylä region.

Additionally, certain practical reasons affect which schools are able to cooperate with the university. This affects our research material to some extent, for example, when students refer to pupils with immigrant backgrounds in their responses. However, discussions during the course have covered issues regarding the cultural and linguistic diversity of Finnish minorities, including Swedish-speaking Finns, the Roma, the Ingerian Finns, and the indigenous people Sámi.

Next, we discuss our broader methodological approach and outline the practical steps we took.

### *3.3. Methodological approach*

In this study, our methodological approach draws mainly from performative writing (Pelias, 2005). This choice stems from acknowledging the increasing critique of qualitative research methodologies and the notions of data, interpretation, and analysis (e.g., Denzin, 2015; St. Pierre, 2021). Performative writing offers alternative modes of scholarly representation, features lived experience, allows complexities, and considers the world as not given but constructed, composed of multiple realities (Pelias, 2005). Performative writing relies on narrative plausibility and fidelity as it shapes everyday experience into “telling and moving tales” (Pelias, 2005, p. 418). Inspired by these ideas as well as Pelias’s (2005) note that “no writing occurs without context” (p. 420), we constructed two narratives and a story based on the research material.

Performative writers accept that “all representations of human experience are partial and partisan” (Pelias, 2005, p. 418). Thus, we consider Mariana’s entanglement with her students, with the interviewed F2L teachers and with her embodied pedagogical practice as both a university lecturer and a dance practitioner as a resource (Koro-Ljungberg, 2016). As a result, Mariana is not “[...] a critical, intentional subject standing separate and outside of ‘the data,’ digging behind or beyond or beneath it, to identify higher order meanings, themes or categories,” as MacLure (2013, p. 660) critically notes. Instead, we acknowledge her connectedness to the social and material environment and the context of the study as an asset. We will shortly describe in more detail the concrete ways Mariana has been – and is – a part of this complex network of relations.

Whereas some decades ago, this kind of entanglement was considered a problem in terms of “objectivity,” it is increasingly seen as a source for deeper understanding rooted in embodied and embedded or situated knowledge (Haraway, 2013). Our collaboration, through the second author’s – Eeva’s – outsider position, supports the possibility of challenging how Mariana approaches, reads, and organizes the data. We acknowledge that “thinking, seeing and knowing are never done in isolation but are always affected by different forces coming together [...]” (Lenz Taguchi & Palmer, 2013, p. 676).

As we have become increasingly aware of how societal structures, belief systems, and language intertwine in our conceptions and personal experiences, we have come to understand that our collaborative, interpretive process is a negotiation in which our views and thinking systems are thoroughly intertwined in crafting the research report. Therefore, “Our choices on what words we choose when describing our interpretations, and which citations from students’ accounts represent some part of social reality are influenced by what we already know, think, believe, and understand” (Siljamäki & Anttila, 2022, p. 4). Pelias (2005) expresses a similar view, stating that performative writers “do not believe that they can speak without speaking themselves, without carrying their own vested

interests, their own personal histories, their own philosophical and theoretical assumptions forward" (p. 419). In the following sections (3.4 and 4), we will explain the practical steps and methodological explorations in more detail.

### *3.4 Practical steps in acquiring and approaching the research material*

The participants in the current study, F2L teachers, PE students, and Mariana participated in the equality course in different roles. Thus, it seems important to outline how the course proceeded in terms of practical elements:

- First, in small groups, the PE students planned a two-hour embodied language learning workshop which they led to their peers in the equality course.
- Each PE student then led a two-hour workshop for culturally diverse Finnish language groups of young people and adults at the educational institute where two F2L teachers worked.
- In addition, the PE students attended two classes in the context of preparatory education for children, where they assisted the teacher (Mariana's colleague, one of the three teachers of the equality course) who taught PE and, within it, the Finnish language to pupils who had recently arrived in Finland.

We approached the students' conceptions through open-ended questions they responded to after the course via an online survey tool. The questions revolved around several topics, for example, how students perceive their role as future PE teachers in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts, how they view their skills to integrate language into PE through embodied approaches, and the role of the PE teacher as a language teacher. In addition, one question was about how students see their role and future work in integrating students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This question relates to the aim of supporting the cultural diversity stated in the PE curriculum (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2014). The total number of participants in the course was 72, 33 of whom responded to the questions. Eighteen respondents self-identified as females, and 15 self-identified as males. Their ages ranged from 20 to 39 years old, and they were from different regions of Finland. All were of Finnish origin.

Mariana then interviewed two experienced Finnish second language teachers (F2L). The F2L teachers taught 16- to 52-year-old Finnish language learners who attend compulsory basic education for adults. Both teachers had Finnish as a second language and literature teacher qualifications. One of the teachers had studied art and drama education, while the other had a study counselor's degree and training in a foreign language and classroom teaching. To protect the anonymity of the teachers, we will not disclose their ages or genders.

Mariana's observations and experiences, including discussions with the F2L teachers and the PE students during the course, supplemented the research material. To document her observations and experiences, she has, based on her recollections during the course, written a personal log covering the practical phase of the equality course. Moreover, Mariana's professional experience as a dancer and dance educator intertwines with her work as a researcher; her artistic activity and art-based orientation to her work influence how she supervises the PE students and approaches research, including analysis of the material and the

whole writing process. As discussed earlier, we see her intertwinement, or entanglement, as a source of depth and richness instead of bias (Koro-Ljungberg, 2016). To highlight this, she has tied her observations and experiences, participants' accounts, and reflections on them into a story depicting how students' practical work evolved and developed throughout the course. This story will be presented in section 4.2.

The second author, Eeva, had more of an outside-eye perspective. She had not been a part of the equality course in any way and had not met the study participants. However, she shares much of her professional background with Mariana. Being a dance teacher and arts educator, educator of future dance and theater teachers, and having a long career as a researcher in the field – including several years of research collaboration with Mariana – informs and influences her approach to the research material. Emphasizing these entanglements in approaching the research material and presenting findings, or rather, insights, is, thus, a conscious research strategy in this study.

Mariana was responsible for gathering all the research material. The interviews were transcribed by a professional service. Mariana read the material with an open approach several times and then chose excerpts to share with Eeva. Mariana also translated the material from Finnish into English. Eeva read the selected excerpts, attending to how the words, phrases, statements, and sentences resonated with our study's focus, especially on the participants' conceptions. During this process, we negotiated the translations, acknowledging that the translation process could alter meanings. We checked the original accounts when uncertain about the choice of words and phrases to confirm that we interpreted the meaning as accurately as possible.

Employing the performative writing approach described above (section 3.3), Eeva constructed two imaginary narratives, one based on F2L teachers' translated accounts and the other on PE students' translated accounts. Below (section 4.1) is a more detailed depiction of how she constructed the narratives, the narratives themselves, and a discussion of what they might reveal. Presenting the two rather concise narratives before the story may prepare the reader for the depiction of a longer chronological process involving multiple voices.

The narratives and story form the core of our analysis. In addition, we have compiled a table outlining some pedagogical practices that F2L teachers implement in their work and the activities PE students employed as part of the equality course (see section 4.3). In concluding this article, we will connect these elements to our theoretical framework and discuss how we might be able to shed light on our research questions and the overall aim of this study.

### *3.5. Ethical considerations*

According to the ethical protocols of the University of Arts Helsinki and the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK (2023), participation in the study was voluntary. We handled the study participants' responses confidentially. Mariana also highlighted to the students that participation, nonparticipation, or interruption would not affect their course grades. We recognize that Mariana's dual role as a teacher-researcher affects the entire research process and requires special attention and transparency concerning ethical issues. On the one hand, she had the advantage of knowing the context of the study, including the goals and contents of the equality course. On the other hand, we saw it as necessary that Eeva, as the second author, did not know the



students or teachers who participated and focused on approaching the material critically and openly from an outsider's perspective.

## 4 Explorations with research material

In this section, we first present the two narratives and, after them, the story. In addition to the translation process described above (section 3.4), we did not change any words or phrases in the study participants' accounts or add any words when constructing them. Eeva only changed one pronoun from first-person singular (I) to first-person plural (we) in the first narrative for consistency. The responses of the two F2L teachers' responses are merged in the first narrative. Thus, the narrative depicts conceptions within a profession rather than individual conceptions. This is also how the teachers mostly spoke, using the first-person plural. In both narratives, selected words or phrases are in bold to highlight the key ideas discussed later.

### 4.1 Two narratives

*Self-confidence is the gateway*

*That we move and, in this way, **diversify and enhance** learning is an essential part of teaching Finnish as a second language. Lesson assignments should be **versatile and varied**. It is not only about reading and writing. Not only grammar and linguistics.*

*We should start with situations and meanings, which words and phrases are used in certain situations. The most crucial thing is that we create **meaningful language-use situations**. And then we use different **senses**.*

*Through embodiment comes **self-esteem and self-confidence**. In embodied practices, you get to know your body. It has an enormous effect on self-confidence. Self-confidence affects studying and learning, so it is **the gateway**. This is why embodied practices are an excellent tool for larger things. Embodied practices are much more than physical activity.*

*Many language learners do not have contacts outside of school. It is crucial for them to see that they can manage; in this way, it will be an **empowering experience** for them. Some are shy and do not dare to speak out loud, so movement and embodiment help them **find a voice of their own** and their own bodies.*

*In addition to teaching language, our work educates and integrates students. It takes **so much time to plan** lessons.*

The second narrative is constructed from students' written responses to open-ended questions. Students' responses are presented as if one student would speak. They wrote in the first-person singular, depicting personal, developing conceptions based mostly on what they had experienced and learned in the context of the equality course.

*PE and language teaching is quite a combination*

*I had never thought of a PE teacher as a language teacher. I now better understand what it means. Now, I think that a PE teacher teaches the “language” of sports to everyone, and at the same time, you can also teach everyday words. I can integrate language teaching into PE practices in a **versatile** way with various types of play and, for example, **group-building** tasks.*

*Embodied and illustrative teaching guarantees that my students with immigrant backgrounds also obtain experiences of **success, understanding, and togetherness** from PE classes. Currently, students are more diverse, and a common language is not always found. You have to find **other ways to teach**. Utilizing embodiment and PE is one way to achieve this goal. Language learning can also become more effective when it involves motor activities. As a bonus, students can move and have fun, which positively affects their **well-being**.*

*Preparing for teaching PE versus teaching language through PE requires a lot of **preparation and planning** in advance. As a language teacher, a PE teacher requires **prior knowledge**. This brings an additional challenge to teaching and may take time away from the content of PE. However, it is necessary to adapt to the changing situation for teaching to be **equal**. It is important to be a reliable and understanding adult and plan the lesson so that **everyone can participate**.*

*PE and language teaching is **quite a combination**. PE has **great potential** for integration as a subject because it is not based on a constant requirement for language skills. As a PE teacher, I am also a language teacher.*

In reading these two narratives, it is worth noting, albeit self-evident, that the students had very little professional experience as teachers, whereas the F2L teachers had a long professional career. Their professions are different: Finnish as a second language teacher, and PE teachers are two distinct professions. Moreover, the F2L teachers' accounts were oral, whereas the students' accounts were written. Thus, there could be an expectation of a gap between the views presented in these two narratives on the relationship between embodiment, movement, and language. For us, however, these two narratives had more in common than we expected.

Both F2L teachers and PE students seem to view language and language learning holistically. We expected this from experienced F2L teachers, and for PE students, this conception may reflect what they have just discussed during the equality course. In every case, both consider language multimodal; thus, learning language requires embodied, holistic, and versatile approaches that can be seen as (trans)linguaging, understood as multimodal practice (García & Kleifgen, 2019). The need and willingness to diversify pedagogical approaches are also present in both narratives. Moreover, supporting everyday life and self-confidence, empowerment, well-being, togetherness, and equality through language learning reflects an awareness of teachers' social responsibilities and expanding professionalism. Additionally, an element of intersubjective understanding (Anttila, 2018) is discernible. Both teachers and students bring up the amount of time that planning and preparing embodied approaches require;

students seem more concerned about this. The students are also concerned about the balance between physical activity and language learning. Despite these concerns, enthusiasm for the potential and importance of expanding their professional roles and tasks appears to be growing. F2L teachers appear to have already internalized their expanded professional role, or identity, as educators of whole persons rather than “just” language teachers. The students seem to be aware of the changing nature of their future profession and the need to expand their professional competences and practices. We will continue contemplating these topics after presenting the story that Mariana has constructed.

#### 4.2. *The story*

*In the story that follows, Mariana's observations and experiences – her log – are italicized.*

*Students' accounts are italicized and indented.*

Bridging Mariana's log and on students' accounts is in regular body font (Book Antiqua).

The students' names are pseudonyms. As in the case of the narratives, some words and phrases are **in bold** to highlight the students' learning processes over the five-month equality course.

##### *First hesitant steps*

*At the beginning of the workshops, I sensed that the students were **a bit cautious** in the same way they were when I was teaching them dance. They have talked about how they feel that they go into a very personal and sensitive area in dance. Additionally, embodied pedagogy requires **courage** to express oneself with one's body, gestures, and facial expressions.*

Lilian expressed the uncertainty she felt at the beginning of the equality course, stating, “At first, I was **a little horrified.**” Anton and Anna raised concerns about the workload in planning the embodied language learning workshops in this way:

*I feel that preparing for teaching PE versus teaching language through PE is really different and requires a lot of preparation and planning in advance. A PE teacher as a language teacher **does not come naturally** to me, at least not yet, but requires prior knowledge of, for example, foreign language students for the teaching to work.*

*I feel that it brings **an additional challenge** to teaching and may take time away from the content of PE. However, it is necessary to adapt to the changing situation for teaching to be **equal**.*

*One challenge in dance teaching and embodied pedagogy is the experience of many students; teaching preparation takes much time compared with more familiar PE content. During the course, I noticed that planning and teaching embodied language learning workshops was a bit difficult for some students. As the workshops progressed, the students seemed to gain **confidence** in their teaching and taught more **clearly**.*

### **Balancing acts**

*As the course continued, the students reflected on balancing the contents of PE and embodied language learning/pedagogy. Some also expressed that **focusing too much on language** learning would take time away from the content of PE. They pondered how physically active embodied language pedagogy should be. I understand their concerns because future PE experts **aim to promote physical activity** and want to maintain the possibility of moving intensively in their lessons. The students also expressed a growing understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity and the needs they bring to teaching.*

For example, Ella contemplated, “**I can integrate** language teaching into PE practices in a versatile way with various plays and, for example, group-building tasks.”

*When I observed the workshops led by the students, I noticed that the Finnish language learners could participate in them better the more comprehensively the PE students used bodily expression and paid attention to repeating words or sentences. In addition, cards illustrating Finnish words, big dice, balls, pea bags, and other equipment also clarified their teaching.*

Hannah made similar observations as above about the importance of versatile pedagogy:

*During the courses, **I understood** the teaching of language through embodied/physically active practices. For example, **short and clear** sentence structures, word formation, **pictures** as part of speech, screens, and **repeating** sentences/words many times. I think that after the courses, **I'm more prepared** to act as a teacher of children with an immigrant background.*

*The Finnish language groups included students of different genders and ages as well as from different religions and cultures. In planning the workshops, the students considered, for example, what kind of physical intimacy is allowed for anyone and whether all women can touch men for religious or cultural reasons. Many practices involved working in pairs or small groups, and arts-based practices, such as dancing, drama tasks, and games, could involve meeting others by touching or eye contact. I shared the students' concern that you have to be sensitive in these matters.*

Adrian pondered the sensitivity of considering a variety of learners:

*It plays an important role because people move in different ways in every culture. **I have to know how** to consider their possible limitations in participating in lessons.*

Daniel reflected on how he could differentiate and pay attention to individual needs in teaching in a heterogeneous group. He stressed the multisensory nature of embodied teaching:

*As a teacher, a lot of **multisensory communication** and differentiated teaching are required of me because of the heterogeneity of the groups.*

*In one workshop, there was a quite physically demanding relay of body parts. The participants appeared excited about the little competition. However, one person was on the sidelines because of back pain. I asked the students how to get her involved. One student developed and taught an activity containing numbers and a precision throw with this adult learner. The student acted tactfully toward her, and I was happy to experience a nice encounter with two people who had not known each other before.*

### **Daring moves**

*It felt important for me that the students themselves could experience togetherness in the embodied language learning groups, whereby they have a bodily experience of it and can convey the same spirit to their students in their future work. I sensed the atmosphere's release; joy, concentration, and jubilation filled the space. Working together in embodied ways and learning something new released tension between Finnish language learners and PE students. They seemed to enjoy being together and interacting.*

Eva reflected on the meaning of being accepted and developing language learning simultaneously in the following way:

*As a PE teacher, I can do many things that support the feelings of students with an immigrant background so that they can become part of a group and society, belong to something, and be accepted. In addition, it is easier to teach PE without a common language, but at the same time, the teacher can develop language skills with the help of embodied practices.*

Noah considers his role in integration necessary, although he sees challenges. He emphasizes that he can support the inclusion of all students with various backgrounds, both at school and in hobby groups:

*I see the role as important ... It certainly causes **many challenges** regarding the language and adapting to the group. However, at the same time, it offers **opportunities** to learn Finnish, get to know the group and Finnish-speaking young people, try sports, find hobbies, and get to know a teacher who cares about them. As a teacher, being a reliable and understanding adult and planning lessons so that everyone can participate are important.*

Joanna emphasized that it is possible to support pupils with different linguistic backgrounds in a variety of PE lessons, even if their students know little of the language:

*I am really ready to work with and teach students with an immigrant background. There may be difficulties with the language in the beginning, but I feel that I can implement various lessons and games that support language learning.*

On the other hand, Sebastian writes about how he will consider students from different backgrounds and tells about his pedagogy:

*Not in any way special. I teach them in the same way as others. The class usually has cultural and linguistic diversity, but this does not affect my teaching.*

*For me, as a teacher and researcher, it was interesting to compare the students' teaching in the workshops and, on the other hand, to see how they verbally described their thoughts. Although I noticed that Sebastian was engaged in the workshops, interacted strongly with the Finnish language learners, and received excellent feedback, he wrote that he taught all students the same way. This idea, emphasizing individual encounters regardless of background, comes from some students each year. Then, I remind them that ignoring differences can be problematic because it may lead to neglecting the significance of different elements of structural inequality.*

*When the students understood better what embodied language learning and pedagogy might mean, most students considered embodied approaches as a possible approach to language learning. They expressed that they gradually understood that their role as language teachers was more essential and saw that their roles and tasks as PE teachers might expand toward this area.*

### ***Brave steps toward success***

Aaron, for example, emphasized that it is natural to combine language learning and PE:

***I now understand better what it means.** Nowadays, students are more diverse, so the teacher has to be prepared for the fact that a common language is not always found. Moreover, you have to find other ways to teach. Utilizing embodiment and PE is one way.*

The idea that a PE teacher is also a language teacher is reflected in some students' responses. For example, Noah and Sofia reflected on their path as language teachers with a basis for embodied language learning pedagogy, but thought that there was still much to do:

*My skills are better than before but **not ready yet.***

*I feel that I currently have better skills than before the spring course. In the future, I want to put **more effort** into the matter and try different embodied language pedagogies in my teaching.*

Additionally, Lilian, having been horrified in the beginning, reflected after the course that "*at the moment, I find the idea interesting.*" Several students expressed the need for more experience and practice in embodied approaches to teaching language.

It is interesting to note how the principles of embodied language learning and embodied pedagogy simultaneously seemed to increase their ability to teach all PE groups, including regular instruction groups consisting mostly of Finnish-speaking pupils, more clearly than before. Several students emphasized this, of which Mia's reflection is an example:

*Last time today, when I was a substitute, I felt I succeeded in clarifying the speech. Instead of speaking disrespectfully slowly, I used simpler expressions and omitted extra words. ... so **I felt that I succeeded!***

Our contemplations concerning the two narratives focused on how learning Finnish as a second language may enhance learners' self-confidence and can be seen as a gateway to "larger things" beyond learning new vocabulary. In our view, these larger things are connected to the broad conception of language as affective, embodied, relational, and collaborative (e.g., Kuby et al., 2019; Toohey, 2019) that may support broad aims connected to, for example, self-confidence and well-being. Additionally, a literature review conducted within the ELLA project (Jusslin et al., 2022) showed that embodied language learning enables learners to engage holistically and adds emotional and motivational benefits to language learning. Embodied and art-based approaches have also been explored by combining singing and Finnish language learning within a course entitled "Learn-Finnish-by-Singing," taught together by a music teacher and an F2L teacher (Teerenhovi & Lehtinen-Schnabel, 2023). The participants' feedback revealed that an embodied, holistic approach, creativity, playfulness, and community spirit are also important for adult language learners.

In this story, which depicts students' process of acquiring skills to teach language as part of PE, we can see a related phenomenon that calls for more attention in educating teachers. Both learners of a new language and teachers who teach language in new ways and contexts need to become empowered to find the confidence and courage to move toward unknown areas (see Dixon & Senior, 2011). Teaching language in embodied and arts-based ways requires new practical skills, expanding professional competences, and the crossing of disciplinary boundaries (see, e.g., Korpinen & Anttila, 2023). Moreover, understanding the increasing weight of teachers' social responsibility and ethical imperatives in increasingly complex and diverse societal situations is more crucial than ever. We will return to these issues in the concluding section.

Next, we present one more section that we have drawn from the research material: an outline of practices that F2L teachers reported in the interviews as concrete elements of their pedagogy and that the PE students explored within the equality course. With this, we intend to see how these practices might be connected to the wide conception of language, especially the notion of languaging presented in the theoretical framework. We also intend to connect our study to the aims of the ELLA research project.

### *4.3 Embodied pedagogies for language learning: Toward practice*

F2L teachers and PE students used various embodied and art-based approaches when teaching Finnish to culturally and linguistically diverse groups. For F2L teachers, drama is one key approach. Activities based on drama provide an interactive setting in which learners can practice their speaking, listening, and reading comprehension skills. Drama methods involve various activities, such as improvisation, role-playing, and theatrical techniques, using language in practical, real-life situations. The PE students also utilized drama. F2L teachers and PE students implemented drama and play to develop learners' social and emotional skills by fostering teamwork and creativity. In addition, the PE students applied creative dance, various movement activities, stretching, and body percussion in ways that emphasize language arising from bodily and sensory experiences. They also utilized various materials, such as pictures, cards, blackboards, balls, big dice, and buckets, for the precision throwing of pea bags. In addition, the F2L teachers used physical exercise as activity breaks. According to the teachers, this supports students' concentration. F2L teachers occasionally

visit the library, museum, or theater with their students to apply Finnish in real-life situations. The PE students highlighted physical activity in different environments for the same reason. Another activity the F2L teachers described is so-called wall assignments: pictures or words related to the lesson's topic combined with different tasks, such as writing the opposite of the word on the wall in their notebooks. The teacher described the task in the following way:

I use it regularly, usually at the end of the lessons, so the students rotate in class, and there are different assignments on the wall. According to the students, this is an extremely nice way because it involves getting up and moving around, being slightly more free, and talking with a fellow student.

Additionally, the F2L teachers emphasized the centrality of gestures and facial expressions in teaching Finnish:

Then, gestures and facial expressions can be used so that a lot can be achieved with them. I often wondered how I look as a teacher in front of the class when I articulate and use gestures and expressions completely differently (than in everyday life).

This account highlights embodied language pedagogy based on the conception of language as multimodal and as (trans)languaging. Table 1 summarizes these practices.

<b>Examples of the goals of language learning</b>	<b>Embodied and physically active language learning activities by Finnish as a second language teachers</b>	<b>Embodied language learning activities by PE teacher students</b>
Learning to use language actively and practically	Art-based activities (e.g., drama and play)	Art-based activities (e.g., dance and drama)
Connecting multimodal expressions and cues with verbal language (e.g., numbers, days of the week, time of day)	Activities using movements, gestures, pictures, or materials (e.g., in different task points in the classroom, language learning games)	Activities using movements, gestures, pictures, or materials (relay races, plays, and games)
Learning through sensing the body, through embodied experiences	Stretching, gymnastics, movements, activity breaks	Stretching, body percussion, creative dance
Speaking and applying the Finnish language in real-life situations	Visits to library, museum, etc.	Physical activity in various environments; outdoors and indoors

Table 1. Summary of examples of the embodied and arts-based language learning activities of teachers of Finnish as a second language and PE student teachers.

This variety of pedagogical practices can be seen as a list of activities familiar to educators in many fields. Although some activities focus quite straightforwardly on vocabulary, many multimodal, embodied, and arts-based activities listed here are in our view connected to a conception of language as a multimodal



phenomenon and language as practice, as the notion of (trans)languaging suggests (García, 2009; Li, 2018). Languaging and embodied pedagogies should not be understood just as a collection of activities but as a new paradigm for pedagogy that understands learners, learning, and teaching holistically.

Based on our study, both F2L teachers and PE students considered embodied approaches to be more than language learning. For them, holism appeared to be an important principle in their pedagogical practice. The F2L teachers highlighted how embodied and versatile activities enhance learning and self-confidence. The PE students' views were similar. Most expressed that combining language learning and PE has great potential and that they were eager to further develop their pedagogical skills. However, they expressed concern about balancing PE and language learning and acknowledged that they needed to learn new skills and acquire more knowledge. For us, it seems important that students are encouraged to expand their professional competence and practices toward new tasks, diverse situations, and contexts during their university education.

## 5 Conclusion

In the current study, we focused on how embodiment, art, and language may intertwine in language education on the one hand, and in PE on the other hand. To the best of our knowledge, our study is unique in its quest to study these professional areas side by side. The notion of expanding professionalism (Westerlund & Gaunt, 2021) has offered a fruitful perspective for researching language and PE and connected our study to current societal issues and teachers' social responsibilities. Previously, expanding professionalism has been applied mainly in the field of music and dance education (e.g., Sutela et al., 2021; Westerlund & Gaunt, 2021). Within the ELLA research project, we also discussed expanding professionalism in our study on developing future PE teachers' intercultural competence (Siljamäki & Anttila, 2021). Based on our present study, we are even more assertive in claiming that expanding professionalism is an essential concept in researching teacher education and developing holistic pedagogies in which embodied and arts-based practices are integrated with learning language. This idea concurs with that of Sutela et al. (2021), who suggest that embodied pedagogical interaction needs to be considered a key element in expanding teachers' professional competence.

We have approached the research material through performative writing, which offers alternative modes of scholarly representation (Pelias, 2005). Our methodological exploration concurs with and exemplifies embodied, arts-based, and creative approaches in researching teachers' professional practices. In closing this article, we connect the narratives and the story that we constructed to our theoretical framework to shed light on our research questions and the overall aims of this study.

The conceptions regarding embodied approaches to language learning expressed by the two groups of study participants—F2L teachers and PE students—were more similar than we expected. While the teachers had a long career and a lot of professional experience, most students were only entering the profession. The study participants representing both professional fields appear to be acutely aware of the need to continuously learn new skills, thus expanding their professional competences and practices. They seemed to consider language as a multimodal phenomenon and understand that learning language can be

supported by embodied and arts-based activities in various ways and situations. Moreover, the study participants expressed awareness of the increasing weight of teachers' social responsibilities within an increasingly complex and diverse societal situation. However, it is clear, albeit understandable, that the F2L teachers' conceptions are more mature and well defined than PE students' views.

Our study highlights that teaching language in embodied and arts-based ways requires new practical skills, expanding competences, and crossing disciplinary boundaries (Korpinen & Anttila, 2023). Additionally, a broad conception of language, a holistic conception of learning and teaching, and a commitment to promoting social justice and equality are essential. Moreover, it affirms that embodied expressivity requires courage, self-confidence, and enhanced bodily awareness (Dixon & Senior, 2011; Sutela et al., 2021). Thus, for future teachers to have the courage to express themselves multimodally, arts-based approaches – drama, creative movement and dance, as well as music – should be applied much more in teacher education. To conclude, we propose that teachers' cultural and linguistic awareness entails embodied, multimodal pedagogical interaction where common verbal language is not always needed to promote equality, intersubjective understanding, and social justice.

## Funding

The study was conducted within the Embodied Language Learning through the Arts (ELLA) research project funded by the Kone Foundation (Grant no. 202007315, 01/2021–12/2024).

## Acknowledgements

We would warmly like to thank the participants of the study.

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Received February 1, 2024

Revision received June 20, 2024

Accepted August 12, 2024